



# Capital Electric COOPERATIVE

## SEPTEMBER 2025

Retired Bismarck High School teacher Jack Noble taught social studies and history at Bismarck for 17 years. Capital Electric Cooperative features a teacher who was dedicated to his students and the career path he chose many years ago.



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# Retired teacher reflects on rewarding career

BY WES ENGBRECHT



**T**he start of a new school year has arrived! Friends share their vast array of summer stories, while reviewing schedules and anxiously searching for their new classrooms. Until they get seated and meet the instructor for their first class, the butterflies remain.

For 35 years, including 18 years at Wachter Middle School and 17 years at Bismarck High School (BHS), one of their teachers was Jack Noble, who taught his students history and social studies. However, they learned about life in addition to facts.

Noble loved his role at the school, as he helped form the lives and futures of his students.

"I was told by a former colleague that if you start each class by making your students smile, you will have them eating out of the palm of your hand, and boy was he right," Noble says.

Even though Noble started each day with humor, he demonstrated appropriate discipline as needed.

"I didn't tolerate disrespect from students toward me or each other. Discipline is a vital aspect of a student's life following graduation as they move into the working world. If I could help in that regard, it was a win," he says.

During the school year, Noble kept a rolling two-week schedule in the classroom, informing students of the upcoming schedule of topics. They then knew when they could look forward to a test covering the information presented. True or false, multiple choice and essay questions were standard, and if they paid attention and studied, it would be easy.

"I would give them the answers to the essay questions along the way, so there was no reason for them to get those wrong," Noble explains.

Noble spent a lot of time contemplating after a school day.

"Every day, I walked to and from school, which gave me an opportunity to reflect on the day and plan for the next. If I felt I was a little too harsh on a student in front of the class, I would apologize to him or her in front of the class the next day. It was important for me to show respect for them, as that's what I expected in return," he says.

As exciting as a career in education can be, there comes a time when a teacher stows away the volumes of teaching materials and years of memories.

"Walking away from the hustle and bustle of the school and the steady and fulfilling student interaction was the challenging part of retirement," Noble says. But he was able to look back through the years, reminiscing on the good and bad times, knowing he did his part in making it the best it could be.

Following his retirement, Noble agreed to substitute teach at Century High School and BHS, which he did for nine years. This role gave him the opportunity to continue teaching at a measured pace and slide into retirement slowly. And he continued to learn from the full-time teachers.

"I thought to myself, 'That is something I could have used while I was teaching full time,'" he says.

Today, Noble continues teaching via Sunday school. "Every day before school, I pray for my students,

knowing their success would come from the Lord. If they had problems with school or at home, I would focus my prayers on those issues," he says. Noble is also currently volunteering at the N.D. State Penitentiary.

Jack and his wife, Helen, have been married 50 years. They have shared their lives lovingly in so many ways, including traveling across the country to enjoy its beauty. They spend as much time as possible in Wisconsin, visiting their daughter and two grandchildren.

As a Capital Electric Cooperative member, Jack stays in tune with his co-op by reading *North Dakota Living* each month. He is a longtime community member we should emulate and thank for his dedication to providing a solid foundation to the students who were fortunate enough to find themselves in his class. On behalf of those students and his fellow teachers, thank you, Mr. Noble.

For those students who are getting settled into another year of learning, remember the lessons your teachers are instilling. Be respectful, study hard and appreciate life while you are still young. Enjoy your year! ☺





**Whit Dwyer** and his wife, **LaDonna**, enjoy a Caribbean vacation with their grandchildren, **Nevin** and **Nevaeh**.

## NEW BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: **Whitford Dwyer**

BY WES ENGBRECHT

**C**apital Electric Cooperative is proud to welcome Whitford "Whit" Dwyer to its board of directors, representing District 1. Dwyer was elected during the co-op's 79th annual meeting June 10, marking his first run for a board seat and his continued commitment to community service.

A Capital Electric member since 2002, Dwyer began engaging more deeply with the cooperative in 2024, when he joined its Member Advisory Committee. That experience sparked his interest in board service.

