



**Capital  
Electric**  
COOPERATIVE

**AUGUST 2025**

The ravaging storms of June 20 were building in an ominous and eerie way across North Dakota. During our summer storms, we are both intrigued and frightened. The severity of this storm was unexpected and is rare in our state. It forced us to hunker down, hoping it would be less than it appeared.

## Powerful storm brings full force of nature's fury

PHOTO COURTESY CAPITAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBER AMANDA GARRETT

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## Capital Electric members kept a watchful eye on storm

BY WES ENGBRECHT



PHOTO COURTESY CAPITAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBER AMANDA GARRETT

**N**orth Dakota's weather is unpredictable at best. Those who have been here all or most of their lives are prepared for most of what comes. The wild weather weekend of June 20 made us question that fact.

Multiple recounts of tornadoes, high winds, hail and heavy rain abounded, as storms blazed a wide path through the state. The level of damage each area received was determined by pure luck. Some spots were mostly unaffected, while other areas nearby were damaged significantly.

"We didn't have it too bad here, but in that area, it was much worse," was one comment we heard.

"We have family in that area, so we are staying in touch to make sure they are OK," was another comment.

When winds reach 100 miles per hour and there are reports of multiple tornadoes, you need to pay attention.

As we watched the news on Saturday, we saw the damage was devastating to homes, businesses, trees, grain bins and more. Virtually everything in the storm's path was subject to its wrath. This fact made it understandable thousands were out of power. Poles, transmission lines, distribution lines and substations were damaged.

Despite the storm's intensity, Capital Electric Cooperative's damage was not as serious as it could have been. The co-op's service area consists mainly of Burleigh and Sheridan counties. Following the storm Friday night, 36 of the 64 townships in the cooperative's

*Trees were damaged throughout the Capital Electric Cooperative service area, causing many outages. Trees in proximity to power lines can bring down a line quickly when they fall. Capital Electric lineworkers spend time throughout the year trimming trees that may result in damage during summer and winter storms.*




service area experienced outages. The damage was widespread, with 25 poles down. According to the outage map, a total of 1,000 services were affected. Then came the time for repair and cleanup.

During and following the storm, crews of lineworkers and contractors were called immediately. Operations Manager Jeff Holzer and System Supervisor Lance Diebold directed the recovery from the operations room.

"Flying debris and broken tree branches caused outages throughout our entire system. Recovery was time-consuming, as we had a wide area to address. The crew worked efficiently and safely to get power restored to everyone by Sunday afternoon. It was truly a joint effort, and we are extremely thankful for their hard work. Our guys' experience paid off," Holzer said.

Capital Electric staff thanks co-op members for their patience during the recovery and repair process. Members were encouraged to report their outages, but they also knew we were on top of them through our wireless metering system. Social media posts were utilized to provide up-to-date information and answer questions. Two-way, timely communication is vital during significant outages, and our members were diligent in

providing feedback.

The cooperative is here to serve our members. By putting safety first, we are proud to maintain a reliable electrical system and to keep your power on. Continue to keep your eyes on the sky and keep us informed as weather and damage unfolds. We will continue to work together. 



*A string of poles marching up a wooded hill near the University of Maryland were taken out during the storm. Capital Electric's operations department worked out a method to restore power, but will be working on a more permanent solution soon.*



*Crews worked from 10 p.m. Friday, June 20, to 6 p.m. Sunday, June 22, to repair lines and replace poles. This pole came down in a rural area, just like many others in Capital Electric's service area.*





Capital Electric Cooperative Director **Bret Weiland** was a big hit as one of the Touchstone Energy® amigos. High fives were abounding!

## Americans show unfailing pride on Independence Day

BY WES ENGBRECHT

"America the Beautiful!" The song we know and love was written by Katharine Lee Bates and was first published as a poem in 1895. That was 130 years ago, and Americans still enjoy America's beauty. Keeping this spirit alive is important to us and future generations.

Here is the memorable opening verse:

*O beautiful for spacious skies,  
For amber waves of grain,  
For purple mountain majesties  
Above the fruited plain!  
America! America!  
God shed His grace on thee  
And crown thy good with brotherhood  
From sea to shining sea!*

It still makes you feel proud and sentimental, doesn't it? Cooperatives around the country were founded by

proud Americans who were grateful for freedom and for the land they have been farming for generations. Powering farms and homes was a necessity, and they made it happen through hard work, vision and resiliency.

As our members prepare for the co-op's 80th year, Capital Electric Cooperative continues to reflect American values. We want our members to be proud of their cooperative, as we reflect their beliefs in the communities we serve.

Independence Day parades around the country are testaments of patriotism and freedom. Capital Electric employees and board members help create that feeling, as we joined other local co-ops in participating in the Mandan Fourth of July parade. The crowd was massive as always, and Touchstone Energy® cooperatives were represented by 25 participant walkers.

