The starfish story

ORIGINAL STORY BY LOREN EISLEY

One day, a man was walking along the beach when he noticed a boy picking up something and gently throwing it into the ocean. Approaching the boy, he asked, “What are you doing?” The youth replied, “Throwing starfish back into the ocean. The surf is up and the tide is going out. If I don’t throw them back, they’ll die.” “Son,” the man said, “don’t you realize there are miles and miles of beach and hundreds of starfish? You can’t make a difference.” After listening politely, the boy bent down, picked up another starfish and threw it back into the surf. Then, smiling at the man, he said, “I made a difference for that one.”

In this month’s local pages, learn how Capital Electric Cooperative’s member-owners are making a difference, through the Operation Round Up program.
Making A Difference

Co-op members + Operation Round Up = support for BHS Starfish students

BY CARMEN DEVNEY

Like the boy throwing starfish into the tide, Bismarck High School is making a difference one student at a time.

The members who participate in Capital Electric Cooperative's Operation Round Up program are making a difference, too. Some of the money they have been donating each month when they round up their utility bills was given to the high school in the form of a grant for its Starfish program. Now, at-risk students who are struggling in school can eat, focus, feel safe — and ultimately increase the likelihood of their graduating from high school.

When Bismarck High School opened its doors to 9th-grade students a couple years ago, the administration and teachers were struck by how many freshmen were struggling to stay in school, for various reasons.

A committee was formed by concerned teachers and the administration to research why students were dropping out of high school locally, and across the state and nation. They found several commonalities including socioeconomic status, failure in 8th grade, and at-risk factors including involvement with the law and agency involvement. Their research indicated that 9th graders in particular would benefit from a program that would provide individualized support to at-risk students in order to foster a positive relationship with education and empower them with the skills to become successful high school graduates. The Starfish pilot program was born at Bismarck High School last year.

Starfish started as a partial-day program and has already evolved to a full-day program. Lea Geis, Starfish coordinator and teacher, says the program offers a place for the students to catch up when they fall behind in school work. It also offers a safe place where they can receive support and not feel judged.

Last year, the program served 45 students; many of whom came to her and said they were hungry. They’d ask for an apple or a granola bar, and Geis had no idea when they last ate. She found herself going to Sam’s Club and buying snacks in bulk. She knew it was a gesture she couldn’t sustain.

“It was disheartening to know such a basic need was not being met,” she says. “I felt like if the students had just a snack, maybe they could concentrate better in class.”

This year, the program is helping 15 students so far. Geis knows it will reach or surpass the number of students it served last year. In anticipating the growth, she applied for Capital Electric’s Operation Round Up grant this summer, on behalf of Bismarck High School, with the intention of using the money to purchase snacks for the students.

“Our budget is minimal for school supplies and items necessary to keep the program running. It was hard to justify that money for food,” she says.

In August, she learned the Starfish program was being awarded an Operation Round Up grant. Now, students have access to granola bars and fruit without having to ask for a snack or feel like they have to explain why they are hungry.

Geis says she, on behalf of Bismarck High School, appreciates the grant and the opportunity to pass the funds on to at-risk kids in the form of food. When she attended the Operation Round Up check presentation in August, Geis was also able to network with other professionals in the community who work with at-risk students. She learned about other ways in which the students could be helped and additional resources that are available to Bismarck High School students. She was also inspired to start a food bank at the high school. She and other staff are currently planning how to implement the food bank in the rear of the student store.

“My vision for having food for kids has expanded in order to meet the needs of all the kids here who have hunger issues,” Geis concludes.
Do YOU participate in the Operation Round Up program?
If not, please call the co-op and opt in today!

Fourteen of the state’s 16 electric distribution cooperatives participate in the Operation Round Up program. In this voluntary program, co-op members round up their monthly electric bills to the next dollar, and donate their change to worthy individuals, groups and organizations in their respective co-op’s service area. The money is placed in a trust where it accumulates, and the trust’s board of directors — who are also co-op members — meet regularly to review applications and disburse funds in the form of grants. All of the money raised by members stays in their local communities. On average, participating members donate about $6 a year. The donation is tax-deductible, and members who participate will receive a summary on their last billing statement of the year.

Capital Electric Cooperative implemented the program in August 1997. Since then, more than 31 million pennies in Operation Round Up funds have been donated and spread across the co-op’s service area. About 5,700 co-op members currently participate in Operation Round Up, and their collective pennies generate almost $3,000 a month. Our co-op would like to DOUBLE that number and amount!

