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## CULTIVATING LEGACY THROUGH TECHNOLOGY: **Leier farm**

BY SAMANTHA VANGSNESS



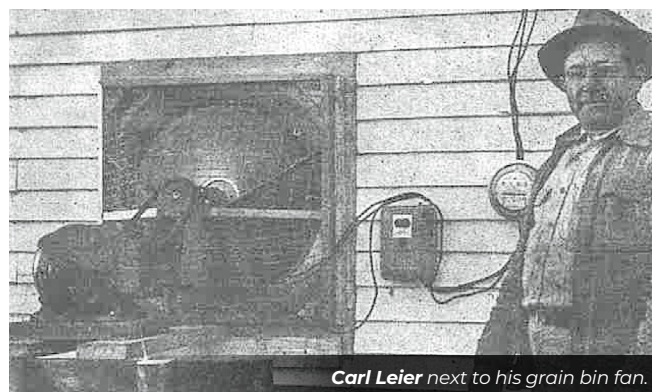
From the golden fields of harvested wheat to the ripening cornstalks, community members are continually reminded of the strong agricultural backbone surrounding the KEM Electric Cooperative service territory. As changes in technology have sparked efficiency, we look to past generations of farmers who helped pave the way.

### The beginning

As a pillar of the farming community, the Leier family has played a part not only in land stewardship, but innovation. For generations, the family has blended forward thinking with a solid work ethic. This can be attributed to the family's patriarch, Carl Leier.

"I like to think of my dad as a pioneer," Chris Leier says.

In 1931, Carl and Mary Leier began farming southwest of Napoleon. As the crops grew, so did their family, as they welcomed seven children all while planting specialty crops and corn to feed the animals. With a mindset toward continuous improvements, Carl worked with local services on various innovative projects, including implementation of a grain dryer.



While reading the "KEM Kilowatt Kapers," an original cooperative publication, Carl's interest in grain dryers came early on. He knew modern farming practices would make a grain dryer a practical addition to the farm. Once implemented, Carl's forward thinking was highlighted in the July 1952 edition of the publication.

This sense of innovation has flourished throughout his family's farming practices and has been passed down to his son, Chris, his grandson, Kevin, and great-

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Preston stands near his grain bin fan, like his great grandpa in 1950's.

grandson, Preston.

## Continuing practices

Chris and Viola moved to a farmstead near Linton, where they raised their family of 11 children. After years of farming, Chris passed the traditions to Kevin, who purchased farmland a few miles down the road. Kevin has since retired, but can be found helping his son, Preston, when needed. Preston carries on the next generation of farming and currently grows durum wheat, corn and confection sunflowers.

As they think about their years of farming, Kevin recalls when he bought the farmstead and began building it to meet their needs.

"I put up two bins right away with air dryers and, a couple years later, I added more," Kevin says. "A few years later, I added a 30,000-bushel grain bin. That one was mostly for corn with a fan in it."

Grain bins help farmers store their crops for feeding animals, fulfilling contracts with buyers or selling at a later date. As farms have progressed, so has technology. Grain dryers allow farmers to dry or even add moisture to crops in a controlled environment.

"Nowadays, there are dryers in all bins," Chris says. "Back then, it was unusual to have a dryer in the bin."

Before the grain dryer, they left crops in the field to dry and harvest when the crops were the right moisture content, Chris recalls. He marvels at the technology available now and what can be done with it.

"They're (grain dryers and bin fans) helpful to maintain better quality in specialty crops like durum," says Preston.

With grain dryers, farmers are able to control the quality of the crop being fed to animals or going to market rather than relying on the weather.

"Dryers have helped to play the market and manage

the basis on the price sold at markets," Kevin says.

In the July 1952 edition of KEM Kilowatt Kapers, Preston recalls a story about his great-grandpa Carl who put his crops into the dryer to cool and dry them down and a few days later the crops were back to the quality they wanted. That is still how bin fans are being used today, over 70 years later.

"I put 8,000 bushels of corn in that was 17-percent moisture, a little too wet, and the first load was hot when we took it out," says Preston. "We then flipped the fan on gave it a few days and it was fine."

Farmers can control their grain bin fans and dryers by their fingertips, like much of the technology we have now.

"You can see the moisture and temperature in the bin from your phone," Preston says.

