



**Capital
Electric**
COOPERATIVE

DECEMBER 2024

The holidays are a special time! Capital Electric Cooperative's board of directors and employees wish you and your families a happy holiday season. We are thankful for your support throughout the year and look forward to working together as another new year arrives!



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North Dakota kids love their sleds. The longer the hill, the better. Plus, it's great if someone takes you back to the top for another run!

Wing's sled park is new adventure

BY WES ENGBRECHT

Following a long career as a Capital Electric Cooperative lineworker, Wing's Bob Hanson is making news in the winter adventure world. Hanson's idea of a winter sled park near Wing has become a reality.

For many North Dakotans, winter is not a favorite season. It's cold, icy, snow-covered and lasts a few months longer than it should. What can make it more palatable? How about some winter fun watching your kids, or participating yourself if you are brave enough, as they speed down a snowy hill with a slippery sled? Clark Griswold would be proud!

"I watched a group of kids, along with an adult, enjoying a smooth ride in their sleds, and it sparked the first steps in a plan to bring the experience to everyone," Hanson explains.

That group of sledders coined the name, "Gobbler's Knob," for the area, which reflected their natural connection with the hill. The name stuck, evident by the welcome sign at the top.

"I was taking a huge step into the unknown on this project," Hanson says. "As far as I knew, nothing like this has been tried in our area. I decided I would let the kids set the tone. Other than sledding, they were making snow angels. That's when I knew it had to be done."

"The sledding area is built on a two-tiered hill. The hill is long, approximately 280 yards, but not too



The peak of the sledding hill marks the beginning of a great day of sledding on Gobbler's Knob.



Bob Hanson is preparing to launch his new business, the Wing Snow Sled Park, just a few miles west of Wing.

steep. Sledders will conserve energy as they will be transported back up the hill as I pull them on large sleds behind my snowmobile," Hanson explains. The shuttling process will begin at Hanson's Willow Springs Ranch.

As an added feature, Hanson has finished a warming house for sledders, which can also be used for birthday parties and other events. It has space for up to 12 kids, or a few less if adults join the party.

The park is located on Bob and Rosemary Hanson's property 8 miles west of Wing and approximately 40 miles from Bismarck. Bob has been promoting the attraction around a wide area, including rural towns, Bismarck and Mandan.

As part of the promotion process, Bob has been sharing contact cards with the phone number and website address (www.wingsnowsledpark.com). He will be placing posters in area schools as well, hoping kids take the information home to their parents. Each sledder will need a signed waiver to enjoy that first run.

"I have been asking Bismarck people I meet if they would be willing to drive 40 miles to enjoy a great day of sledding. I have had only one person say they wouldn't. I take that as a promising response, as it appears that interest is heavy," he says.

Bob values safety above all, just like he did during his years at Capital Electric. He will have adults test the sledding hill several times to ensure there aren't any inherent pitfalls along the way. Having it safe for all ages will be a top priority. Safety helmets are available for rental if needed.

"At Wing's Snow Sled Park, we provide groomed runs for a great winter sledding experience for all ages and to enjoy the great outdoors during the long winter months in North Dakota. The Wilton Lions Club sponsors all events at the park, so without them it wouldn't have happened," he says.



The warming house is a welcome place for a comfortable break from the cold. It's also a perfect place for a birthday party, as it has space for up to 12 kids. It even has a superhero theme!



Bob Hanson has manufactured trailers to haul multiple sleds up the hill to ensure efficient use of sledders' time. He finds equipment and parts from sources around the area and transforms them to meet his needs.

The park is only open on weekends, and appointments are required. Four paid sledders are needed for a valid appointment. Enjoy sledding the area hill for \$25 per hour per person. Kids under 5 years old ride for free with a paid adult. Only cash or checks are accepted. Call Bob at 701-226-5406 or email hansbek@bektel.com for your reservation. ☎



For many, a favorite holiday memory always brings a smile. Capital Electric Cooperative's directors, who serve the co-op members throughout the year, were asked, "What is your favorite holiday memory, and how did it make you feel?"

