



# Capital Electric

COOPERATIVE

MARCH 2026

The old white barn on the original homestead of Albert and Helga Holden is located south of Wilton on Highway 83. Their great-grandson, Ric Holden, shares a story about their lives as Capital Electric Cooperative members.



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- Co-ops work together
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Ten of Albert and Hilda Holden's children are shown in a photo taken in 1961.



Norman Holden, left, with his father, Albert Holden, when Norman had just returned from his service in World War II.

## A history of dedication

The following historical account of Capital Electric Cooperative members Albert and Hilda Holden is shared by their great-grandson, Ric Holden. The story was precipitated by a letter Ric recently found, which was sent to the Holdens from Capital Electric in 1948 to warn them about "shady salesmen" who were fooling farmers into unsatisfactory wiring jobs. According to Ric, this was a real-life example of Capital Electric's dedication to the wellbeing of its members.

BY RIC HOLDEN

The settlement of the American West was defined not only by federal land policy, but by the individual and ethical fortitude of the homesteaders who inhabited it. Albert and Helga Holden homesteaded in Burleigh County around 1900 about 15 miles north of Bismarck.

The virgin soil had to be turned over with a single-bottom plow pulled by a team of horses.

The children walking in the cool earth behind their father is not merely a sentimental scene, but it indicates the total mobilization of the family unit in an era before automated sensing or satellite monitoring.

Later, Albert served as a county commissioner for 12 years. It was the custom of newly elected commissioners to have the road to their farm graveled. When he was asked when he was going to get his road graveled, Albert sternly replied he was not going to gravel his road based on an election.

The story of Albert and Hilda Holden serves as more

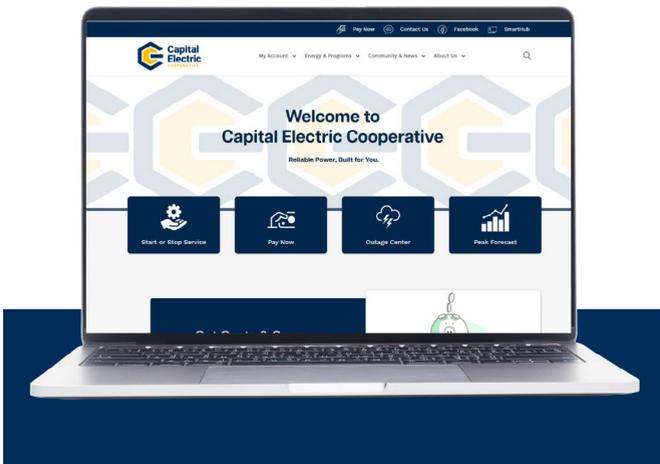
than a family anecdote. It is a microcosm of the agrarian and political development of the American West. Arriving in a landscape defined by emptiness and grass, they utilized the single-bottom plow to transform the physical environment.

The family history tells a story about when Albert was asked if he was Swedish.

"Hell no, I'm no damn Swede," he replied. But his wife was 100% Swedish. Later, when ancestry.com arrived, some of his close surviving relatives took the test and found Albert was 75% Scandinavian. Albert was a colorful person, to say the least. He and Helga raised 12 children on the farm south of Wilton. €



# Co-op unveils new member-centric website



For many years, Touchstone Energy® has provided Capital Electric with a website platform called Co-op Web Builder, which allows us to update our own data. We have gone through a few updated versions along the way, each one improving our ability to provide up-to-date information to our members.

We are announcing the launch of our entirely redesigned website, built with a focus on enhancing member experience. Co-op Web Builder has transformed, but it is still provided by Touchstone Energy. The new website platform is called SHiNE and is a user-friendly system designed to help us build and manage the website with ease.

So, what's new?

- **Find what you need fast:** No more endless searching. A powerful search engine allows you to quickly find the information you're looking for,

be it membership details, upcoming events or helpful articles.

