



# Capital Electric COOPERATIVE

## JANUARY 2025

Kerby Hausauer, center, is presented with the 2024 Tree Care Award from Burleigh County Soil Conservation District Chairman Cody Kologi, left, for planting and caring for the trees on his farmstead.



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*As the trees mature, they provide a scenic forefront to the farmstead.*

## HAUSAUER RECOGNIZED FOR DEDICATION TO TREES

# **Adding protection to beautifully restored farm**

BY WES ENGBRECHT

**W**e have heard it many times. "North Dakotans get things done." "North Dakotans are not afraid of real work." Our vast expanses of land need care and attention, and hardworking people are making it happen.

Capital Electric Cooperative has sponsored the Tree Care Award with the Burleigh County Soil Conservation District for many years. Landowners who invest significant time in the planting and care of trees on their property are considered for this annual award.

This year, Kerby Hausauer received the award for the significant number of trees he has planted on his property 6 miles northwest of Regan. Far beyond tree

planning and planting, Hausauer continues to make remarkable improvements to the land.

The land, which has been in the family for five generations, is precious to Hausauer and his family.

"My great-grandfather built the farm on the land, and it was passed down to us. While growing up, I helped my grandpa and my dad work the ground. I appreciated this opportunity and made a real connection with it," he explains.

Planting trees during a drought and subsequent dry winter was a challenge.

"It took a lot of hard work and dedication to ensure the trees survived. I dropped 22,000 gallons of water on them to keep them alive. I had help from others

*Iconic hardworking rural North Dakotans prepare to complete a project on rural soil.*



along the way, including immense support from Chad Thorson at the Soil Conservation Service. We worked as a team, planning what types of trees would do well in our climate. I pushed the boundaries in that area, as I did a ton of research on new and rare varieties. Chad always seemed to find a source for the varieties, and we made it happen," Hausauer says.

One of the varieties Hausauer chose was Princeton elm. This tree grows quickly to 80 to 90 feet with a 60-foot crown.

"This tree will last 150 years, and it needs significant square footage to grow," he says.

Thorson also found three varieties of honeyberries, a variety of maples, American hazelnuts, buffalo berries and many more.

Kerby, his wife, Melissa, and their children invested an unbelievable number of hours in the planning process, but they weren't done there. Kerby wanted to do much more.

His grandmother attended a one-room school built in 1894 in Estherville Township. In the 1960s, his grandparents moved the building to the farm, where it was used as a shop and storage building for antiques. Kerby then refurbished it and transformed it into a cabin.

"My wife and kids helped me with this project. We tore it down to the frame and started over, while

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*The planted trees provide protection for the farm from the south wind.*





Many hours went into the restoration of the one-room school building, resulting in a beautiful cabin.

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maintaining the integrity of the structure and some original pictures on the walls. We also added a school bell, an American flag, a well pump, a wood-burning stove, wind turbine, solar system and a ham radio system to make it an off-grid cabin if needed," he says.

Another unique idea came to Kerby when he found an old buggy in Gladstone. Many years ago, the buggy belonged to a doctor in Williston who used it to make rural house calls. In recent years, it has been featured in several parades in northwestern North Dakota.

"When I bought it, the buggy had rotted and needed restoration. It was yet another project I couldn't pass up," he says. After Kerby restored it as much as possible, he set it next to a Lonestar old-fashioned windmill and matching water tower. They built these structures from scratch with some help from a kit which included the windmill head.

Another passion for Kerby is the farm's garden. "I developed my garden by hauling in 70 tons of manure and working it into the soil. The garden will be approximately 6,000 square feet, and I hope to grow farmers market quality produce. In the past, I have been proud to grow giant pumpkins, and I will work those in as well. I held the state record for a time with a 660-pound pumpkin from a few years ago," he adds.

Kerby and his family put the time into the farm as a legacy to his kids and future generations, but the trees were the focus of the improvements.

"You can't have a beautiful farm without beautiful trees," Kerby says.

Some of their kids have moved away, but return to the farm to celebrate Independence Day with a big

fireworks display. They can enjoy the trees and every amazing feature added to the property.

"Someday, I hope my kids will build memories on this beautiful farm with their families. It's a true family venture and is revered by everyone," Kerby says.