Sensors help dry crops to whatever percentage is needed, he explains. Aeration fans can help add moisture back into the crops as well, which is helpful for soybeans when they may have been harvested too dry.

"I remember using our noses to sense if crops needed to be dried or not," Kevin jokes about the tangy smell of a wet crop.

As Chris reflects on the technology used by Kevin

# KEM Kilowatt Kapers

Published Monthly by KEM Electric Cooperative, Inc., Linton, North Dakota  
VOLUME II, No. 7 (Devoted to the Presentation of Information to Its Members) JULY, 1952

## Why A Grain Drier?

Some years ago, the shocks and grain stacks could be left out in the field for some time and in case of rain or excess moisture, it could be left out in the field until it was dry. But with our modern and better harvesting machinery and methods, the grain must be harvested whenever it is possible to get it off the field before the wind or hail forces it to the ground and if it is in swath, it should be picked up before rain gets it. If it is rained on, it will take a long time to dry out the swath, shattering can become a serious problem, and pickup loss is increased. Even worse, it may start to sprout. This all adds up to too much moisture in much of the grain that you are able to get into storage.

It may take many years until we get another wet season such as we had last fall and then again it may happen every year, but this is not the only reason for a grain drier. When your grain is ready to cut, you are going to get it whenever you can. Because of this, you will start combining too early in the morning when the grain is still too damp. You will also stay at it in the evening until the grain has once again taken on too much moisture. If you were going to get this grain off the field when its moisture was such that it was safe for storage, you would only be able to put in a short day. If you had a grain drier, you could start several hours earlier and stay out several hours later, which could mean enough grain in the bin instead of in the field in one day, to pay for a grain drier. We used to think of grain driers as a luxury, but now we know that they are a necessity with our modern farming operations. Tests show that grain has been dried with 25 per cent moisture. When you can knock the grain out of the straw, it may still have 18 to 20 per cent of moisture, but the drier will easily take care of this. This can be done with very little of it being lost.

A large farmer in the state had two

(CONTINUED ON PAGE FOUR)



CARL LEIER JR. is standing by a device that controls horn flies as well as greater comfort for the cattle from other flies. A chain, suspended between a tall and short post, wrapped with a burlap or gunny sack that were soaked with a mixture of DDT is what does the trick. However, Carl added some of his own ingenuity. The chain was run over a pulley and the tension is maintained by the weights. This set up enables the cattle to rub themselves on all parts of their bodies and there is little or no danger of ropes or wires being stretched or broken.

"Certainly beats any other fly control we have tried before", Carl says.

## Water Heater Notice

After September 20, 1952, KEM Electric Co-operative will allow you to use the water heater rate chart only if you have an approved water installation. No preheating device will be allowed, such as pipes passing through your furnace or some other non-electric device. WATCH YOUR NEXT NEWSLETTER FOR DETAILED INFORMATION!

A quick and simple aid in determining hidden insect infestation of wheat has been developed. Insect-infested and filthy grain is banned for sale as human food, under government pure food regulations.

## Do You Remember ??

About a year ago this newsletter contained an article on the proper use of a grinder and the danger of using an engine or electric motor on a grindstone that was not designed for high speeds. The article was written on behalf of two men who will never again use engines for grinding or for any other job.

In the May issue of KEM Kilowatt Kapers, you found a picture of a pedal-type of grindstone which had been converted with a jackshaft or pulley system which reduced the speed of the grindstone. It was pointed out that this was necessary if this grinder was to be motorized and was to be used safely.

Now once again, we would relate a sad story of a man who was killed by a disintegrating grindstone due to excessive speed, or a victim that may lose one of his eyes. The pedal-type grindstone just isn't made for speed.

Farm Safety Week was July 20th to 26th. You can make your grinding operation safe the year round. May we repeat the following rules for your using a grindstone for grinding:

1. Do not exceed recommended speeds stamped on grinding wheel.
2. Each grinding wheel should have a guard or shield.
3. Always wear goggles when using a grindstone.
4. The grindstone surface must move toward the edge of the item being sharpened.
5. Never use much pressure when using the side of the grindstone.
6. Make the operation safe by using common sense. The item being ground must be held properly. Observe the condition of your grindstone.