- **A wealth of knowledge:** The site is complete with articles, calculators and helpful videos to support you in achieving your energy goals.
- **Accessibility tools:** We now offer an assistive toolkit to help members have the best experience on our website. This includes an AI-powered platform that helps translate our content into accessible experiences for everyone.
- **Enhanced mobile capabilities:** Our website is now optimized for all devices, ensuring a seamless experience on desktops, tablets and smartphones.
- **Security focused:** The website is built with advanced security features to better shield member data. This includes improved protection for your browsing experience and history.
- **Uses web platform tailored to co-ops:** The website offers unique features by leveraging Touchstone Energy's SHiNE platform, built for co-ops by co-ops.

We are committed to providing Capital Electric members with the best possible experience. The new website is a significant step forward in achieving this goal. Please visit and explore the new website at [capitalelec.com](http://capitalelec.com).

*Touchstone Energy is a national network of electric cooperatives across 46 states providing research, communications resources and employee training programs that help its member-cooperatives better engage and serve their members. As a result, Touchstone Energy cooperatives are positioned to achieve superior member satisfaction and engagement that strengthens the cooperative, the communities it serves and the electric cooperative community at large. ☺*



## Save the date for your annual meeting

June 16 • BSC Advanced Technology Center

- Learn about co-op issues.
- Elect board directors to represent you.
- Enjoy a free meal.

## Online voting for directors

**Sign up for SmartHub to vote online!**

In addition to traditional in-person voting at our annual meeting June 16, Capital Electric Cooperative will again offer online voting through SmartHub, a web and mobile app that allows members to access their bill, manage their account and monitor electric usage. To register for the free resource, visit [capitalelec.com](http://capitalelec.com) and click on the SmartHub tab at the top of the homepage. You will need to enter your billing account number, last name and email address to sign up. ☺



Leading the Capital Electric Cooperative and Central Power Electric Cooperative partnership are, left to right, Capital Electric General Manager **Paul Fitterer**, Director **Deon Vilhauer** and Central Power General Manager **Tom Meland**, right. Former board president **Richard Koski** is also pictured third from left.

# Co-ops work together to maintain reliable system

BY GREG OWEN, MANAGER OF ENGINEERING

**M**aybe you've noticed a new building north of I-94 and east of Bismarck. What is it? And why does it need numbers as large as the Hollywood sign? This outpost building belongs to Central Power Electric Cooperative (CPEC). But who is that?

To answer, we'll have to take a trip back in time to 1949, when electric cooperatives in North Dakota, such as Capital Electric Cooperative, were newly formed and just starting to build distribution lines across the countryside to new members eagerly awaiting electricity.

So much of the focus for distribution cooperatives then was to continue extending "the end of the line," reaching new consumers with the benefits of electrification. A similar focus was to ensure the stable supply and delivery of electricity from the generation sources. A conference was held in Bismarck in July 1949 to discuss the construction of a transmission system

for use by CPEC, a newly formed entity to transmit wholesale electricity to member-cooperatives in central North Dakota. CPEC continues to serve this mission today, with headquarters in Minot and outposts in Wahpeton and now Bismarck.

Why do we need transmission systems? Can't we just connect distribution lines to the power plants? Like any physical system, distribution lines have their fundamental efficiency limits. Power can only be pushed so far before distribution lines become overloaded or voltage drops too low to energize appliances, motors and other needs.

To deliver power across greater distances, we lean on the efforts of our forefathers (Westinghouse, Tesla and Edison), where high voltage became the solution to this challenge. Power produced at generation stations is transformed into higher voltages (345,000 volts for



A major enhancement to Central Power Electric Cooperative's Bismarck service is the addition of a mobile substation. Mobile substations are self-contained, transportable electrical substations, typically on trailers, that provide temporary power for grid maintenance, emergencies, new construction or large events. They can quickly replace or supplement traditional substations to prevent outages and ensure reliable power supply.

example), which can then be transmitted over hundreds of miles to delivery centers, where the voltage is transformed lower to distribution systems, and finally transformed to the common value we utilize in our homes and businesses (120 volts for example).

The mission of CPEC was to build the high-voltage transmission infrastructure required to bring power from generation sources to the distribution cooperatives. Thus, the relationship between CPEC and Capital Electric began in 1949, which helped provide access to power generated by the newly constructed Garrison Dam.

