



# CURRENT NEWS



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**KEM  
Electric Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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### OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

Chair.....Victor “Chuck” Wald  
Vice Chair.....Carmen Essig  
Secretary-Treasurer.....Carter Vander Wal

### Directors:

John Beck  
Dean Dewald  
Dean Hummel  
Neil Meidinger

### Co-General Managers/CEOs:

Donald A. Franklund  
Travis M. Kupper

[www.kemelectric.com](http://www.kemelectric.com)

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*KEM Electric Cooperative is dedicated to providing affordable, reliable energy and services that support and unite our member-owners.*

*We also aspire to meet the Touchstone Energy® Cooperative core values of integrity, innovation, accountability and commitment to community.*

KEM Electric Cooperative, Inc., is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

**TOGETHERWESAVE.COM**



KEM Member Support Technician **Kirk Praus** accepted the journeyman meter technician certificate from NDAREC safety instructors **James Neether**, **Steve Homes** and **Jeff Tweten**.

## Praus honored at AT&S Conference

The North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives hosted the 54th annual REC Apprenticeship Training and Safety (AT&S) Conference in Bismarck. Training topics included trenching and shoring, rubber-glove testing, underground cable splicing and safety, communication and leadership.

At the conference awards banquet, Praus was honored for graduating from the apprentice meter technician. The AT&S program requires metering technicians to complete an apprenticeship requiring 8,000 hours of on-the-job training and 144 hours of related instructions.

This is a growing field, and Praus is only the seventh meter technician to have graduated from the apprenticeship program in North Dakota.

## Employees receive service awards

Three KEM Electric employees celebrated significant work anniversaries last year. Their total years of service signify 75 years of commitment to our member-owners.

Manager of Member Services **Tim Dockter** was honored for 35 years, Journeyman Lineman **Dave Twardoski** for 30 years, and Journeyman Lineman **Jake Zink** for 10 years.



Zink



Twardoski



Dockter

The number 75 says a lot about these employees. They liked their jobs so well, they turned them into careers. We thank them for the dedication and years of service.

## Operations outlook

By Gary Hulm

Every day, our linemen are working in the field to keep the electric system in as good of condition as possible. They do this by replacing faulted underground cable, converting overhead cable to underground, and replacing old and weathered poles.



Last year, KEM Electric Cooperative hired RAM Utilities, a company based in Moorhead, Minn., to test distribution and transmission poles. Inspection and maintenance are important steps in maintaining system reliability. Members read about the pole-testing process in the July 2017 local pages of the *North Dakota Living* magazine. Nearly 5,000 poles were tested and 120 replaced.

Starting this spring and continuing through summer, RAM Utilities will test another 5,000 distribution and transmission poles on our system, looking for weathered and loose parts, and making repairs. With a reject rate of 1.5 to 2 percent, we anticipate replacing about 100 poles.

We do partner with contractors on large or specialized projects, as KEM's linemen stay busy with planned projects. Also this year, line crews will:

- ✓ Convert overhead three-phase distribution lines to underground; Upgrade aged overhead single-phase lines;
- ✓ Replace defective underground cable; and
- ✓ Continue to inspect and maintain transmission lines.

KEM has also hired tree-trimming contractors who will be working in our service area again this summer.

We will continue to install new services as requested, and proceed with regular maintenance that will prevent power outages and ultimately strengthen the system.

## SAVE THE DATE! KEM Electric Cooperative annual meeting

Thursday, June 21, 2018 @ Linton Public School



### Are you interested in becoming a director?

It's time to consider serving as a board director for KEM Electric.

The initial commitment is a three-year term. Board meetings are the fourth Tuesday of every month.

At the annual meeting, two board positions will be elected including:

- The District 1 position presently held by **John Beck**;
- The District 2 position presently held by **Carter Vander Wal**.

If you would like to place your name on the ballot, pick up a petition at the KEM office.

**\*Petitions must be returned to the cooperative office no later than May 22.\***

Nominations will also be accepted from the floor at the annual meeting.

All qualified and willing candidates must complete and submit the petition by the date on the back.

KEM Electric Cooperative is overseen by a seven-member board of directors that is elected by you, the member-owners of the co-op.

To learn more about the process or for information on what is required of a director, call the KEM office at 701-254-4666.

### A phone survey may await you

KEM Electric Cooperative will be completing a random residential telephone Member Satisfaction Survey. Performed by Odney Advertising, this survey will take place March 5 to 9. Members, if you receive a call from Odney Advertising at 701-892-7420 on behalf of KEM, please take 10 minutes to answer the questionnaire. By participating, KEM receives better insight into how we can better serve you, the member-owner.

### Also in the MARCH issue of *North Dakota Living*:

- Hydraulic issues? WDUS can help.
- Students benefit from Operation Round Up grants
- Cooperative grants awarded
- Board meeting minutes & more



**Holiday closing:** KEM Electric will be closed on Friday, March 30, to observe Easter. Line crews will be available in case of an emergency power outage.

## EMPOWER YOUTH

GROWING COOPERATIVE LEADERS

- ✦ Build on individual strengths
- ✦ Help recognize leadership potential
- ✦ Improve scholarship / college / job applications

The **Empower Youth Leadership Program**, for students in grades 9-12, is based on Cooperative Principles that promote ideals such as community service and teamwork.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Kristie Ching, program director

605-542-7416 Empower Youth Leadership Program  
empoweryouth@bepc.com www.empoweryouth.coop

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