Many victims of grinders can no longer warn you about the dangers of grinders. The victims that are able to tell you about their experience, prefer not to do so, because they don't want to admit that they know better. WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT YOUR GRINDING OPERATIONS?

KEM Kilowatt Kapers, an early cooperative publication.



*Kevin as a child with his Uncle Tony.*



and Preston, he is appreciative of the advances, but never imagined it would progress as it has.

### The next generation

When dedicating and investing time and resources into a livelihood such as farming, it is difficult not to consider how decisions will impact the next generation. Preston has four children, and he considers what the farm will look like for them one day, just as Chris and Kevin did.

"They all have their own place (on the farm) and they enjoy it," Preston says.

When they are working, he is amazed at what they learn and what interests them, he says.

"I try to challenge them to think about things and how to solve problems," Preston says.

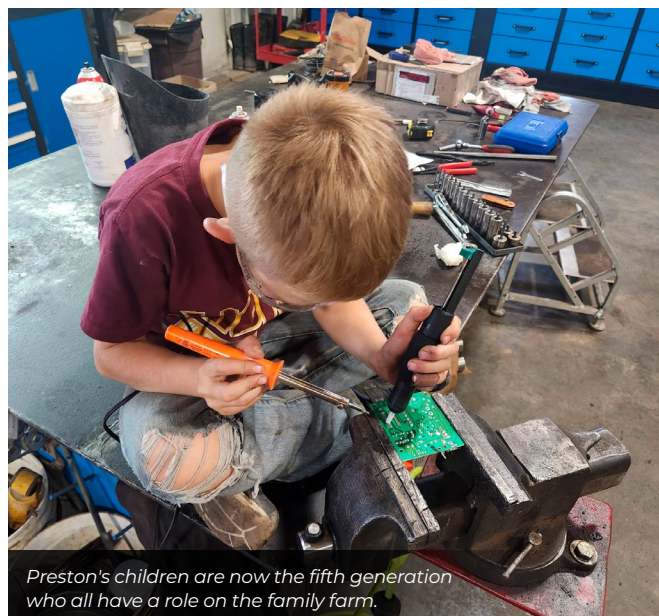
Preston tries to keep the kids busy on the farm and remembers his grandpa and dad sharing similar stories. Chris would ask Kevin and his siblings to take apart machinery. They tore the machinery apart, sorted the angle iron and flat iron, and saved what may be needed.

"We had to rethread all the bolts and sort them, along with straightening nails," Kevin says.

They all reflect on the skills learned and achieved through farming and how that has helped shape

them and their workmanship.

"The way to go about problem solving remains the same," Preston says. "It's something Grandpa and Dad have." ⚡



*Preston's children are now the fifth generation who all have a role on the family farm.*

## MANAGER'S MESSAGE:

## Co-ops power communities with purpose

**Jason Bentz**

Co-General Manager/CEO

Communities come in all shapes and sizes. Some are based on geographical proximity, some are based on shared interests or hobbies, and some communities can even be found in virtual spaces, such as social media groups. Regardless of where or how they are formed, communities can bring people together and create a sense of belonging.

KEM Electric Cooperative is committed to our members, and we're glad you are part of the electric cooperative community.

In October, more than 30,000 cooperatives across the United States are celebrating National Co-op Month. It's a time to reflect on all the aspects that set cooperatives apart from other types of businesses. But more importantly, it's a time to celebrate the power of co-op membership.

Electric cooperatives are nonprofit utilities built by the communities they serve. KEM Electric's mission has always been to provide you with reliable electric service. We care about your quality of life. And because we are locally operated, we're uniquely suited to meet our members' evolving energy needs.

Beyond providing electrical services, our employees and directors are equally invested in our local community. Why? Because our employees live here, too. That's why we work hard to support local economic development projects, youth programs and scholarships, charitable giving initiatives and additional programs that make our community a better place to call home.

All co-ops, including KEM Electric, are guided by seven cooperative principles that embody the values and spirit of the cooperative movement.

These seven principles are a framework to help all co-ops navigate challenges and opportunities, while remaining true to our purpose.

**Open and voluntary membership:** Co-op membership is open to anyone who can use the co-op's services.

**Democratic member control:** Members make decisions that shape the cooperative. Why? Because co-ops are created by the members for the members.

