



# Capital Electric COOPERATIVE

## OCTOBER 2025

The 2025 Lincoln Days celebration kicked off with the annual parade, which keeps growing with more entries and more parade-goers. It's a fun-filled weekend for Lincoln and other area residents as they enjoy three days of exciting events.



PHOTO COURTESY OF LESLIE LIVENGOOD

### IN THIS ISSUE

- Lincoln celebration continues to grow
- A history of co-op service
- Luke Ellenbaum joins board
- New shoes for students
- Cody Homes, journeyman lineworker
- Youth Tour is back
- Board minutes



PHOTO COURTESY OF LESLIE LIVENGOOD

## Lincoln celebration brings people together

**B**ehind the parade and Lincoln Days weekend festivities lies a focused, hardworking team of community members who spend countless hours putting a plan together that draws residents of Lincoln and beyond.

From Friday, Aug. 15, through Sunday, Aug. 17, Lincoln Days attendees enjoyed a multitude of events. A kids color dash, an escape room, karaoke, the much-anticipated Saturday morning parade, food trucks, a vendor show and a touch-a-truck experience were included in the adventures.

"Lincoln Days was a huge success, with wonderful feedback from the community on a memorable weekend. Thanks to the hard work of the committee, volunteers and vendors, around 20 events over three days brought thousands of people together, and we're already excited for next year," says Leslie Livengood, who served on the planning committee.

An exciting addition to this year's downtown party was All Aces, a local rock and country band that has gained notoriety in our area.

"We were blown away by the energy of the crowd. This was our first appearance in Lincoln, and we weren't disappointed by the turnout. It was amazing," says lead singer Travis Sorch.

The residents of Lincoln and the surrounding rural areas are all highly valued Capital Electric Cooperative members.

"These are our people, and we appreciate the opportunity to serve them. When we are involved in the Lincoln Days parade, we see the smiles, we hear the positive comments, and it means a lot to us as their power provider," says Capital Electric Communications Manager Wes Engbrecht.

The city of Lincoln has grown significantly in recent years and expects to continue on that path in upcoming years. Capital Electric's committed to be a steady partner in this transformation and looks forward to our future together. ☐



Capital Electric Cooperative Directors **Dwight Wrangham**, left, and **Kyle Tschosik** after the parade, as families happily get loads of candy.



As a lifetime writer and editor, **Milt Vedvick** was closely tied to printed materials.

## Pioneer forged path for co-op magazine

BY WES ENGBRECHT

One of the long-lasting tenets of North Dakota's electric cooperatives is the work ethic of co-op leaders and employees through more than 80 years. Their vision and tireless work brought electricity to rural communities. Some names stand out from those early years, even though recognition wasn't important to them.

Between 1961 and 1980, Milt Vedvick, a native of Ray, wrote and edited the *North Dakota Rural Electric Magazine*, the predecessor to *North Dakota Living* that Capital Electric Cooperative members read today.

Vedvick served in the U.S. Army during World War II from 1941 to 1945. Following his military service, he set out to meet his educational goals.

As a 1949 graduate of the University of North Dakota's School of Journalism, Vedvick loved to write. And he was good at it. During college, he met and married his wife, Jeanette. Following graduation, he spent the first 12 years of his career writing for a couple of magazines in North Dakota and Minnesota. In 1961, he accepted the position with the *North Dakota Rural Electric Magazine*, which was established in 1954 by the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives.

During his co-op writing and editing career, Milt was awarded the coveted George W. Haggard Memorial Journalism Award six times. This honor was a product of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and was given to cooperative editors who earned the reputation of a steady, consistent and accurate cooperative journalist.

A significant change in messaging evolved during Milt's tenure with the magazine.

"The magazine has altered its editorial emphasis. In the early years, it encouraged more power use on farms. During the next 25 years, industry conditions forced a move to conservation of energy and its wise use for the benefit of rural North Dakotans," Milt pointed out in a 1979 article published in the magazine.

Some of our readers may remember the content from the early magazines. Much of it mirrors today's content. Stories and photos covered Capital Electric's lineworkers performing maintenance work. Others introduced the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour winners and shared family recipes in the Recipe Roundup. There were also stories reflecting more timely information, such as how to make your new kitchen all-electric and how to make your electric fans useful year-round.