"Early in this process while I imagined the result, my goal was to still be alive when they were mature so my family could enjoy them. I said, 'God, these are your trees, I will take care of them if you grow them.' He responded and we are all amazed at how fast they grew. When people ask how they grew so quickly, I tell them I never fertilized them, God grows them," he says.

Thank you, Kerby, for your hard work in making Burleigh County even more beautiful. You are a worthy recipient of the 2024 Tree Care Award! ☺



The inside of the cabin is completely furnished and ready to use.

# General manager reflects on 20 years



*Fitterer*

**M**anaging a business in today's world is both rewarding and challenging. Capital Electric Cooperative General Manager Paul Fitterer has been in management with the co-op for 20 years. He has been the general manager for the past nine years. Over that time, he has seen things

change considerably and worked hard to ensure those changes don't have a negative impact on our members.

Here are Paul's responses to some questions relating to his position as general manager:

## **Q. What's the best thing about working for Capital Electric?**

It would be hard to come to work every day without having very competent and hardworking employees who enjoy working at the co-op. Likewise, Capital Electric's mission of providing safe, reliable and affordable electricity to our members motivates me to ensure we are using the co-op's resources wisely.

## **Q. How has Capital Electric and the electric utility industry changed over the last 20 years?**

A significant amount of change has occurred in this industry, and this continues to be the case today. Technology has played a major role in the changes. Smart meters can now send instant information regarding usage and outages before a line crew needs to be involved. Lineworkers are using iPads to receive and document their work to increase efficiency. We have seen the advent of electric vehicles, and they continue to improve as time goes on. Likewise, the proliferation of power markets has added complexity, while new regulations on power plants have forced them to retire. Today, artificial intelligence, bitcoin and data centers require significant power. Our business has never been so complex, but that complexity leads to new opportunities for better service in the future.

## **Q. What are the most significant challenges in our industry as we move forward in an every-changing world?**

Challenges such as constantly changing regulations, fulfilling large power requirements and maintaining affordable rates keep us working daily to respond. In today's environment, federal regulations swing

back and forth, depending on the political party in office, making it difficult to site and build new power generation. At the same time, the demand for power is at an all-time high, creating inflationary pressures as utilities work to build and deliver new power generation. I worry about the cost pressures on our membership due to regulation and inflation as we move through this generation build cycle.

## **Q. What are you most proud of at Capital Electric?**

I'm most proud of being able to work for an electric cooperative owned and governed by its members. I'm proud of our 39 employees who provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity to 23,000 meters. I'm proud of Capital Electric's focus on reliability with an average uptime of 99.99%. I'm proud Capital Electric returned nearly \$16 million in capital credits over the last 10 years to current and former members. There are many more things to be proud of and that's what is great about working at an electric cooperative!

Capital Electric's members, board members and employees thank you, Paul, for your hard work and dedication to the cooperative! ☺

## **EMPLOYEE MILESTONES**



*Manager of Engineering  
Greg Owen  
5 years*



*Lineworker  
Tristen Schwartz  
5 years*



## Bergquist joins co-op

**W**ith a position open in Capital Electric Cooperative's engineering department, the co-op hired Tucker Bergquist as an engineering technician.

Bergquist is originally from the Wing area and has been working as a wind technician, handling wind turbine maintenance and repair.

"I enjoyed the wind turbine work, but it did get cold at the top of the towers in the winter," he says.

"Tucker is a great addition to Capital Electric. Having grown up in rural Burleigh County, he knows what service means to folks at the end of the line. His educational background and experience in maintaining wind energy systems makes Tucker a natural fit for the engineering technician role at Capital Electric, where he'll be maintaining and upgrading control system equipment for the cooperative," explains Manager of Engineering Greg Owen.

Bergquist earned his bachelor's degree in computer science from North Dakota State University in 2020. He graduated from Wing High School in 2015, where he played football and basketball, as well as being on the track and field team. In high school, Tucker spent a lot of time helping his grandfather at his farm west of Wing.

Bergquist's parents still live in the Wing area, and he has a brother in Regan and a sister who lives in Bismarck.