Members, please call the co-op at 701-223-1513 to verify that you participate in the Operation Round Up program, or to opt into the program. Every member’s small donation truly does add up to make a big difference. Just ask the staff members at Bismarck High School, who are using their grant to provide healthy snacks for at-risk students who are struggling in school. They appreciate the grant, and know that your commitment to community made a difference.

Charitable Trust awards grants

The board members who serve on the Capital Electric Cooperative Charitable Trust meet two times a year to review Operation Round Up applications and award grants. In August, Roger Christianson, Jerry Doan, LeAna Hug, Barb Handy-Marchello and Jim McCullough reviewed applications that were submitted by July 31.

The board members awarded 10 grants totaling $13,433.18. Checks were distributed during a presentation ceremony on Aug. 20 at co-op headquarters in Bismarck. The following individuals and organizations received assistance from participating Capital Electric members and the co-op’s Operation Round Up program:

- Community Action Program (Backpacks for Kids)
- Scottish Rite Speech Therapy Center (speech therapy for low-income children)
- AID, Inc. (assistance for low-income individuals)
- Welcome House, Inc. (emergency homeless shelter)
- Starfish – Bismarck High School (assistance for at-risk students)
- Pride Manchester House (bikes and helmets)
- The Salvation Army (lobby renovation)
- Farm Rescue (assistance to farmers in need)
- Charles Hall Youth Services (harps for therapeutic purposes)
- Bismarck-Mandan Quota International (sound system for hearing impaired children)
- South Central Juvenile Drug Court (sobriety incentives for young drug offenders)

The next application deadline will be Jan. 31, 2016. Any person in the counties of Burleigh and Sheridan may submit an application to receive an Operation Round Up grant. To request an application, call Capital Electric Cooperative at 701-223-1513 or download the form at www.capitalelec.com (click “Member Services” and “Operation Round Up”).
O.S. “Sid” Soma, former general manager for Capital Electric Cooperative from 1964 to 1983, passed away Aug. 18 in Bismarck. He was 94 years old.

Born in Deadwood, S.D., on July 14, 1921, Sid graduated from Newell High School and attended Augustana College in Sioux Falls, S.D., where he played football before enlisting in the U.S. Navy during WWII. He served 3 ½ years aboard the light cruiser USS Brooklyn, earning the rank of EMC 1st class.

An advocate for rural electrification, Sid worked as a lineman for Butte Electric Cooperative in Newell, S.D., and as a line inspector for Black Hills Electric Cooperative in Custer, S.D., prior to entering the service. He vividly remembered the building of the power lines — and how construction stopped due to WWII and a lack of funding.

Sid returned to South Dakota and his job at Butte Electric, following his honorable discharge. He married Helen Gyopyos, of Elmira, N.Y., nearly 72 years ago, and they were blessed with two children, David and Crystal. Helen also worked at Butte Electric as a billing clerk.

When electric companies started building power lines and getting easements again, Sid became the manager of Butte Electric. He was the youngest manager ever hired by any electric cooperative.

When the co-op’s members had questions or concerns, they often called Sid at home — and Helen would serve as dispatch, taking notes on mileage from tree to corner or fence post to hill, helping the linemen find the source of the problem. Even though Sid was the manager, when the linemen became too busy or were short a hand, Sid would head to the field and help.

“That tells you what kind of person he was,” Helen reflects.

Sid took great pleasure in helping provide power to rural areas. He shared a story with Helen about a farm family that was about to get electric service for the first time. When the linemen announced the power was on, Sid asked the farm wife flip a switch. When the light came on, she cried. She could hardly believe they finally had electricity.

“He pushed and worked hard for people to have that joy,” Helen reflects. “He knew how hard his mother had to work, until they scraped up enough money for a generator so his mother could use a washing machine to wash clothes.”

Sid became the general manager of West River Electric Cooperative in 1948, in Wall, S.D. He also became an advocate for telecommunications cooperatives in rural areas, and eventually served in the dual role as general manager of Golden West Telephone from 1954 until 1964.

In 1964, Sid and his family moved to Bismarck where he accepted the position of general manager of Capital Electric Cooperative, which he held until his retirement in 1983.

Helen says Sid took many employees under his wing over the years, giving them advice and supporting them and their families.