Milt covered it all during those years. The co-op stories, member interviews, advertising, the jokes and the recipes were all his domain. This was truly the era of hard work, and Milt handled it well.

Milt's son and Capital Electric member, Bob Vedvick, shared details of his childhood during Milt's stint at the magazine.

"I was Dad's right-hand man. We traveled across the state together as he interviewed countless farmers and cooperative members for stories. He counted on me to carry his camera, which wasn't always easy for a boy my age," he says with a smile.

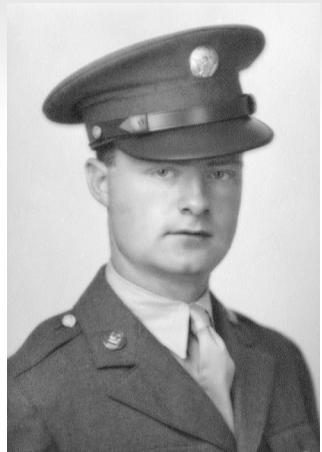
"There were times when Mom and Dad would take us three kids, which included my younger brother, Chuck, and my sister, Michelle, to the office with them as he wrote and she proofed the magazine. We settled in for a restless night's sleep on the conference room floor. I guess Mom didn't want us to stay home alone while they worked through the night," Bob says with a laugh.

As managing editor and advertising manager, Milt worked mostly alone to interview, write and publish the stories making up the pages.

"You will never see Dad's name as a story writer, as he didn't believe in taking credit for his work," Bob shares. Jeanette performed proofreading service on her own time, as she was not an employee.

Milt served North Dakota's cooperatives faithfully for most of his career and left a legacy of excellence and commitment to telling our stories, sharing industry information, and sharing his knowledge and experience with co-op members.

Milt died in Tucson, Ariz., in December 1990. He lived a full and fruitful life and has been and will be remembered by many. 



**Milt Vedvick**


**Manager's column . . .**
**Pole change-out program begins**

With the coming of Spring we begin to put into action our plans we have been formulating during the slack winter months. Our pole changeout program will be in full swing in a couple of weeks. This year we plan to changeout approximately 4500 defective poles that were inspected the past winter. As was the policy last year on the disposing of the defective poles once they are removed from the line, they become the property of the contractor and it is his responsibility to dispose of them as he sees fit. This arrangement enables the Cooperative to obtain a reasonable price from the contractor for changing these poles and saves the cooperative considerable time and expense in not having to bother with these old poles that are of no use to us in the future. If any member or land owner wishes to obtain any of these poles you should contact the contractor during the work.

Also, with Spring's arrival we solicit the help of any member on our system to please report anything unusual that

you may observe concerning our distribution lines; it may not appear too serious but regardless of its nature, report it to the office or one of our linemen. Things to look for are broken insulators, broken wire strands in the conductors, broken crossarms, broken guy wires, anchors that have pulled loose due to the spring thaw, leaning poles and wires hanging lower than usual. Our linemen try and inspect our lines periodically but it is almost impossible to cover the entire 1600 miles of lines so that is the reason we ask your help, so please report anything you may observe, it may eliminate an extensive outage.

The Board at their last meeting picked the 15th of June 1966 as the date of our Annual Meeting. It will be held in Bismarck this year so please mark your calendar to reserve that date as the day that you must set aside to exercise your responsibilities as owner of your electric cooperative.

**Wing Farm Institute**

Over 250 people attended the Burleigh County Farm institute held at Wing, N. D., on Wednesday, March 23.

The Burleigh County farm institute is sponsored by the Burleigh County Agricultural Improvement Association, and the Wing Lions club in cooperation with the County and State Extension service, and Board of County Commissioners.

The morning men's program featured Doc Hastings with the Midway Veterinary clinic, who spoke on Common livestock Husbandry problems; and Lee Mielke, the agricultural representative of the First National Bank, of Bismarck, who spoke on "Financing Farm Credit Needs". Lee pointed out that it is very necessary that good and accurate records are kept of your farming operation, in order to obtain the necessary financing.