"I've been a lifelong co-op member," he says. "I try to stay in tune with what's happening – new construction, rates, community involvement. I want to be part of shaping the future."

Whit and his wife, LaDonna, reside in south Bismarck, where they enjoy an active, family-centered lifestyle. The couple shares a deep entrepreneurial spirit and a long history of community involvement. In 1981, they opened Dwyer's Steakhouse in Parshall, which they successfully operated for 15 years. Known for hand-cut steaks, a standout salad bar and a wildly popular potato salad, the restaurant became a local favorite and community hub.

"We were open from 4 p.m. to 2 a.m. to serve the late-night crowd," Whit recalls. "It was hard work, but we were proud of what we built."

During their time in Parshall, a close-knit town of just over 1,200 residents, Whit served on the Mountrail County Economic Development Council, building strong ties with local residents and contributing to the town's growth and resilience.

Whit's public service also extends to the military. After enlisting in the N.D. Army National Guard in 1977 while still in high school, he went on to serve a distinguished 45-year career, retiring in 2022 as a chief warrant officer 5. His military tenure included installations in Minot, Bismarck, Devils Lake and eventually Arlington, Va., where he served as senior maintenance warrant officer with the National Guard Bureau. Along the way, he held various leadership roles, including deputy state maintenance officer for the N.D. Army National Guard.

In addition to his military and business experience, Whit operated Rural Spraying Services from 2013 to 2020, working as a certified commercial and residential pesticide applicator.

Today, Whit and LaDonna enjoy retirement together, often spending time with their two sons, Matthew and Mitchel, now in their 40s, and their cherished grandson and granddaughter. Their hobbies include camping, boating, golfing and skiing, as they enjoy what Whit calls "the good life."

With his diverse background in leadership, operations and community engagement, Whit brings valuable experience and perspective to Capital Electric. The cooperative looks forward to his contributions as a board member and his ongoing dedication to serving fellow members. ☈





CAVES owner **Ron Stotz** works with residential customers to set up smart-home technology.

## THE FUTURE IS SMART: Automation transforms everyday living

**P**icture this: You walk through your front door and with a simple voice command, the lights brighten, your favorite music fills the air and the temperature adjusts to your preferred setting. It may sound like a scene from "The Jetsons," but with today's smart-home technologies, it can be a reality.

Smart homes are no longer a futuristic dream – the technology has arrived, and it's revolutionizing modern living. From smart thermostats that adapt to your routine to security cameras that keep a watchful eye while you're away, these innovations offer unmatched convenience, entertainment and peace of mind.

### Convenience at your fingertips

Convenience is one of the main reasons homeowners invest in smart-home technology. With automation at their fingertips, homeowners can control their environment with ease, making life more comfortable and stress-free.

For many, a smart thermostat is their introduction to smart-home technology. One of the easiest and most

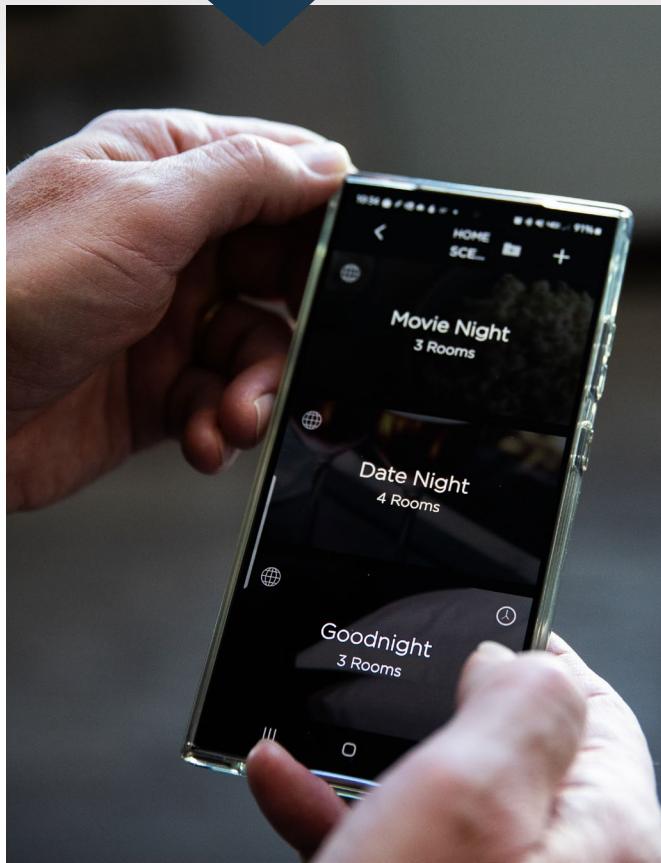
practical upgrades, smart thermostats can learn user patterns and automatically adjust temperatures, ensuring optimum comfort and energy efficiency. Remote access allows users to monitor and adjust settings from anywhere.