“He had a good, good heart,” Helen says. “He always talked about all his linemen as ‘his boys.’ He respected the work they did, and he always praised them for the job they did.”

After retirement, Sid and Helen enjoyed antique shows, spent time at their summer home in the Black Hills of South Dakota, and traveled to Texas, Arizona, Nevada and California during the winters. Sid also continued to fish, keep a garden, refinish antique furniture and tinker with “stuff.”

Sid was committed to community throughout his career, before Touchstone Energy® made it one of its core values. While in Wall, Sid served on the Wall School Board;
served two terms as mayor; sat on the board of directors of the Black Hills, Badlands and Lakes Association; served as chairman of the Pennington County Red Cross; and served as a lay member of the Governor’s Council on Highway Safety. In Bismarck he served on numerous boards including Missouri Slope Lutheran Care Center, the St. Alexius Lay Advisory Board, Burleigh County Red Cross, Salvation Army, North Dakota Power Use Council, ND REC Manager’s Association, and as chairman of the Board of Trustees at McCabe United Methodist Church. He is a lifetime member of the Bismarck Elks, American Legion and Kiwanis Club.

Up until his death, many current and former cooperative employees would stop by the couple’s house in Bismarck and talk to him because, “he was a good, stalwart person who would always listen to anybody who had a problem,” Helen says.

Sid is survived by his wife, Helen; son, David; and daughter, Crystal; two grandchildren, Travis (Danielle) Smith, Bismarck, and Jennifer (Jeremy) Meissner, Denver, Colo.; six great-grandchildren, Hunter, Madelyn, Zander, Brandon, Alec, and Harper; nephews, Gerald (Mary Ellen) Soma, Calif., and Jon Soma, Md.; niece, Patricia (Al) Wilcove, Fla.; numerous cousins; great-nephews, and great-nieces.

Capital Electric Cooperative honors the career and commitment of O.S. “Sid” Soma, and extends its condolences to his family members and friends.

 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.
**CAPITAL CREDIT CLAIMS**

Listed below are the names of former Capital Electric Cooperative, Inc. members who had capital credit checks mailed to them in June of the year 2009. These checks have been returned to Capital Electric Cooperative by the postal service because they could not locate the members at the address on file. A further search by Capital Electric personnel has not turned up their whereabouts.

If you received electrical service from Capital Electric Cooperative, Inc. any time during the year 1993 and your name is on this list, please contact our office. If you know of the whereabouts of members on this list who received electrical service from Capital Electric Cooperative, Inc. any time during the year 1993, please have them contact our office at 701-223-1513.

Please keep in mind that not all of the capital credit amounts are large. However, we desire to get the money due to those who earned it, and clear up our records.

We will redeem capital credits for those members on the following list who notify us prior to Dec. 1, 2015. Notice is hereby given that any of the aforementioned unclaimed capital credits outstanding after Dec. 1, 2015 will be forfeited pursuant to Section 10-15-34.1 and 10-15-23 of the North Dakota Century Code.

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**4TH AND FINAL NOTICE – OCTOBER 2015**