Capital Electric welcomes Bergquist to the team and we look forward to working with him as he serves our members. ☺

## 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](http://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.**

# ENTER YOUR YOUTH TOUR ERA



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**HONORING  
HEROES @ WWII  
MEMORIAL**



**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.

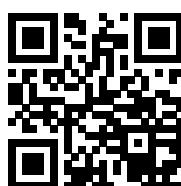
**Essay question:**

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](mailto: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](http://ndyouthtour.com)**

# Board minute excerpts NOV. 18, 2024

The regular meeting of the board of directors of Capital Electric Cooperative was held on Monday, Nov. 18, 2024. The meeting was held in person at Capital Electric, 7401 Yukon Drive, Bismarck. All directors were present at that time.

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

**Financial Review:** Prior to the board meeting, Directors Dwight Wrangham and Greg Dehne reviewed the October 2024 check register and expenditures. They advised all checks and expenditures were in order. The financials were approved.

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

**Business Department Report:** Steen presented the October 2024 financial and statistical report to the board.

Revenue was ahead of the budget for October as \$3,487,853 was generated in comparison with the budgeted figure of \$3,432,526 (favorable variance of \$55,327 or 1.6%).

Capital Electric's October net load factor was ahead of budget by 3.98%.

The operating margin for October was \$451,644, ahead of the budgeted amount of \$199,946. The total margin for October was \$458,717, which was ahead of the budgeted \$207,568.

Capital Electric began billing 17 new services in October, bringing our active services to 22,472 versus 22,195 at this time last year, or a net increase of 277 accounts over the last 12 months.

The cash flow statement was reviewed.

**Estate Retirements:** Following review of the financial condition of the cooperative and recommendation by management, it was authorized to retire one estate in the amount of \$1,682.07.

**Lincoln Lighting:** Discussion was held on the meeting with the city of Lincoln related to street lighting and no action was taken.

**Operations Report:** Holzer reviewed the written report from the operations department. Holzer reported crews worked to complete a new circuit at the Gibbs substation providing a new feed bringing power to the new Central Power Electric Cooperative outpost, poles identified for priority replacement have been changed out, monthly substation inspections were completed, and a bad regulator was identified in the East Bismarck substation.

**Safety Report:** The safety report was reviewed. There were no lost-time accidents since the last board meeting. North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC), Safety Instructor Brian Lakoduk performed field observations on Nov. 7, 2024. A Safety Committee meeting was held on Nov. 4, 2024. The safety report was approved.

**Engineering Services Report:** Owen reviewed the written report from engineering services. Twenty-two work orders were completed in October. Owen reported on ongoing and upcoming projects, including completion of the three-phase buildout in the Fleet Farm area, completion of numerous service lines and short primary line extension for new services, and work on Summit Point for single-phase distribution for initial residential buildout.

**Tower Site Property:** Following discussion, approval was given to authorize moving forward with negotiating and finalizing a purchase agreement for the sale of the Keever Butte parcel.

**Energy Services:** Schaffner reviewed the energy services report. Fifty-five service

orders were completed in October, which included load control transponder (LCT) changeouts. Schaffner reported continued work on LCT changeouts, work with the Burleigh-Morton County Detention Center and responding to inquiries related to new rate structures.

**Communications and IT:** Engbrecht reviewed the communications and IT report. Engbrecht reported on upcoming *North Dakota Living* local pages article, presentation of the Tree Care Award to Kerby Hausauer at the Burleigh County Soil Conservation District's annual meeting, and continued work to using multi-factor authentication methods for cybersecurity defense.

**2025 Budget:** Fitterer and Steen presented the 2025 budget and the board discussed. Following discussion, the 2025 budget was approved as presented.

**Strategic Plan:** Fitterer outlined the plan for implementing and completing items identified at the strategic planning session, including the progress for continued work to complete the items identified.

**Policies:** Steen presented the combined rate policies. The amendments and rescissions to the combined rate policies were approved as presented.

Steen presented the combined load control policies. The amendments and rescissions to the combined load control policies were approved as presented.

**Basin Electric Power Cooperative:**

Fitterer reported on Basin Electric matters.

**Central Power Electric:** Charles reported on Central Power Electric matters.

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

**NDAREC:** Vilhauer reported an update on NDAREC.

**National Information Solutions**

**Cooperative:** Fitterer reviewed the October board meeting. ☺

**CAPITAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**  
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