Candy is not the only draw, although it sure is for the younger crowd. Floats, which require countless hours to decorate, are plentiful. Not surprisingly, horses have



Directors **Kyle Tschosik** and **Greg Dehne**, Manager of Communications/PR/IT **Wes Engbrecht** and Director **Bret Weiland**, left to right, show their enthusiasm prior to the parade. Thousands of pieces of candy and other treats were tossed along the route, making it an amazing event for all!



been and always will be an important part of any North Dakota parade.

"This event is important to the communities and, as cooperatives, we are here to ensure our members recognize us as proud participants. The heat can be stifling in early July, but it doesn't hinder our neighbors from lining the streets with friends to enjoy the festivities. We are happy to be part of this celebration each year and were again this year," said Capital Electric's Manager of Communications and Public Relations Wes Engbrecht.

Amidst the crowd of smiling faces, we hear comments such as, "Thank you for what you do and for keeping our lights on." Longtime co-op members don't hesitate to share their gratitude. When they see their cooperative represented at public events, they see themselves. They are the cooperative, and they want everyone to know.

Basin Electric Power Cooperative provides power to Capital Electric and other North Dakota co-ops. Basin Electric also serves its members by coordinating parades and many other events to bring us all together in cooperation. We are thankful for their time and commitment to the co-op way of life.

If you were fortunate enough to join the fun this year, we thank you. This event is uplifting for our communities, and we look forward to joining the celebration for years to come. ☺



The smiles said it all! Countless little ones blanketed the streets as they raced for candy. Perfect summer weather added to the experience for all.





**Chrissy Resch**, Bismarck, displayed her 2023 Ford Mustang Mach-E at this year's EV Tailgate Party. Local electric vehicle owners were in attendance, in addition to dealers for this event.

## EV Tailgate Party continues to grow

**C**apital Electric Cooperative and the N.D. Department of Transportation teamed up to bring a variety of electric vehicles and other equipment together for a June 26 event at the state Capitol. The event is known as the EV Tailgate Party and has been held annually the past four years.

"We're extremely happy with the growth of the event. Our first year hosting this event, we primarily relied on private owners to bring the EVs they had special ordered. Now, the local dealers have many new, impressive models available, and their willingness to join us at this event has been incredible. We hope to continue to provide these awareness opportunities for the community and look forward to the new vehicles and outdoor equipment at next year's tailgate event," said Capital Electric's Energy Services Manager Josh Schaffner.

This year's featured vehicles were the Ford Lightning, Hyundai Ioniq 5, 6 and 9, Volkswagen ID Buzz, Rivian R1S, GMC Sierra EV, Nissan Ariya, Cadillac Lyriq, Chrysler Pacifica Hybrid, Jeep Cherokee Hybrid, Subaru Solterra and the new Bobcat electric wheeled loader.

During the event, Border States grilled hamburgers, brats and hot dogs, which were free for attendees.

Attendees also received a free ice cream treat from Luigi's Ice Cream Truck. Live news coverage was provided by KFYR-TV for the First News at 4.

Event sponsors included 701 Cycle and Sport, Basin Electric Power Cooperative, Bismarck Motor Company,

Bobcat, Bird, Border States, Schwan GMC, Dakota Supply Group, Eide Automotive Group, Irby, Lignite Energy Council, North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives, Pro Kartz, Puklich Chevrolet, Subaru of Mandan and Wesco. ☎



Those who attended this year's event were treated to burgers and hot dogs, which were grilled by the staff at Border States.





## Heupel returns from co-op powered Youth Tour



**Heupel**

When Kaden Heupel boarded a plane bound for Washington, D.C., he knew he was traveling to something special, but he didn't realize how unforgettable the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour would be.

"The trip was great," says Heupel, a senior at Bismarck High School. "I got to meet a lot of new people and learn a lot of new things. The museums

were great. And so were the food spots! The food was amazing."

Sponsored by Capital Electric Cooperative, Heupel joined more than 1,700 students from across the country for a jam-packed week in the nation's capital. The trip was full of memorable moments, from standing on the historic Gettysburg Battlefield to meeting lawmakers on Capitol Hill.

One of Heupel's favorite stops was the FBI Experience. Located inside FBI headquarters, the museum offers a rare, behind-the-scenes look at the FBI's role in protecting our nation. Interactive exhibits showcase real investigative tools, historic case materials and career opportunities.

"I liked looking at their hidden cameras and all of the weaponry and other stuff they use while on duty," Heupel says.

He also enjoyed the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center, which houses hundreds of historically significant aircraft

and spacecraft. But it wasn't the supersonic Concorde or legendary Space Shuttle Discovery that caught his attention.

"I thought it was cool looking at the tiny planes that have just a small propeller and really small wings and wondering how they could possibly fly," Heupel says.

Between the monuments and museums, Heupel also learned about the important role electric cooperatives play in powering our nation and sustaining our local communities.

The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour has been bringing high school students from across the nation to Washington, D.C., since the late 1950s. Students apply by submitting an essay to their local co-op. Each year, Capital Electric selects one student to represent the co-op on the tour.

When asked if he'd recommend the experience to other students, Heupel didn't hesitate.