As the demand for electricity continued to grow, CPEC joined other transmission cooperatives in 1961 to help form Basin Electric Power Cooperative, which has since taken the role of producing wholesale electricity and building the bulk energy grid. Think of it as Basin Electric being similar to the four-lane highways, CPEC as the two-lane highways and Capital Electric as the streets and gravel roads leading to your home.

Why so many layers? It is difficult for one entity to build and maintain all the roads in the state. Interstates are built to different standards than subdivision roads, with greater efficiencies gained as each entity specializes in certain aspects of training, equipment and materials.

For many years, Capital Electric owned, maintained and operated a portion of the transmission system. However, as our system grew and government regulations relating to transmission reliability standards increased, the ability for Capital Electric to provide the attention necessary to maintain both distribution and transmission assets necessitated a full consolidation with CPEC in 2014. From that point forward, CPEC became the owner of transmission and substation assets within Capital Electric's delivery system.

If CPEC was formed in 1949, what took so long for Capital Electric to be a full member? Prior to 2014, Capital Electric participated in CPEC and Basin Electric directly, enjoying the benefits of both suppliers, yet also

subject to cost fluctuations of both. Certain seasonal variations in load were sometimes financially favorable in this arrangement and sometimes not. Leading to the decision in 2014, the benefits of diversity of load among Capital Electric and the other members of CPEC, along with the maintenance and regulatory burden shifting over to CPEC, made full consolidation the best path for Capital Electric's membership.

So, what are some examples of benefits to Capital Electric's members from CPEC? One is the benefit of load diversity of a larger footprint, which helps provide a more predictable power supply cost for budgeting Capital Electric's needs.

The demarcation of maintenance, planning and construction of transmission and substation assets greatly improves efficiency of line crews and design staff. Equipment and material inventory for Capital Electric can be focused on just distribution assets, eliminating warehouse space for bulky transmission items. Annual training and compliance are required by the North American Electric Reliability Corporation for operators of bulk electric transmission systems, which is now a task completed by CPEC.

CPEC can also invest in equipment such as mobile substations that can be utilized across its larger footprint, whereas the expenses of such an asset would be difficult for Capital Electric to justify alone.

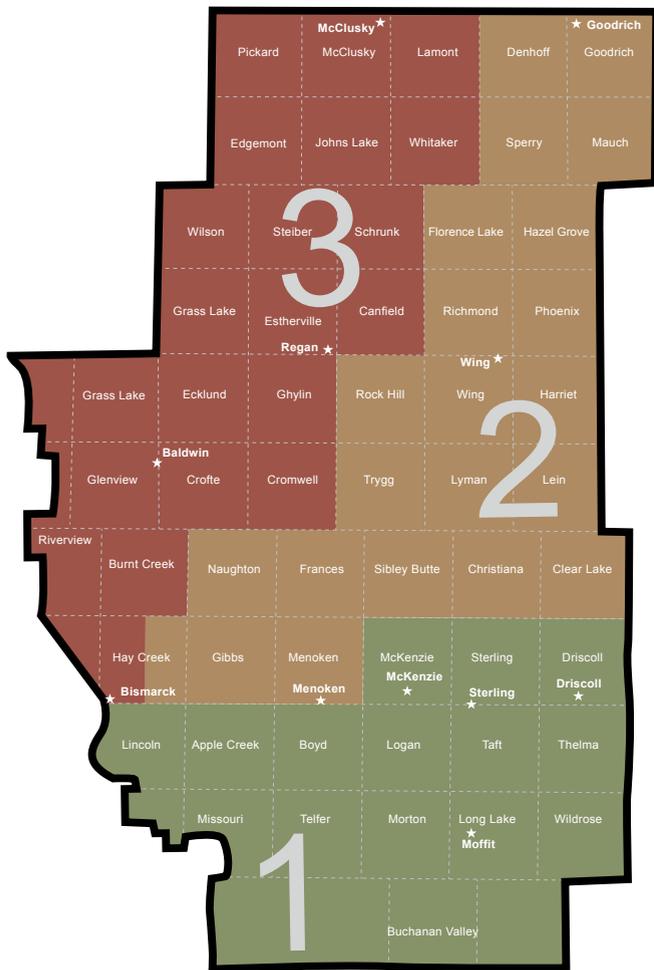
The relationship between Capital Electric and CPEC is one of cooperative spirit, banding together to do things that would be difficult to accomplish alone. CPEC provides the assets and abilities to build and maintain the transmission system that brings power into Capital Electric's service territory, allowing Capital Electric to focus on distributing electricity to members in a safe, reliable manner at the most affordable rate possible. So, next time you see those building numbers from the interstate, give them a wave and thank them for doing their part to keep the lights on. ☺



Members of the Bismarck Central Power Electric Cooperative crew, **Ron, Cody, Doug and Blake**, prepare to put in a day's work.