ADVANCED ELECTRIC INC.  
ALBIN, TERRY R.  
ANDERSON, NEIL  
BAILEY CONSTRUCTION INC.  
BAILEY, DON  
BAILEY, JENNIFER  
BAUER, NATE  
BEARSHIGHT, WYATT  
BLAIR, JULIE  
BOOTH, JUDSON M.  
BORKERCH, AUGUST  
BREHM, MICHAEL  
BRIGHT, EDWARD S.  
BROCKMAN, KRISTI L.  
BRUGGER, BARBARA M.  
BUCK, JOHNNY W.  
Buck, Vicki L.  
CAMPBELL, JANIS A.  
CAMPBELL, MICHAEL L.  
CARSON, DOREEN  
CARSON, GREG  
CHRISTENSEN, JEAN  
CLOOTEN, JOAN E.  
CREATIVE PRODUCTS  
DANIEL, PATRICIA L.  
DEAN, JAMES A.  
DESORMEAUX, JOEY A.  
DESORMEAUX, MICHELLE R.  
DIEDE, KENT  
DOCKET, SHANE B.  
DUCHEINEAUX, CLAUDINE  
EADES, JIMMY D.  
ERICKSON, CARLE  
ERICKSON, ELISIE  
FAITH INDEPENDENT  
BAPTIST CHURCH  
FEIST, LISA J.  
FEIST, TERRY A.  
FONTENOT, JOHNNIE W.  
FOTH, BRUCE  
FOTH, SHARON  
FREDHOFF, KIRK  
FRENCH, CRAIG ALAN  
GAROWSKI, PETER  
GARTNER, DAVE  
GARTNER, HELEN  
GEINERT, LYNEA  
GEVEDON, CHARLOTTE A.  
GOULET, TODD D.  
GOULET, Tricia M.  
GRECO, MICHAEL A.  
GROSZ, JULIA M.  
GROVE, ERIC N.  
HAASE, JEAN  
HARTMAN, LORI ANN  
HAYDEN, GARY  
HORNING, ANNETTE  
IBRAHIM, A. H.  
JENSEN, STEVE  
JOHNSON, TAMMIE  
JOYCE, KAREN  
KAISER, TIM  
KELLERMAN, KAREN L.  
KOLAND, KEITH  
KOST, SHANE M.  
KREEGER, RANDI  
KREEGER, ROBERT  
KUPFER, HARDIS  
KURIHARA, CATHERINE M.  
LANG, TOM  
LEE, JANET E.  
LERVOLD, VIOLET J.  
LINK, CHRISTOPHER B.  
LINK, DAWN  
M & J TRUCKING  
MABIN, PAT M.  
MALLUM, PATRICIA L.  
MALONEY, LOIS  
MALONEY, TROY  
MANN, VIDA  
MARTIN, GEORGE A.  
MASON, MICHAEL R.  
MAY, KRIS  
MBM INC - MCDONALDS  
MCBEAIN, DANIEL P.  
MCBEAIN, JANELL L.  
MCCLOUND, TIM  
MCKAY, DALINDA  
MEEK, LARRY  
MEREDITH NEW HERITAGE  
Mertz, Jennifer Jo  
MERTZ, ROBERT  
MOHS, KIRBY  
MORROW, JENAE  
MORROW, PAUL  
MOSBRUCKER, HELEN  
MULLINS, CAROL  
Nelson, CARRIE  
NELSON, MICHAEL  
NILES, RANDY  
NORDGAARD, BRAD  
NORDGAARD, KARLA  
OLSON, LEROY  
OLSON, ROGER  
PATNEAUD, JONI M.  
PEKARSKI, DALE  
PHILLIPS, JULIE A.  
PHILLIPS, MURRAY E.  
PIETZ, DAWN  
PIETZ, RICHARD  
POLIVODA, NADEZHDA  
POLIVODA, Vasiliy  
RHONE, KATHY  
RICHTER, Glynis R.  
RICKE, ARTHUR G.  
RICKE, SHIRLEY M.  
ROBINSON, MARK D.  
ROEHRIC, TRACY  
ROHRICH, BOB  
ROHWELLER, JANESSA  
RUSSELL, ROGER  
SAHR, DAWN  
SAHR, JEFFREY J.  
SCHMIDT, DAWN  
SCHNEIDER, DEBRA  
SCHNEIDER, RICHARD  
SKROK, ARLENE F.  
SKRook, KENNETH F.  
SMITH, CARLA J.  
SMITH, VINCENT J.  
STEEN, JAY E.  
STRAND, ALLEN D.  
SVENSON, MONTE L.  
THOM, FRAN  
THOM, NEIL E.  
THORBERG, ROBERT V.  
TRUSTY, NICOLE  
TWINN, LENA  
TWORES, WILLIAMETTE  
VETSCH, RANDY  
VOLK, MARY C.  
WALCH, BETTY  
WILCOX, JACQUELINE K.  
WILCOX, WILLIAM C.  
WILDROSE PROPERTIES  
WILLIAMS, BETTY  
WINKOWITSCH, TAMMY  
WOEHL, KATHERINE A.  
WOEHL, TRACY C.  
WOLF, DARREL G.  
WOLFE, SHAWN  
WOLFF, HAROLD M.  

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**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!
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.

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.”

Find out why you should write an essay for the 2016 Youth Tour. Visit www.youtube.com/ndarec
**Board minute excerpts**  
**Aug. 21, 2015**

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Capital Electric Cooperative, Inc., was held Friday, August 21, 2015, at cooperative headquarters in Bismarck.

**Financial review:** Prior to the board meeting, Directors Liuska and Kramer reviewed the July 2015 check register and expenditures, and reported all checks were in order. It was moved, seconded and carried to approve July expenditures in the amount of $3,278,787.35.