Smart lighting is another popular choice. With automation, lights can be scheduled to turn on and off automatically, providing hands-free convenience that can be customized to fit individual needs.

"We have a customer whose kids always leave the lights on," says Ron Stotz, owner of CAVES, a North Dakota business specializing in smart-home technology. "We installed a light control system for her. She has a 'good night' button on her phone. When she presses it, the lights begin to slowly fade until they're turned off. That's her signal for her kids to go to bed."

Smart lighting can also regulate your internal clock. Circadian lighting mimics natural sunlight changes throughout the day. Using bright, blue-enriched light helps boost energy and focus, improving productivity. As the day progresses, warmer, dimmer tones promote

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relaxation and prepare the body for restful sleep. By aligning with our natural rhythms, circadian lighting can enhance mood, reduce stress and optimize overall well-being, making it a powerful tool for both work and home environments.

Smart-home technology can also help people with disabilities live more independently. Voice-activated controls give users greater control over their environment, allowing them to adjust lighting, unlock doors and control entertainment systems with ease.

### Enhanced security and peace of mind

Security systems have evolved significantly. Today's systems incorporate AI-powered analytics that can differentiate between people, animals and vehicles. Users can set specific zones to monitor activity and receive instant notifications when motion is detected, providing real-time insights and remote monitoring.

Smart door locks add an extra layer of protection by allowing homeowners to assign unique access codes to family members or guests, eliminating the need for physical keys.

"We have parents who don't want to have their kids responsible for a key. With smart locks, they can give them a code, so they can let themselves in after school," Stotz says.

With the ability to lock or unlock doors remotely via a

smartphone, users can ensure their home is secure even when they are not there.

Video doorbells complement smart locks and security cameras, allowing homeowners to see and communicate with visitors from their phone. When paired with a smart lock, users can unlock the door remotely, allowing delivery drivers to place packages inside a home or garage.

### Entertainment tailored to your lifestyle

Smart-home entertainment systems bring the ultimate convenience and immersive experience to any living space. From high-definition home theaters with surround sound to in-home audio systems that let you stream music in every room; smart technology takes entertainment to the next level.

"We installed a motorized TV in a backyard. A customer wanted an outdoor TV that motorized out of a wall, so he could watch TV in his swimming pool. We did landscape speakers all the way through, so he had a full sound system," Stotz says.

This level of customization shows how smart entertainment systems can transform any space, indoors or outdoors. Whether you're a music lover, sports fan or cinephile, smart-home technology can elevate your experience.

### Energy efficiency made easy

Smart technologies can also enhance energy efficiency by optimizing how and when devices use power. Take lighting, for example.

"We can program each dimmer to 85%. Your eyes can't see a difference, but over time, you'll be able to save some energy," Stotz says.

Even window blinds are getting smart. Smart systems, like Neutron, automatically adjust blinds based on sunlight, temperature and time of day. By closing blinds during peak sunlight hours in the summer, they reduce heat buildup, lowering the need for air conditioning. In colder months, they open to let in natural warmth, reducing heating costs. These automated adjustments optimize indoor temperatures naturally, cutting down on energy consumption while maintaining comfort.