The morning women's program featured Mrs. Marge Benesch, with the J. C. Penney Co. Her presentation was titled, "Decorating Trix for 1966".

A free noon lunch was provided by the Wing Merchants and businessmen, in cooperation with the Burleigh County Agriculture Improvement Association.

The Wing High School Band provided the afternoon's entertainment. These young people and their director are certainly to be congratulated on the quality of the music that they presented.

**(Pictures on Page 17)**

The farmer was standing by his barn when a pompous-looking stranger approached, and without a word of greeting, produced a card and brusquely announced: "I'm a government inspector fully entitled to inspect your farm with or without your consent."

A little later the farmer heard screams from his alfalfa patch where the inspector was being chased by a bull. Leaning over the gate as the inspector drew near, the farmer cried: "Show him your card, mister, show him your card!"

**Start Planning Now !!!**  
**To Attend**  
**CAPITAL ELECTRIC'S ANNUAL**  
**MEETING**  
**June 15 -- At Bismarck, N. Dak.**

# Ellenbaum joins board of directors

**F**ollowing Capital Electric Cooperative's 2025 annual meeting, two new directors have joined the board. One of the newly elected directors is Luke Ellenbaum, Bismarck, having made his first run for a board position.

Ellenbaum was raised in rural Minnesota, graduating from Frazee-Vergas High School in 1995. As a District 3 director, he lives north of Bismarck with his wife, Kelli, and three teenage daughters. His oldest daughter is in her third year of college.

Joining the Minnesota National Guard when he was 17 years old, he attended basic training the summer between his junior and senior years of high school and served with the Mechanized Infantry Unit out of Detroit Lakes.

"It was an interesting and character-building experience that also provided me with college aid through the GI bill," he says.

"I attended the Fergus Falls junior college in the fall, all for general studies. The following summer, I received my first introduction to the power distribution field, when I took a job for a utility pole inspection company. I would walk the line all day, digging a 2-foot-deep hole around the perimeter of each pole, for \$8 an hour. I was quite strong at 20 and could get far enough ahead of the inspection/backfill crew to offer a rest now and then. In the fall, I enrolled at NDSU (North Dakota State University) to study mechanical engineering. I graduated from NDSU in 2001 with a Bachelor of Science degree in mechanical engineering," he says.

In 2005, Luke moved to Bismarck, working for Montana-Dakota Utilities for six years as a gas supply engineer. He managed its load forecasting work, supporting daily gas nominations throughout the service area, supervisory control and data acquisition systems for interruptible customers, regulatory data requests and other duties. He took advantage of this period to gain his professional engineer registration. At this time, Luke also attended the University of Mary to earn his MBA.

In 2011, Luke accepted a job with URS, an engineering consulting company, becoming the anchor employee for a Bismarck startup office targeting oil and gas work. He completed the project manager training program, was seconded as a pipeline project manager for Enbridge and eventually became the Bakken area manager.

Luke made the decision in 2022 to step away from the engineering consulting business.

"It was hard to leave the camaraderie of the team I had built and led, but I had great confidence in my successor, so I made the jump," he says.

"The Capital Electric board position is not something I would have ever imagined myself signing up for. I would like to see members taking more interest in the



*The Ellenbaum family includes Luke and Kelli and their daughters, left to right, Bo, Cannon and Emerie.*

organization, at least taking a few minutes once a year to read the director candidate bios/platforms and vote," he says.

"Moving forward, I will be doing my best to understand the complex network of co-ops, their history, energy contracts, viewpoints and ideas that have led to the rate changes of recent years. I am likely a more disruptive director than the board has experienced in recent years, but my intentions are constructive. I welcome any District 3 member to contact me with thoughts and questions, if they understand there are different interests within our organization, and I am only one of nine directors for a single distribution co-op subject to several cascading larger upstream entities, which in turn are subject to the whim of politicians," he says.

Luke enjoys playing guitar, though he rarely performs in public anymore. He enjoys woodworking and has delved into the world of timber framing, which has led to forestry work.