**Business department report:** The Business Manager reviewed the July financial and statistical report with the Board. The total kilowatt-hour (KWH) sales for July 2015 were over budget by 9.8 percent. The actual monthly electric revenue is above budget by 9 percent. Year-to-date, KWH sales are below budget by 1.3 percent and electric revenue is under budget by 2.2 percent.

The financial margin for July is -$21,102 versus the budgeted margin of -$248,853, above budget by $227,751. Capital Electric’s load factor was above budget, resulting in a cost savings of $91,000. The year-to-date margin is $477,416 versus $499,722 budgeted, under budget by $22,306.

Capital Electric began billing 103 new services in July, bringing active services to 18,852 versus 18,011 at this time last year, or a net increase of 841 accounts over the last 12 months.

The Business Manager reviewed the comparison of actual-to-budgeted expenses for the month of July and for the year-to-date through July 2015. Accounts receivable balances as of Aug. 20, 2015, were reviewed.

**Health Care Trust:** On Aug. 11, the board met and heard presentations from the N.D. Banker’s Association and Mississippi REC statewide regarding lessons learned in self-funding. Afterwards, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) and Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota (BCBSND) gave presentations on what they could offer in self-funded health insurance for the Trust.

It was noted that the Trust is only needed if the co-ops elect to go with BCBS because NRECA is already a self-insured plan, and the Trust would not provide additional benefits; co-ops would simply sign up with NRECA if desired. Because the work has been done, the delegates voted to create the health care Trust and elect officers regardless of the final decision. The overall consensus is that the decision will be made when all the premium rates that are expected in mid-September are received.

**Cyber security assessment:** We continue to work on our internal physical security assessment and have received some bids and are waiting on others.

**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:

- Wally B. Beyer $ 1,694.71
- Gerry Kelsch $ 19.86
- TOTAL $ 1,714.67

**Engineering and operations report:** The Manager reviewed the written report from the engineering and operations department. We completed 55 work orders this month, adding 64 new consumers to the system.

Fischer, 3rd Generation and Gieser Utility Contracting continue to trench in new services, and VIP continues to work on our overhead rural rebuild.

Capital Electric set a new system peak on Aug. 12, 2015 at 6 p.m. It was 82,644 kilowatts. The former peak set last year on Jan. 5, 2014 was 79,436 kilowatts.

On Aug. 10, 2015 a vehicle left the road on highway 1804 by Glencoe church and took out one of our three-phase poles.

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

**Wing Service Center building:** The installation of the floor heat boiler system is being worked on at the Wing Service Center. This project should be completed and tested early next week.

**Communications and public relations department:** The Manager reviewed the written report from the communications and public relations department.

**Operation Round Up:** The Capital Electric Charitable Trust Board met on Aug. 10 to review 15 applications received for grants through the Trust. The board approved 11 grants totaling $13,443.18.

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

Capital Electric sent eight linemen to the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives’ (NDAREC) hotline school in Mandan, N.D., July 27 through 31, 2015.

**Public Service Commission case:** The case is now on appeal and the Appellant’s Brief is being worked on.

**Central Power Electric Cooperative:** Hilken reported on Central Power matters.

**Construction:** Construction in Bismarck continues. We meet with Montana-Dakota Utilities to discuss contingencies in the Bismarck area to assist each other in the event of a substation failure. The meeting went very well and a plan was developed. Other needs identified by Capital Electric prior to consolidation are being considered for the 2016-2017 construction work plan.

Amendment No. 8 to Capital Electric’s Wholesale Power Contract with Central Power amending the expiration date from Dec. 31, 2050 to Dec. 31, 2075 was reviewed. Following discussion, it was moved, seconded and carried to approve Amendment No. 8 to the Wholesale Power Contract.

**Basin Electric:** Basin Electric will be raising rates for SRS (phone answering service) in 2016. The risks/rewards of Minnokta Power Cooperative joining Basin Electric was also reviewed.

**NDAREC:** There was no meeting this month.

**National Information Solutions Cooperative:** Haugen-Hoffart has a conflict for the annual meeting and Olson will serve as delegate.

**Manager search:** It was moved, seconded and carried to approve the contract with Integrity Partners.

**Central Power/Basin Electric delegate:** The board met with Troy Presser, a director for McLean Electric Cooperative, Garrison. He is a candidate for the Central Power director position at Basin Electric.

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