"You should totally apply. It's a once-in-a-lifetime trip, and it's all paid for! You get to learn a lot of new stuff and explore D.C. I really appreciate the opportunity to go on this once-in-a-lifetime trip," Heupel says.

The 2026 North Dakota Youth Tour will take place June 14-20, 2026. For more information on this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, visit [ndyouthtour.com](http://ndyouthtour.com) or email Wes Engbrecht, [wese@capitalelec.com](mailto:wese@capitalelec.com).

Heupel is the son of Capital Electric members Dustin and Kristi Heupel. ☺

The regular meeting of the board of directors of Capital Electric Cooperative was held on Friday, June 27. The meeting was held in person at Capital Electric, 7401 Yukon Drive, Bismarck, pursuant to due notice to all directors.

**Also present were:** Manager Paul Fitterer, Business Manager Luke Steen (remote), Operations Manager Jeff Holzer, Engineering Services Manager Greg Owen, Energy Services Manager Josh Schaffner, Manager of Communications and IT Wes Engbrecht and Attorney Zachary Pelham of Pearce Durick PLLC, who acted as recording secretary.

**Financial Review:** Prior to the board meeting, Directors Sara Vollmer and Dave Charles reviewed the May check register and expenditures. They advised all checks and expenditures were in order. The financial review was approved as presented.

**Management Reports (Business Department, Operations Department, Engineering Services, Energy Services and Communications/IT):**

**Business Department Report:** Steen presented the May financial and statistical report to the board.

Revenue was ahead of budget for May, as \$3,855,927 was generated in comparison with the budgeted figure of \$3,685,067 (favorable variance of \$170,860 or 4.6%).

Capital Electric's May net load factor of 48.83% was behind budget by 30.98%.

The operating margin for May was \$-316,645, behind the budgeted amount of \$271,199. The total margin for May was \$-309,236, which was behind the budgeted \$283,264.

Capital Electric began billing 17 new services in May, bringing our active services to 22,567 versus 22,305 at this time last year, or a net increase of 262 accounts over the last 12 months.

The cash flow statement was reviewed. **Estate Retirements:** Payment of capital credits was authorized to five estates totaling \$1,901.04.

**Operations Report:** Holzer reviewed the written report from the operations department. Holzer reported crews set and terminated 18 transformers for the new Elk Ridge subdivision, completion of monthly substation inspections and approximately 25 poles lost from the June 20 storm.

**Safety Report:** There were no lost-time accidents since the last board meeting. Eight lineworkers attended Hotline School hosted by the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC) in Mandan. Without objection, the safety report was approved.

**City of Lincoln Street Light Maintenance Agreement:** Fitterer reviewed the street light maintenance agreement between the city of Lincoln and Capital Electric, related to maintenance and repair of streetlights owned by the city. The agreement was approved.

**Engineering Services Report:** Owen reviewed the written report from engineering services. There were 14 work orders completed in May. Owen reported two-thirds of the Briardale subdivision overhead to underground line conversion is complete and the initial residential buildout at Summit Point is complete.

**Wildfire Mitigation Plan:** Owen reviewed Capital Electric's proposed wildfire mitigation plan and the plan was approved.

**Energy Services:** Schaffner reviewed the energy services report. Forty service orders were completed in May. Schaffner reported on ongoing work related to geothermal project equipment, status of the remaining LCT replacements and the electric vehicle tailgate event.

**Energy Resource Conservation (ERC) Loan:** Schaffner reviewed a member's ERC loan application, and the ERC loan was approved as presented.

**Communications and IT:** Engbrecht reviewed the communications and IT report. Engbrecht reported on the annual meeting and plans for the 2026 annual meeting, storm outage communication with membership and an update on the website.

**Wing Fire Department:** Fitterer reviewed the Wing Fire Department's loss of a truck and equipment from a wildfire, the decision by Central Power Electric Cooperative to donate the department a truck and the need to equip the replacement truck. It was approved to provide \$7,500 for a matching grant from Basin Electric Power Cooperative and CoBank to the department for replacement equipment to equip the donated truck.

**Basin Electric:** Fitterer reported on Basin Electric matters, including the upcoming annual meeting. Dave Charles was selected as Capital Electric's delegate to the annual meeting and Greg Dehne was selected as the alternate.

**Central Power Electric:** Charles reviewed Central Power Electric matters and the June board meeting.

**Industry Update:** Fitterer reviewed materials related to power markets and general cooperative news.

**NDAREC:** Deon Vilhauer reviewed statewide matters.

**National Rural Electric Cooperative Association:** Fitterer reported on the regional meeting scheduled for September, power sector rules and a legislative recap. Vollmer was selected as Capital Electric's delegate to the regional meeting and Tschosik was selected as the alternate.

**Federated Insurance:** Fitterer reported on the CEO retiring and board report.

**RESCO:** Fitterer reported on the board election. The board cast Capital Electric's ballot in support of Vilhauer. ☺

**CAPITAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**  
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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

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Greg Dehne, Asst. Sec.-Treas. ....	Bismarck
Dwight Wrangham.....	Lincoln
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