### A smarter future

Smart-home technology continues to advance, making everyday tasks easier and enhancing security measures. Whether upgrading one room at a time or fully integrating an entire house, homeowners can customize their systems to fit their unique needs. With the perfect balance of convenience, entertainment and security, smart-home technology is shaping the future of modern living.

**CAVES** is a North Dakota company that specializes in home technology and entertainment. It has locations in Bismarck, Dickinson and Minot. For more information, visit [cavesnd.com](http://cavesnd.com).

# Summer temps result in record high demand

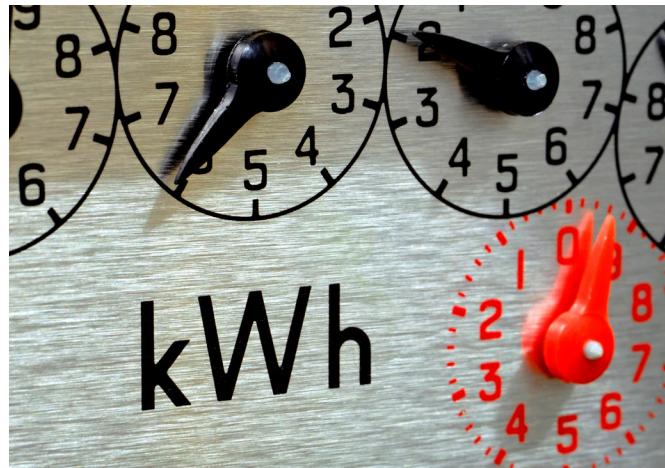
**N**orth Dakota. The land of beautiful prairies, lakes and farmland. It's also the land of extreme weather.

Like everyone, North Dakotans enjoy their comfort. A pleasant atmosphere in our indoor spaces keeps us happy. We expect to avoid the outdoor weather challenges, and Capital Electric Cooperative does its best to make that a reality.

North Dakota's weather is unpredictable and sometimes more intense than expected. This summer, we reached an all-time high in power usage, also known as demand. This elevated demand has a way of taxing our electric system to the highest level.

Even with high usage numbers this summer, we experienced no outages due to system overloads, as we have focused on planning and building a reliable power-providing network. Even when the damaging winds resulted in lost power across our service area, our system planning made it possible to limit the outage times.

One of the ways we have remained on top of providing reliable power is to communicate with our electric meters using a cellular network. Constant data visibility is vital to maintain the most efficient and effective system possible. The conversion of overhead lines to underground lines also increases reliability. We install approximately 25 miles of underground each year.



It takes experience and expertise to keep the system working well. Sound design, construction and maintenance are necessary to bolster reliability to meet ever-increasing demand. The growth in our system has been steady over the past several years.

Capital Electric will continue to utilize the newest technology to keep providing steady power to our members, and we appreciate your support and cooperation as we move into the future. ☺

## We want your story ideas!

BY WES ENGBRECHT, MANAGER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND IT

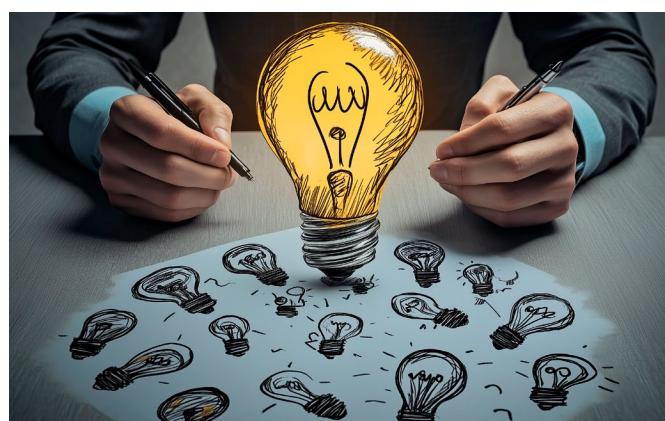
**A**s we go through months and years of providing you with co-op information in Capital Electric Cooperative's *North Dakota Living* local pages, we are always considering the stories we can include, such as member interviews, updates regarding lineworker projects and storm responses, community projects and more. We receive good story ideas from members along the way, and we welcome those ideas.