"I stay busy maintaining our rural property, planting trees and forgeable plants, developing our small homestead and growing my collection of tools and implements of destruction. I spend time camping and bowhunting in the Badlands and I enjoy upland game, turkey, muzzleloader season and generally any hunting or fishing," he says.

Capital Electric welcomes Luke and his industry experience to our team of directors. ☈



Face-to-face contact from Shoes of Hope volunteers creates a personal connection with the students as they prepare for the upcoming school year.

## Shoes of Hope puts smiles on faces

Going to school is an exciting time for kids. Having a new pair of shoes makes it even better. The Shoes of Hope program continues to make a pair of new shoes available to students before they start the first day of school.

Parents register for this event by submitting an application that gives the name, age and shoe size for each child. New shoes that have been purchased throughout the year are assigned to the student. When they register, the parents know the shoes will fit and will be a style and color the child will be proud to wear.

Nita Jeromchek and Jeanne DeKrey, representing Legacy United Methodist Church, spend countless hours preparing.

"During the foot washing, volunteers see the same kids from year to year. One young lady specifically asked to be placed at the same station, because she liked the volunteer so much. One child mentioned they didn't want their feet washed, but then slowly slid his feet into the water with a big grin on his face. We all like to be pampered, and children love it as much as adults," Jeromchek says.

The new shoes represent a financial relief for the parents, and the kids find joy in receiving shoes for their first day of school. Caring for children is a rewarding experience for all of us, and these volunteers will continue to do it! ☺



Cody Homes

## Homes earns journeyman status

**A**n apprentice lineworker goes through an intense training program to attain journeyman status. This process is not easy and requires significant on-the-job training.

What happens when a Capital Electric Cooperative lineworker becomes a journeyman? At this point, the lineworker is qualified to work independently on our electrical system, operate heavy equipment, ensure safe practices are being met by the team and perform complex troubleshooting to make sure the system is operational.

Capital Electric lineworker Cody Homes has completed his apprenticeship training and was promoted to journeyman. Homes joined the operations department 2.5 years ago. Before coming to Capital Electric, he spent a summer at Northern Plains Electric Cooperative in Carrington.

Operations Manager Jeff Holzer considers Homes an asset to the co-op.

"Cody has a great work ethic and the skills needed to get the job done. We are happy to have him on the team," he says.

Capital Electric takes pride in our hardworking, highly qualified line crew. By adding Cody as a journeyman, we move up another notch in expertise and experience to maintain the level of reliability our members have come to expect.

Congratulations on this achievement, Cody. We know you will do the job well and keep the power on! ☺



# 1,800 students. 7 days. 1 unforgettable trip.

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.*

Learn more at [ndyouthtour.com](http://ndyouthtour.com).

## 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:

As member-owned organizations, electric cooperatives are always seeking new ways to engage their members. What are some ways electric cooperatives can better communicate and connect, especially with students and young adults?

The application deadline is Jan. 16, 2026.

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

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.



## Board minute excerpts AUG. 22

The regular meeting of the board of directors of Capital Electric Cooperative was held at 8 a.m. Friday, Aug. 22, at United Tribes Technical College.

**Also present were:** Manager Paul Fitterer, Business Manager Luke Steen, Engineering Manager 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 Deon Vilhauer and Greg Dehne reviewed the July 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 July financial and statistical report to the board.

Revenue was ahead of budget for July, as \$4,601,420 was generated in comparison with the budgeted figure of \$4,534,443 (favorable variance of \$66,977 or 1.5%).

Capital Electric's power costs were over budget for July by 3.1%.

The operating margin for July was -\$110,245, ahead of the budgeted amount of -\$174,027. The total margin for July was -\$102,309, which was ahead of the budgeted amount of -\$169,116.

Capital Electric began billing 28 new services in July, bringing our active services to 22,607 versus 22,421 at this time last year, or a net increase of 186 accounts over the last 12 months.

The cash flow statement was reviewed.

**Estate Retirements:** Following review of the financial condition of the cooperative, payment of capital credits to 21 member estates was approved.

**Operations Report:** Holzer reviewed the written report from the operations department. Holzer reported a three-phase line extension was completed for a bulk fuel plant in Menoken, completion of overhead to underground line conversion projects and

completion of monthly substation inspections.