Kyle Tschosik: The Flexible Flyer

I grew up on a dairy farm northeast of Strasburg. The Christmas holiday season was filled with hard work, but we also had time for fun. My brother, Bruce, was only a year older than me, so we did everything together. We also shared one gift at Christmas, and it was usually a nice one!

When I was 8 years old, we received the gift of a lifetime, a Flexible Flyer sled, and we needed a prime location to use it to the fullest.

As dairy farmers, we washed the equipment after every milking. In the winter, we dumped the dirty water outside. The water ran almost to the house and created a perfect sheet of ice for us to try the new sled. We continued to wear that sled out over several winters. It was the best Christmas gift ever!

Deon Vilhauer: German delight

December brings fond memories, most of which circle around the holidays and our extended family.

At Christmas, we gathered in Ashley with my mom's side of the family. We spent time during the day driving our John Deere snowmobiles and having the kind of fun that cousins do. In the evening, we had supper at the home of my grandparents, George and Alma Rueb.

It was so hot in their house for the big meal, because Grandma spent all day preparing food. She did the cooking and baking in a woodstove. The meal consisted of Grandma's special hotdish, German potpie, halupsi (cabbage rolls), homemade pickles and beets, and a few different varieties of kuchen.

The holidays were a special time for us all!

Dwight Wrangham: Family times

I was 10th in a family of 11 kids. Some of my brothers and sisters had children who were older than me. It was strange being an uncle to those kids. We would have a large gathering at Christmas, with most of the family coming home.

Between our indoor and outdoor activities, the

holidays were the source of so many great memories. The wonderful holiday meal and opening the gifts were the highlights of the season!

Bret Weiland: A candlelight Christmas

Our tradition at Christmas was unique and special to our entire family. It revolved around candles, which are an important part of any Christmas holiday.

We had a candelabra, which held candles for all of us. Our grandparents' candle was in the center, our mom's and her siblings' candles were placed beside theirs, and the grandchildren's candles circled the rest. The color of our candles was determined by our birthstone color.

The lighting process began with our grandparents lighting their candle. Our mom, aunts and uncles, in birth order, then lit their candles from that one. The grandchildren then lit their candles from their parents' candles. Then, we all stood to enjoy the light they brought to our lives.

This tradition will continue to be my best holiday memory!

Sara Vollmer: Through children's eyes

My favorite holiday memory comes from the joy of having small children and the excitement and fun they bring to the Christmas season. Watching the holiday season through their eyes, from church programs to Christmas morning, makes the holidays special. As children, they always made sure their animals would also get gifts of snacks on Christmas Day as well.

Lyndon Anderson: One-room school

A holiday memory I have is when I went to a one-room school on our family farm near Baldwin in the late 1960s. Every year, we had a Christmas program in mid-December.

As families arrived at the school, it didn't take long to fill the small room with grandparents, parents, brothers and sisters, with many huddling around the stove until the building warmed.

Soon, the program started. We sang songs and each student recited a Christmas poem. We also had a gift exchange, which we looked forward to the most. During the remainder of the evening, we ate lots of Christmas goodies, visited and played. Soon, we all headed home, having created another memory.

Dave Charles: Military memories

My favorite non-religious holiday is the Fourth of July. My father was a disabled World War II veteran. Growing up, I helped with the annual Veterans of Foreign Wars fireworks stand in Jamestown.

In the 1960s, the most memorable aspect of the

holiday was hearing the veterans talk to each other at the fireworks stand about their war experiences. At that time, they were in their 40s and 50s. They were our neighbors, teachers, mailmen, railroad workers and farmers.

Their stories about Pearl Harbor, North Africa, B-17 pilots being shot down and held in a German POW camp, D-Day and the Battle of the Bulge were intriguing to me. I was a "mouse in the corner," hearing stories most others probably never heard because you had to be there.

We celebrated with a blast of patriotic fireworks as they talked about their liberation of Europe and Asia. I loved it!