As Capital Electric members, you are part of the co-op family. As employees of the co-op, we experience positive interactions with many of you as we work to ensure we are doing the best we can.

If you have a story idea or would just like to talk about something that may be of interest, I would love to hear from you. I may not always be able to accommodate a story idea, as we have information we must include in each issue, but I am open to listening to your ideas. You see my name in many of our magazine articles, and many would say they see my face on the pages quite a bit as well.

If you would like to connect with me, please call 701-712-7923 or email me at [wese@capitalelec.com](mailto:wese@capitalelec.com).

I look forward to hearing from you and getting to know you, our members, better. ☺



## Board minute excerpts **JULY 21**

The regular meeting of the board of directors of Capital Electric Cooperative was held on Monday, July 21, in person at the cooperative. All directors were present.

**Also present were:** Manager Paul Fitterer, Business Manager Luke Steen, Engineering Services 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 Dwight Wrangham and Bret Weiland reviewed the June 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 June financial and statistical report to the board.

Revenue was behind budget for June, as \$3,947,855 was generated in comparison with the budgeted figure of \$4,128,830 (unfavorable variance of \$180,975 or 4.4%).

Capital Electric's June power costs were under budget for June by 3.6%.

The operating margin for June was \$-181,647, ahead of the budgeted amount of \$-248,318. The total margin for June was \$37,239, which was behind the budgeted \$319,683.

Capital Electric began billing 37 new services in June, bringing our active services to 22,586 versus 22,357 at this time last year, or a net increase of 229 accounts over the last 12 months.

The cash flow statement

was reviewed.

**Quarterly Write-Offs:** After discussion, the quarterly write-offs totaling \$8,973.85 were approved.

**Estate Retirements:** Following review of the financial condition of the cooperative and recommendation by management, three estate retirements totaling \$2,068.64 were approved.

**Rural Utilities Service (RUS) Form 87:** Steen reported on the need to update the board officers for RUS Form 87. Authorization was made to update the current board officers.

**CoBank Incumbency Certificate:** Steen reported on the need to update the board officers for the CoBank Incumbency Certificate. Authorization was made for completion of the form to update the current board officers.

**Operations Report:** Holzer reviewed the written report from the operations department. Holzer reported an underground line was energized and an eight-pole line was retired in the Briardale subdivision, 2025 pole testing has been completed after testing 2,163 poles and identifying 20 poles as rejects, and the completion of the conversion of overhead line to underground line at the Brownsville subdivision.

**Safety Report:** There have been no lost-time accidents since the last board meeting. The North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC) safety team held a Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program audit on June 30, meeting crews in the field and inspecting the Bismarck and Wing facilities. The safety report was approved.

**Engineering Services Report:**

Owen reviewed the written report from engineering services. Thirty-two work orders were completed in July. Owen reported on ongoing and upcoming projects, including

conversion of overhead to underground line in the Imperial Valley subdivision, commencement of converting overhead line to underground line along Highway 36, and an update on the status of the sale of Capital Electric property on 43rd Avenue.

**Township Agreements:** Owen reported on township agreements.

**Energy Services:** Schaffner reviewed the energy services report. Thirty service orders were completed in June. Schaffner reported on efforts to answer rate and billing questions, the completion of the LCT changeout project and the Safety Committee meeting.

**Communications and IT:** Engbrecht reviewed the communications and IT report. Engbrecht reported on work to update the website, various community outreach events and efforts to continually improve network security.

**Basin Electric Power Cooperative:** Fitterer reported on Basin Electric matters, including the upcoming annual meeting.

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

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

**NDAREC:** Vilhauer reported on the July board meeting.

**National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA):** Fitterer reported on resolutions for five amendments that will be voted on at the upcoming regional meeting. Fitterer reported on the need to select a board member to represent Capital Electric at the NRECA director election in October and by consensus Director Greg Dehne was selected as the delegate and Kyle Tschosik selected as an alternate. ☺

### CAPITAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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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

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