**Member economic participation:** Members contribute money to the co-op to make sure it operates smoothly now and in the future. At KEM Electric, this happens through paying your energy bills.

**Autonomy and independence:** Co-ops are independent and can operate on their own, which ultimately benefits the members.

**Education, training and information:** Co-ops continuously focus on education to ensure employees have the training and information they need to make the co-op successful.

**Cooperation among cooperatives:** Co-ops share with and learn from other cooperatives. We help each other in times of need, because we want other co-ops to thrive.

**Concern for community:** All cooperatives work for the greater good of the local communities they serve. Co-ops give back to their communities to help them thrive and grow.

As we celebrate National Co-op Month and the power of co-op membership, we hope you will recognize the many aspects that set electric cooperatives apart. Our mission is reliable power. Our purpose is people and the local communities we're proud to serve. ⚡



## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP

As winter approaches, now is the time to inspect your home for air leaks around windows. Caulking and weatherstripping are simple, effective methods for sealing windows.





## MESSAGE FROM MEMBER RELATIONS: **LIHEAP is here to help**



**Marcy Sanders**  
Manager of  
Member Relations

As the fall weather arrives, KEM Electric Cooperative members will be faced with colder temperatures in the coming months. For some, anticipation of the winter months causes stress and anxiety as they wonder how to ensure a warm home. Thankfully, there are programs to help members.

Through the N.D. Department of Human Services (NDDHS), the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) can help low-income and eligible individuals when it comes to heating and insulation costs in the winter. Individuals can obtain home energy assistance with a variety of services, including home heating.

### Services offered

LIHEAP offers a variety of service assistance. Not only can the program help curb the costs of your heating and cooling bill, but it also helps households with weatherization services, making homes more energy efficient.

The assistance program may also help with the costs of furnace and chimney cleaning, emergency assistance and energy cost-reduction devices. Homeowners and renters are eligible to apply for assistance.

### Apply for LIHEAP

Upon applying for LIHEAP, an outreach specialist from NDDHS will visit your home and assist in gathering necessary documentation for the service. From there, an application will be sent to the state for review, and the results will be provided within a week or two.

Check with your local human service office for more information regarding these services.

Applications are now being accepted year-round and can be found online at [applyforhelp.nd.gov](http://applyforhelp.nd.gov) or by request at the local human service zone office. ⚡

**Scan the QR code or reach out to your local human service zone office for more information and to apply.**



## Additional resources:

**South Country Human Service Zone:** Serving Dickey, Emmons, Kidder, LaMoure, Logan and McIntosh counties  
**Dickey County office**  
205 15th St. N., P.O. Box 279, Ellendale, ND 58436  
Phone: 701-349-3271

**Emmons County office**  
100 NW Fourth St., P.O. Box 726, Linton, ND 58552  
Phone: 701-254-4502

**Kidder County office**  
120 E. Broadway, P.O. Box 36, Steele, ND 58482  
Phone: 701-475-2551

**LaMoure County office**  
202 Fourth Ave. NE, P.O. Box 38, LaMoure, ND 58458  
Phone: 701-883-5301, ext. 7

**Logan County office**  
301 Broadway, Napoleon, ND 58561  
Phone: 701-754-2283

**McIntosh County office**  
112 NE First St., P.O. Box 218, Ashley, ND 58413  
Phone: 701-288-5170

## MESSAGE FROM OPERATIONS: **Powering together**



**Dale Nagel**

Chief of Staff/  
Line Superintendent

Every October, electric cooperatives across the country celebrate National Co-op Month and reflect on the unique advantages of being part of a cooperative. As an electric cooperative, we are guided by the seven cooperative principles. One of those principles is cooperation among cooperatives, which is something we do every day.

Along with three neighboring electric cooperatives, KEM Electric Cooperative is a proud owner of Innovative Energy Alliance Cooperative (IEA), Maintenance Solutions Cooperative (MSC), West Dakota Utilities Services (WDUS) and 3C Construction. You have probably read about these strategic partnerships in the past, but we would like to highlight the partnerships that help us ensure safe, reliable electric services for our members.