Greg Dehne: Uncle Elmer's dog

My Christmas memories are all about my immediate family. The Dehne family was from Jamestown, and my dad had two brothers and one sister. My family members lived across the state, so the obvious holiday meeting choice was Jamestown, where Dorothy, dad's sister, lived. All my grandparents lived in Jamestown. My Uncle Elmer, who was married to Dorothy, was especially fond of his dog, which was the meanest little dog I have ever met.

One Christmas, I was informed by my parents Uncle Elmer's dog had died, which was sad, but true. As I descended into the basement to play billiards with my cousins, I turned to the fireplace mantle and jumped out of my pants, as the little dog was staring at me right next to my nose. As I gathered my wits, I realized Uncle Elmer had stuffed his beloved Chihuahua for remembrance and placed him on the fireplace mantle for all to see.

We had many great holiday gatherings in Jamestown, and I remember how, even as a young boy, I was lucky to be from North Dakota and be able to celebrate the Christmas holidays with my family and friends. I hope your holidays this year are blessed with family and friends!

Kayla Pulvermacher: Family traditions

The little traditions and the people, especially my grandparents, hold the most memories for me. My Grandpa Richard crawling on the floor and playing with my baby brother's gifts. My Grandma Patty avoiding every camera in sight. My Grandpa Gary watching "A Christmas Story" for days on end. My memories of my Grandma Lee have gotten fuzzy, but her warmth is something I won't forget. And our beloved bonus Grandma "GiGi" Alice continues to go above and beyond to make the holidays special. As I get older, I strive to make memories for my kiddos as special as they did. ☺

Preparation leads to reliability

BY WES ENGBRECHT



The inspection process identifies the priority replacement poles by checking the core beneath the ground.

As winter begins to dominate the weather forecast, Capital Electric Cooperative lineworkers hope for the best, but plan for the worst. Over the last two winters, they have seen both. But weather can damage our system during any season.

For an electric cooperative, reliability is of paramount importance, as co-op members enjoy a steady stream of power to keep things humming at home. Since winter conditions require the most planning and the best equipment, the months leading to it are vital.

"This time of year, we bring a pole testing contractor to test approximately 2,000 poles. They perform what amounts to core testing to see what's happening on the inside of each pole," System Supervisor Lance Diebold says.

Once the poles are inspected, the ones suggested for replacement are put into two categories – rejected and priority poles. Capital Electric ensures all poles identified in either batch will be replaced. This year, the inspectors rated 25 poles as priority and another 75 poles as rejects to be replaced.

"The guys have been replacing poles this past month and are down to two priority poles remaining. Some of the most important ones are yard poles, as they have transformers, meter sockets and secondary wires attached. These are very difficult to replace in the middle of winter," Diebold says.

In addition to the pole testing, lineworkers inspect half of the overhead lines each year. This process ensures all lines meet our requirements and will hold up during wind and ice storms.

As you drive down the roads in Burleigh and Sheridan counties, take note of the poles and lines and know they will always be in the best possible condition for optimum reliability. ⚡



Capital Electric Cooperative offers student scholarship

Capital Electric Cooperative is offering a \$1,000 student scholarship, in partnership with Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

To qualify for the scholarship, students must be enrolled or planning to enroll in a full-time undergraduate or graduate course of study at an accredited two-year or four-year college, university or vocational/technical school. Their parent(s) or guardian(s) must be members of Capital Electric.

Our cooperative will assemble a panel of impartial judges to review all applications. The judges will select the winning application based on academic performance, potential to succeed, leadership and participation in school and community activities, honors, a statement of education and career goals, work experience and an outside referral. The scholarship will be awarded without regard to other awards, loans or financial assistance the applicant may have obtained.