**Safety Report:** There were no lost-time accidents. A field representative of Federated Insurance reviewed industry trends and Capital Electric's wildfire mitigation plan with the operations department. Without objection, the safety report was approved.

**Engineering Services Report:** Owen reviewed the written report from engineering services. Twenty-five work orders were completed in August. Owen reported on ongoing and upcoming projects, including continued coordination for the East Century Avenue and Sterling interchange road projects, completion of the Highway 36 overhead to underground crossing project.

**Rural Utilities Service (RUS) Form 219:** Owen reported on the completion of RUS 219 inventories 515 and 516, both of which were authorized.

**Township Franchise Agreements:** Service territory franchise agreements were approved.

**Utility Relocation Agreement:** Owen reported on the city of Bismarck's right-of-way utility relocation agreement for Century Avenue and 19th Street left-turn lanes and traffic signal project. It was approved to enter into the utility relocation agreement as presented.

**Property Update:** Owen reported on the status of closing on the 43rd Avenue property and an amendment to the closing date was requested. The board approved execution of the first amendment to the purchase agreement as presented.

**Energy Services:** Schaffner reviewed the energy services report. Schaffner reported on working with members to address billing and load control inquiries, work to visit all substations to perform yearly checks, maintenance updates and applications for distributed generation.

**Communications and IT:** Engbrecht reviewed the communications and IT report. Engbrecht reported on progress made on updating the website, plans for social media postings and the matching grant from CoBank and Basin Electric Power Cooperative has been approved for United Tribes Technical College and the Wing Fire Department.

**2026 Budget:** Steen reviewed preliminary 2026 budgets and no action was taken.

**Policies:** Schaffner presented a proposed draft modification to a policy for Energy Conservation and Demand Reduction Financing and no action was taken. Steen presented proposed modifications to the Distributed Energy Resource Rate Policy, which was approved as presented.

**Strategic Planning Update:** Fitterer reported an update on the status of achieving the stated goals from the strategic planning session.

**Basin Electric:** Fitterer reported on Basin Electric matters, including the recently held annual meeting, Basin Electric's large load program and 2026 rate increases.

**Central Power Electric Cooperative:** Dave Charles reported on Central Power matters and noted the Bismarck outpost is operational.

**North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC):** Vilhauer reported on NDAREC matters.

**National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA):**

Fitterer reported on the upcoming regional meeting. Director Kyle Tschosik was selected to fulfill the role as Capital Electric delegate for the Federated Insurance election that will take place at the regional meeting.

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

**Federated Election:** Fitterer reported a director position is open on the Federated board, and the vote was cast for David Sigloh of Burke-Divide Electric Cooperative.

**CoBank Candidates:** Fitterer reported on the CoBank board election, and the vote was cast for Robert (Mac) McLennan of Minnkota Power Cooperative.

**Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC) Election:** Fitterer reported on the CFC board election, and the vote was cast for Gary Fish.

**Mid-West Electric Consumers Association Annual Meeting:** Fitterer reported on the upcoming annual meeting and by consensus, Bret Weiland was selected as Capital Electric's delegate and Luke Ellenbaum as an alternate delegate. ☺

**CAPITAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**  
7401 Yukon Drive, Bismarck, ND 58503  
Website: [www.capitalelec.com](http://www.capitalelec.com)

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS:**

Deon Vilhauer, Pres.	Bismarck
Sara Vollmer, V. Pres.	.....Wing
Kyle Tschosik, Sec.-Treas.	Bismarck
Greg Dehne, Asst. Sec.-Treas.	Bismarck
Dwight Wrangham	Lincoln
Bret Weiland	Bismarck
Dave Charles	Bismarck
Whitford Dwyer	Bismarck
Luke Ellenbaum	Bismarck

**OFFICE HOURS:**

Monday-Friday: 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

Office phone: 701-223-1513

Toll-free: 888-223-1513

Pay-By-Phone: 1-877-853-5928

DAY—NIGHT—WEEKEND

TROUBLE CALL: 701-223-1513

Capital Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 