Each day, employees at KEM Electric collaborate with employees of IEA, which provides various services and support to the cooperative. On the operations side, we work closely with IEA's engineering department to analyze, update and plan for system maintenance and expansion. We also work with the information technology team to ensure secure, efficient and reliable operation of all computing systems, hardware and software at our cooperative. Other departments within IEA that KEM Electric works closely with includes managerial, employee services, finance and accounting as well as others.

But it doesn't stop there. As owners of MSC, KEM Electric has access to a dedicated team who delivers comprehensive maintenance and technical solutions.. MSC's experienced team builds and maintains our metering systems within substations, ensuring these critical components operate smoothly and efficiently. MSC also verifies meters on our system, ensuring accuracy and integrity of metering equipment.

When our fleet of vehicles and equipment needs attention, WDUS certified technicians, who specialize in a variety of services, are here to keep us running. From N.D. Department of Transportation inspection certifications to utility vehicle repair and maintenance, WDUS's multi-faceted repair shop ensures our cooperative vehicles are always ready.

When we need additional hands to complete a project or repair storm damage, 3C Construction, a construction contractor, is ready to assist our cooperative. Its crews provide reliable solutions for new line construction, pole change outs, and storm outage restorations. By providing additional manpower and equipment, 3C Construction helps reduce project time and ensures efficient operations to help us continue powering our communities.

Through these partnerships, we can better serve you with cost savings, while maintaining quality of service to our members. By working together, sharing resources and supporting one another, we build a stronger cooperative. During National Co-op Month, we are proud to celebrate what we have accomplished and with whom we have accomplished it! ⚡



## ENTER YOUR YOUTH TOUR ERA

**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 for the school year 2025-26.
- You and your parents or guardian must be served by KEM 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 Marcy Sanders, KEM Electric Cooperative, at 701-254-4666 during regular business hours.

Email entries to [msanders@kemelectric.com](mailto:msanders@kemelectric.com)

or mail a hard copy to: Youth Tour Essay Contest, 107 S. Broadway, Box 790, Linton, ND, 58552-0790.





## SAFETY STARTS WITH ME: Generator safety

The safety of our members and our employees is a top priority at KEM Electric Cooperative, especially during uncertain situations. When storms impact our area, KEM Electric employees work safely and diligently to restore electric services as soon as weather conditions allow.

When line crews are working on impacted infrastructure, such as downed power lines, they take necessary precautions to ensure their safety. First, they verify a circuit has been de-energized and proper switches are opened and tagged to isolate the circuit from the system. Then, they place grounding straps on the circuit, on both sides of the lineworkers, to make sure the power line cannot be energized while work is being completed.

"Our team works to ensure a safe working environment during every job," says Marty Messer, Steele area foreman. "But members can also assist in keeping everyone safe."

Portable generators, which are widely used during an outage, can prove fatal to both line crews and members when used improperly.

Although portable generators can be helpful during outages, we urge you to follow these safety guidelines:

- **Never connect a generator directly to your home's wiring unless your home has been wired for generator use.** A generator connected to a home's wiring or plugged into a household outlet can cause backfeeding along power lines and electrocute anyone who comes into contact with the line, even if the line seems de-energized. Have a licensed electrician install the equipment necessary to safely connect generators to your home.
- **Plug appliances or equipment directly into generators.** Turn off appliances or equipment before plugging them into the generator or turning off the generator.
- **Use heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cords.** Make sure extension cords are free of cuts or tears and the plug has three prongs.



- **Never overload a generator.** A portable generator should only be used when necessary to power essential equipment or appliances.
- **Keep the generator dry.** Operate it on a dry surface under an open structure.
- **In case of a fire hazard, have a fire extinguisher nearby.**
- **Never refuel a generator while it is operating.** Turn the generator off and allow it to cool before refueling.
- **Carefully read the manufacturer's instructions.** Follow the manufacturer's instructions to ensure safe operation.

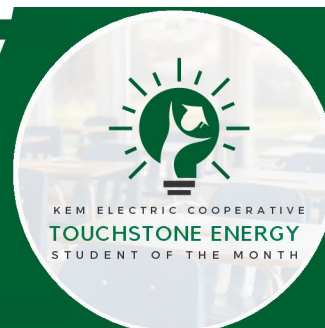
Rest assured when a storm hits our area, KEM Electric crews are ready to safely restore power to homes and business, but we need your help to remain safe. When we work together for safety and the good of our communities, we all benefit. ⚡

## NOMINATIONS ARE OPEN!

Nominate a deserving Hazelton-Moffit-Braddock Public School student for the Oct. KEM Electric Touchstone Energy Student of the Month.