Application forms may be downloaded at www.capitalelec.com or picked up at co-op headquarters at 7401 Yukon Drive in Bismarck. **Applications need to be completed and returned to Capital Electric on or before Monday, Feb. 17, 2025.**

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JUNE 15-21, 2025

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Join us on the adventure of a lifetime. On the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, you'll do it all. You'll explore monuments and museums, meet with members of Congress and get an up-close look at where our country's laws are crafted. You'll stand on the Gettysburg Battlefield, walk the halls of George Washington's iconic 18th-century mansion and witness ceremonies honoring the men and women who fought in uniform for this great nation. For one jam-packed week, you'll be immersed in the cooperative spirit that built and sustains our great nation. And **all expenses are paid** by your local electric cooperative!

Yeah, Youth Tour hits different.

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.

Essay question:

Why is it important to be involved in your community, and how does that prepare you to be a future leader?

The application deadline is Jan. 17, 2025.

Email entries to Wes Engbrecht at wese@capitalelec.com or mail a hard copy to: Youth Tour Essay Contest, 7401 Yukon Drive, Bismarck, ND, 58503.

Questions? Please contact Wes Engbrecht, Capital Electric, at 701-223-1513 during regular business hours.



Learn more at
ndyouthtour.com

The regular meeting of the board of directors of Capital Electric Cooperative was held Friday, Oct. 25. The meeting was held in person at Capital Electric, 7401 Yukon Drive, Bismarck.

Also present were: Manager Paul Fitterer, Business Manager Luke Steen, Manager of Engineering Greg Owen, Operations Manager Jeff Holzer, 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 Dave Charles and Sara Vollmer reviewed the September 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 September financial and statistical report to the board.

Revenue was ahead of the budgeted amount for September as \$3,889,150 was generated in comparison with the budgeted figure of \$3,622,840 (favorable variance of \$266,310 or 7.4%).

Capital Electric's September net load factor was ahead of the budgeted value by 6.75%.

The operating margin for September was \$-118,460, which was ahead of the budgeted amount of \$-319,187. The total margin for September was \$-89,567, which was ahead of the budgeted amount of \$-301,149.

Capital Electric began billing 29 new services in September. This brings active services to 22,464 versus 22,155 at this time last year, or a net increase of 309 accounts over the most recent 12 months.

The cash flow statement

was reviewed.

Estate Retirements: Three estate retirements totaling \$1,587.27 were approved for payment.

Revenue Deferral Resolution: The board authorized the resolution on the deferred revenue plan to the Rural Utilities Service as presented.

Write-offs: Third quarter write-offs totaling \$6,883 were approved. The total 12-month write-offs are \$25,840.

Operations Report: Holzer reviewed the written report from the operations department. Holzer reported annual pole testing is 90% complete, transformers have been set and primary cable is in at the Fleet Farm location, and crews continue to trim trees and clear rights of way systemwide.

Safety Report: The safety report was reviewed. There were no lost-time accidents since the last board meeting. A fall safety coordinators meeting was held and included topics on N.D. Department of Transportation rules of the road, the Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program and a Bismarck State College line school update. A safety instructor with the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC) conducted field observations in October. Without objection, the safety report was approved.

Engineering Services Report: Owen reviewed the written report from engineering services. Twenty-two work orders were completed in September. Owen reported on ongoing and upcoming projects, including the completion of the single-phase overhead line to underground conversion along River Road, preliminary easement work for the Brownsville overhead line to underground conversion project, and completion of the line extension to Central Power Electric Cooperative's outpost.

Energy Services: Schaffner reviewed the energy services report. Sixty service orders were completed in September. Schaffner reported on

attendance at Basin Electric Power Cooperative's energy audit training, NDAREC's N.D. energy efficiency programs meeting and installation of load controller changeouts in the system.

Communications and IT:

Engbrecht reviewed the communications and IT report. Engbrecht reported on meetings with local legislators, sponsoring the soil conservation's tree care award and installation of new network equipment at the Wing outpost.

2025 budget: Steen reviewed the 2025 budget and no action was taken.

Basin Electric: Fitterer reported on Basin Electric matters.

Central Power Electric: Charles reported on the October board meeting.

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

NDAREC: Deon Vilhauer reported on the October board meeting. ☺

CAPITAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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