Are you interested in serving as a director for Capital Electric?

Place **YOUR** name on the ballot today!



Capital Electric Cooperative will hold its 80th annual meeting at the Bismarck State College Advanced Technology Center on June 16.

This year, three seats on the co-op's board of directors will need to be filled. Directors whose terms are expiring in June are Dave Charles, Bret Weiland and Kyle Tschosik.

The nine members who make up the Capital Electric board of directors set policies and make decisions that guide the cooperative into the future. With the annual meeting just a few short months away, now is the time for members to start thinking about whether they have the time and desire to serve their electric cooperative.

In accordance with Article 4, Section 3, of the co-op bylaws, current Capital Electric members can have their names placed on the ballot to be voted upon for the open board positions in either of these two ways: 1) accepting a nomination from the Nominating Committee or 2) submitting a petition signed by at least 15 current members of the cooperative, not less than 55 days prior to the annual meeting.

If you are interested in becoming a candidate for Capital Electric's board of directors or wish to have a member considered for nomination, please contact a member of the Nominating Committee (listed below) on or before April 3. Committee members will have information on the requirements a member must meet in order to serve on the co-op's board of directors. Pursuant to the bylaws, the Nominating Committee must post a list of nominations not less than 65 days prior to the annual meeting.

Official notice of Capital Electric's annual meeting will be included in Capital Electric's *May North Dakota Living* local pages. €

**The following members have been appointed by the board of directors to serve on the Nominating Committee:**

**Gary Hansen**  
701-471-3558  
gary.hansen@edwardjones.com

**Sean Johnson**  
701-391-5326  
smj58501@yahoo.com

**Travis Jensen**  
701-426-0331  
Outdoors\_tj10@hotmail.com

**Ann Reich**  
701-214-7259  
annreich@bektel.com

**Mike Briggs**  
701-214-9860  
briggs@bis.midco.net

**Amanda Fischer**  
701-989-0504  
gfischer@bektel.com

**Becky Hanson**  
701-391-3378  
hansonw@bis.midco.net

**Keith Horner**  
701-426-0767  
hornersonthehill@bektel.com



Cody Homes



Jared Crutchfield

## Lineworkers achieve journeyman status

Lineworkers Cody Homes (Bismarck) and Jared Crutchfield (Wing) have achieved journeyman lineworker status and are fully qualified to take on the vital responsibilities of ensuring safe and reliable service for our members.

Homes and Crutchfield were among 17 apprentices to complete the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC) apprenticeship program in 2025. Graduates received their journeyman lineworker certificates during a Jan. 15 awards ceremony held in conjunction with the Apprenticeship, Training and Safety Conference.

"Lineworkers are the backbone of our system. Without their expertise, the power that runs our homes, businesses and communities wouldn't be possible. Their work is vital to the system and requires a focus on safety and knowledge of the necessary technology," says Operations Manager Jeff Holzer.

Completing the lineworker apprenticeship program is no small feat. The training program is designed to teach the skills and knowledge needed to be a successful lineworker. Through on-the-job training and independent study, apprentices learn how to safely construct, maintain and operate the power grid. To graduate, they must complete 8,000 hours of on-the-job training and 576 hours of study.

"North Dakota's electric cooperatives require a skilled

workforce to keep the power flowing 24/7/365," says Josh Kramer, NDAREC executive vice president and general manager. "These graduates have completed the intensive requirements to achieve journeyman status, demonstrating a commitment to their trade, a desire to learn from others in the field and a safety-above-all-else attitude. Now, they join a special group of workers, who together power the lives of the more than 250,000 North Dakotans served by the state's electric cooperatives."

Capital Electric is committed to providing employees with ongoing education and training, ensuring the highest levels of service, safety and reliability for our members. In addition to participating in the lineworker apprenticeship program, lineworkers attend annual training sessions to learn and refine the techniques necessary to safely work on energized and nonenergized power lines.

We congratulate Cody and Jared on their achievement and look forward to their continued commitment to our members. ☺

The regular meeting of the board of directors of Capital Electric Cooperative was held on Friday, Jan. 30 at 8 a.m. 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 Wes Engbrecht, Manager of IT Kent Kensmoe and Attorney Zachary Pelham of Pearce Durick PLLC, who acted as recording secretary.

**Financial Review:** The December 2025 check register and expenditures were reviewed and all checks and expenditures were in order. The financial review was approved as presented.

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

**Business Department:** Steen presented the December 2025 financial and statistical report to the board.

Revenue was ahead of budget for December, as \$4,333,341 was generated in comparison with the budgeted figure of \$4,268,733 (favorable variance of \$64,608 or 1.5%).

Capital Electric's December power costs were just over budget for the month by 0.2%.

The operating margin for December was \$113,332, ahead of the budgeted amount of \$66,182. The total margin for December was \$2,212,650, which was behind the budgeted amount of \$2,810,114.

Capital Electric began billing nine new services in December, bringing our active services to 22,758 versus 22,526 at this time last year, or a net increase of 232 accounts over the last 12 months.

Cash flow statements were reviewed.

**Estate Retirements:** Payment of \$7,456.22 of capital credits was approved to nine members' estates.

**Write-offs:** Approval of write-offs amounting to \$5,194.79 for the fourth quarter were approved. The total 12-month write-offs are \$28,947.

**Rate Review:** Steen reviewed the rate structure.

**Operations:** Holzer reviewed the written report from the operations department. Holzer reported on the completion of annual testing of hotline tools and personal protective grounds, the completion of the 2025 inventory, and the energization of a three-phase tie line that will allow for the retirement of 1.5 miles of overhead line.

**Safety Report:** There have been no lost-time accidents since the last board meeting. A North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC) safety instructor met with line crews for a safety meeting relating to ladder safety, hearing safety, suspension trauma and field observation report in January. The safety report was reviewed.

**Engineering Services:** Holzer reviewed the written report from engineering services. Thirteen work orders were completed in December. Holzer reported on ongoing and upcoming projects, completion of reports required for state and federal grants, and a meeting with Central Power Electric Cooperative to review 2026 projects.

**Energy Services:** Schaffner reviewed the energy services report. Schaffner reported on the N.D. Member Services Association winter meeting, increased demand for load controller installations as more residential accounts transition to the CP rate and distributed generation projects.

**Communications:** Engbrecht reviewed the communications report. Engbrecht reported on the annual meeting Nominating Committee,

community events and finalization of the website redesign.

**IT:** Kensmoe reviewed the IT report. Kensmoe reported on his attendance at the N.D. InfraGard meeting, presentation at the N.D. Member Services Association meeting and updated on a Microsoft email outage.

**Annual Meeting:** Fitterer reported on the annual meeting and reviewed the resolution on absentee voting. The resolution was approved as presented, allowing for the submission of absentee ballots at the annual meeting by mail or electronically.

**Policies:** Fitterer reviewed Policy I-24-Expectations of Directors of Board of Directors and the policy was reaffirmed.

**Basin Electric Power Cooperative:** Fitterer reported on Basin Electric matters.

**Central Power Electric:** Dave Charles reported on Central Power Electric matters, including the January board meeting.

**NDAREC:** Deon Vilhauer reported on NDAREC matters.

**National Rural Electric Cooperative Association:** Fitterer reported on upcoming regional meeting.

**National Information Solutions Cooperative:** Fitterer reported on the January board meeting.

**RESCO:** Vilhauer provided a report on RESCO and indicated he would be presenting to the NDAREC board.

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

## 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.  
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Toll-free: 888-223-1513  
Pay-By-Phone: 1-877-853-5928  
DAY—NIGHT—WEEKEND  
TROUBLE CALL: 701-223-1513

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