*The nomination deadline is Oct. 15.*

Scan the QR code for more information.



## KEM ELECTRIC BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS: JULY 29

The meeting of the board of directors of KEM Electric Cooperative was held on July 29 in Linton. The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Chairman Victor Wald. A quorum was present. Also present were co-General Managers/CEOs Travis Kupper and Jason Bentz, Chief of Staff/Line Superintendent Dale Nagel, Manager of Member Relations Marcy Sanders, Chief Financial Officer Alex Craigmile, Legal Counsel Jennifer Grosz and Executive Assistant Connie Hill.

**Reorganization of the board:** Board reorganization took place. The executive committee elected includes Chairman Wald, Vice Chairman John Beck and Secretary/Treasurer Carter Vander Wal.

**Consent agenda:** The consent agenda was approved as presented.

**Strategic items:** Bentz and Kupper presented the co-general managers' report, which included updates on a Basin Electric Power Cooperative District 9 managers meeting, a North Dakota managers meeting and more. Several additional Basin Electric board documents were available for review.

**Department reports:** Craigmile provided the

financial report. Nagel provided a department report, which included storm restoration updates, system upgrades and more. Sanders provided a written department report on upcoming youth initiatives and a communication channels update. Chief Information Officer Charlie Dunbar provided a report for the board. Grosz provided an update.

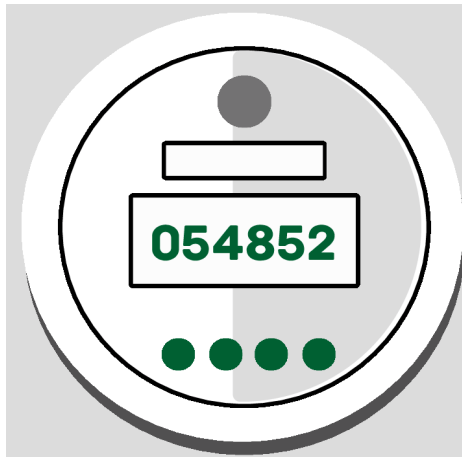
**Action items:** The board discussed upcoming meetings and voted on delegates as well as other items.

**Discussion/general information:** Omar Abdallah and Nicholas Disanti from the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation presented the cost-of-service study to the board. The board also discussed other information.

**Executive session:** The board entered an executive session during the meeting.

The meeting concluded with adjournment. Vander Wal certified the accuracy of the minutes.

**Next meeting date:** The next meeting is at 9:30 a.m. Oct. 28 in Linton. If you wish to be placed on the agenda, please call the office. ⚡



## HEATING SEASON IS HERE! IS YOUR ELECTRIC METER BREAKER ON?

**Members, if your home has a sub-meter for the separately metered electric heat rate, please make sure your heat meter breaker is turned on inside your electric panel.** If you have a heat meter, please make sure the breaker to the meter is turned on all year, to ensure we receive meter readings. If the breaker is off, your electric heat kilowatt-hour usage will not be billed correctly. The separately metered heat rates run Oct. 1 through April 30.

### KEM ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC.

#### DIRECTORS:

Victor Wald, Chairman, District 4.....Napoleon  
John R. Beck, Vice Chairman, District 1.....Linton  
Carter Vander Wal, Sec.-Treas., District 2.....Pollock  
Dean Dewald, Director, District 5.....Dawson  
Neil Meidinger, Director, District 3.....Zeeland  
Carmen Essig, District-at-Large.....Lehr  
Todd Schnabel, Director-at-Large.....Lehr

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

#### MANAGEMENT:

Travis Kupper.....Co-General Manager/CEO  
Jason Bentz.....Co-General Manager/CEO

#### Report outages to the following toll-free number: 800-472-2673

Hazleton, Linton and Strasburg exchanges' phone number: 701-254-4666

#### OFFICE HOURS:

Monday through Friday,  
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Website: [kemelectric.com](http://kemelectric.com)  
Email address: [info@kemelectric.com](mailto:info@kemelectric.com)

FIND US ON:

