

- Ways to stay informed
- Power in your hands
- Youth programs available
- Winter storm safety

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

**JANUARY 2026**

# HAPPY New Year



## MANAGER'S MESSAGE:

# Easy ways to stay informed



**Travis Kupper**

Co-General Manager/CEO

Happy New Year! As we step into 2026, we want to take a moment to look at the many ways we stay connected to you, our members. Our goal is to make it simple and convenient for you to stay connected with what matters most. Whether it's a planned outage, severe weather response, board decisions or program updates, we offer several ways to keep you in the loop.

**Website:** Our website serves as an information hub for members. On our website, you

can find information ranging from outage maps and payment options to cooperative news.

**Social media:** Follow us on Facebook and Instagram for real-time updates, outage alerts, and stories about our employees and community.

**Print newsletter:** Every month, members who receive a physical bill also receive our print newsletter, which highlights co-op news, programs and engaging infographics that spotlight the topics and issues you care about most. If you have paperless billing, you can also find the print newsletter in your SmartHub account.

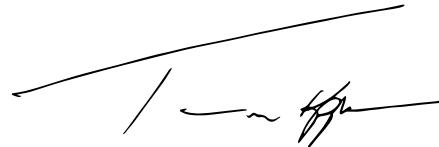
**E-newsletter:** Our monthly e-newsletter delivers cooperative news and helpful tips straight to your

inbox! Our e-newsletter includes a member-focused question-and-answer section, program updates, and relevant state and national news. If you are not currently receiving the e-newsletter, call our office to update your email or update it within SmartHub.

**North Dakota Living and local pages:** You may often see us refer to articles in *North Dakota Living* as "our local pages." Starting on C1 in *North Dakota Living*, you'll find updates on what's happening at your cooperative from operations and member services, along with safety tips, board meeting highlights and member stories that celebrate our community.

**SmartHub:** Available on the web, smartphones and tablets, SmartHub lets you pay your bill, track your energy use and receive the latest co-op news right at your fingertips. Within SmartHub, you can also report an outage without ever having to make a call. Sign up for timely notifications about outages and planned maintenance through SmartHub.

Staying plugged in helps you get the most out of your membership, because this cooperative belongs to you. If you ever have questions or need assistance accessing any of these tools, please don't hesitate to reach out. We're always here to help. 



## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU.



Your voice, your impact! Participate in our member satisfaction survey and play a vital role in shaping the future of our services. If you receive a paper statement, you will get your member survey in the February billing statement. More information regarding the survey will be available in February.

## MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD: **Power in your hands**



**Victor Wald**  
Chairman

As the chairperson of the KEM Electric Cooperative board of directors, I am honored to serve our electric cooperative and our members. Because we're a co-op, we operate a little differently than other utilities. KEM Electric's decisions are made locally by directors who also live right here in our communities.

Everyone who pays to receive electricity from the co-op is a member. When you pay your electric bill each month, your money stays here to pay

for the electricity used or to make improvements to our local system to strengthen service reliability. The money you pay the co-op doesn't line the pockets of shareholders five states away. We're a co-op, and we exist to provide a service to you, our local members.

We believe in local leadership, transparency and democratic control. That is why I want to highlight what it takes to be a director, and encourage anyone interested to consider running for a director position. This is your cooperative, and your voice matters.

As a board member, you'll have the opportunity to contribute to the direction and decisions of KEM Electric. Some of the responsibilities include:

- **Monthly board meetings:** The board convenes once a month to discuss and decide on matters crucial to our cooperative's operations, development and growth.
- **Ongoing training opportunities:** Continuous learning is crucial. Board members have access to training sessions to enhance their knowledge and skills in governance and utility management.

We highly value the commitment of our board members, and we compensate them for their time and travel expenses to show our appreciation.

If you are interested in serving as a director, please attend our membership appreciation event in Steele on Jan. 27 and visit with us, or call the staff at our cooperative to learn more.

Please know the members of KEM Electric are at the heart of everything we do. We exist to serve you and provide the quality, reliable and friendly service you expect and deserve.

While we've grown over the years, we're still driven by the same guiding principles to serve our community. We hope to see or hear from you soon. This co-op was created for you, the members. The power is in your hands. 

## Join us MEMBER APPRECIATION OPEN HOUSE

Come enjoy a delicious meal on behalf of KEM Electric and visit with our board of directors, CEOs, staff as well as other members. Members will also receive a FREE gift.

 **11 A.M.-1 P.M.**  
**ON JAN. 27**



**PIFER'S AUCTION CENTER, STEELE**



## MESSAGE FROM MEMBER RELATIONS: Join the KEM Electric board



**Marcy Sanders**

Manager of  
Member Relations

Are you a dedicated leader with a deep connection to our rural communities? We invite you to join the KEM Electric board of directors and be a driving force behind positive change in the community.

KEM Electric currently has a District 4, District 5 and District At-Large position up for election.

### Why join our board

Running for a director position for an electric cooperative can be a meaningful and impactful

decision. Here are just a few reasons to join:

- **Make a difference:** Contribute to decisions that impact our energy future.
- **Community engagement:** Collaborate with like-minded individuals dedicated to community growth.
- **Professional growth:** Enhance your leadership skills and network.

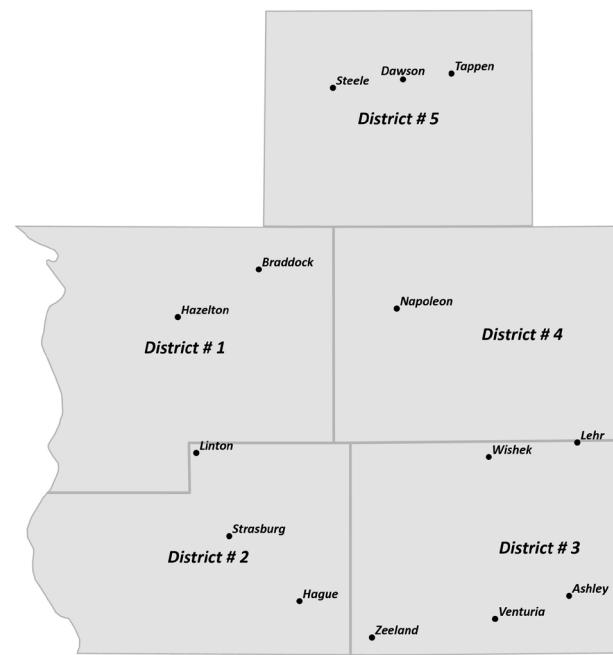
### Who we're looking for

We're seeking individuals with diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives who share our commitment to serving the members of KEM Electric. Ideal candidates should have:

- Leadership and strategic thinking skills
- A commitment to our communities/service area
- Strong communication and collaboration abilities

If you're ready to make a meaningful impact, we encourage you to visit [kemelectric.com](http://kemelectric.com) to learn more. Nomination petitions open on Jan. 31 and must be submitted by the end of day on March 2.

For inquiries or more information, please contact Marcy Sanders at 701-254-4666 or email [msanders@kemelectric.com](mailto:msanders@kemelectric.com).



KEM Electric district map

# SMARTHUB Simplified | How to get started

**Download the SmartHub app, or view online by visiting [www.kemelectric.com](http://www.kemelectric.com)**

Use your account number to register for SmartHub. You can find your account number on your monthly bill. Then click on *Don't have an account?* and register from there!



# CO-OP YOUTH PROGRAMS NOW AVAILABLE

## TOUCHSTONE ENERGY® STUDENT OF THE MONTH

KEM Electric Cooperative selects a deserving student from each local school to receive sponsorship funds throughout the academic year. Nominations are due by the 15th of each month.



## YOUTH TOUR

Youth Tour 2026 is calling, are you in? KEM Electric is now accepting applications for the 2026 Youth Tour. Apply today and level up your summer!



**APPLICATION DEADLINE: JAN. 16**

## HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS

Each year, KEM Electric offers a variety of scholarships for high school seniors. Whether you're attending a four-year university, technical college or trade school, there are various scholarship opportunities.



**APPLICATION DEADLINE: FEB. 6**

Visit [kemelectric.com](http://kemelectric.com) for more information and details on each of these initiatives.

## MESSAGE FROM OPERATIONS: **Planned cooperative projects**



**Dale Nagel**  
Chief of Staff/  
Line Superintendent

As we look ahead into 2026, KEM Electric Cooperative is committed to bringing additional reliability and safety to our system. A team of engineers and operation employees from KEM Electric have thoughtfully planned to ensure seamless execution of the upcoming projects. A few of these projects include cooperative infrastructure upgrades, technology installation and service upgrades.

### Pole testing

In late 2025, pole testing contractors wrapped up testing 7,500 utility poles in KEM Electric's territory. Of the utility poles that were tested, around 150 are being replaced. Crews will be working on replacing these utility poles throughout the coming months as weather allows.

### Technology installation

We continue to upgrade technology across our service area. Sectionalizing technology is being updated from aged oil circuit reclosers, commonly known as OCRs, to TripSavers. TripSavers help improve reliability by preventing outages from temporary faults caused by various factors from animals, trees or lightning. Additionally, supervisory control and data acquisition, commonly known as SCADA, compatible technology will continue to be installed within substations. This technology allows us to have real-time data and control at our fingertips.

### New services and upgrades

Throughout the year, our crews will continue to plan for and install new services as well as service upgrades to meet members' needs. Whether you plan to build a new house, install a grain bin or have other plans that need electric services, be sure to call our office. By contacting us in the early stages of the planning process we can help provide guidance and analyze what your projected electric service requirements may be as well as service availability and potential costs.

### New underground installation

Installation of six miles of new three-phase underground cable from our Midway Substation will begin once the ground thaws. The new cable will run west and allow the cooperative to replace one mile of small, aged cable as well as five miles of three-phase overhead power line. Installing underground cable from substations helps enhance reliability to the system and members.

We would like to remind members to report outages by calling 800-472-2673 or through SmartHub. Additionally, if you have one service with us, you can now report outages by texting OUT to 844-955-2714. This information helps us assess where the cause of the outage may have originated from. KEM Electric continues to focus on the goal of providing safe, efficient, reliable service to our members and look forward to serving you in 2026. ⚡



## SAFETY STARTS WITH ME: Winter storm safety



**Jake Zink**

Journeyman Lineworker

efficient manner."

During uncertain times like power outages, it is important to be prepared and stay safe. Here are some tips to keep in mind before, during and after an outage.

- **Make a storm kit.** Having a few items on hand is better than nothing at all. Include items such as water, nonperishable foods, blankets, a first-aid kit, flashlights and extra batteries. Keep in mind all households may be different and make the kit applicable to you. Place all items in a storage box, so all the items are in one place for easy access if the power goes out.

Snow, ice and high winds are often an inevitable part of the winter on the prairie. These conditions can have an impact on our electric infrastructure, which may lead to power outages.

"We know that outages during storms can be unsettling," says Jake Zink, journeyman lineworker. "But here at KEM Electric Cooperative, our team is ready and prepared to help get power restored in a safe and

- **Report outages.** In the event of an outage, it is important all outages are reported. This helps cooperative employees understand the issue and send a crew to restore the outage. Report an outage by calling 800-472-2673 or by using SmartHub. Additional ways to report an outage can be found on our website, [kemelectric.com](http://kemelectric.com).

- **Use generators safely.** If you plan to use a portable generator as a power source, be sure the generator is located outside your house for proper ventilation. It is also important to follow the manufacturer's directions for operating the generator.

- **Never approach or touch a downed power line.** Always assume all wires on the ground are electrically charged. Call us to report the downed power line immediately.

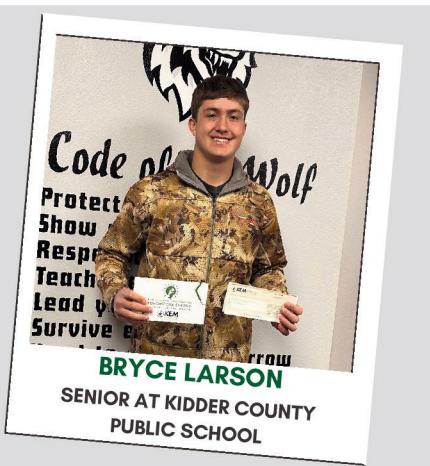
Planning for severe storms or other emergencies can reduce stress and anxiety caused by the weather event and can lessen the impact of the storm's effects. Additionally, rest assured knowing KEM Electric employees are working as efficiently and safely as they can to restore power to your home. ⚡

## Congratulations BRYCE LARSON FROM KIDDER COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL!

### NOVEMBER TOUCHSTONE ENERGY® STUDENT OF THE MONTH

"What really makes Bryce stand out is his character. He's grounded in his faith, treats others with kindness and respect, and is always willing to lend a hand or a listening ear. Whether it's in the classroom, on the field or in the hallway, he sets an example that others naturally follow," says Bryce's nominator.

In **January**, KEM Electric will be accepting nominations of students from **Napoleon Public School**. The deadline for nominations is Jan. 15. This sponsorship is open to any K-12 student. Visit [kemelectric.com](http://kemelectric.com) for more information.



## KEM ELECTRIC BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS: OCT. 28

The meeting of the board of directors of KEM Electric Cooperative was held on Oct. 28 in Linton. The meeting was called to order at 9:36 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.

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

**Strategic items:** Bentz and Kupper presented the co-general managers' report, which included updates on Basin Electric Power Cooperative, Innovative Energy Alliance Cooperative and other items. Several additional Basin Electric reports and board documents were available for review.

**Department reports:** Craigmile provided the financial report, which included a budget review. Nagel provided a department report, which included

projects and an outage report. Sanders provided a department report on member engagement and programs. Chief Information Officer Charlie Dunbar provided a written report for the board. Grosz provided an update on the status pertaining to legal topics and projects.

**Action items:** The board discussed and resolved action items.

**Discussion/general information:** The board discussed the preliminary capital budget, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association programs and more.

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

The meeting concluded with adjournment. Secretary-Treasurer Carter Vander Wal certified the accuracy of the minutes.

**Next meeting date:** The next meeting is at 9:30 a.m. on Jan. 27 in Steele. 

### Statement of nondiscrimination

KEM Electric Cooperative is a recipient of federal assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). In accordance with federal civil rights law and USDA civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, employees and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/ parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible agency or USDA's TARGET

Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at 800-877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD3027, found online at [ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call 866-632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- 1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., SW Washington, DC 20250-9410
- 2) fax: 202-690-7442
- 3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

KEM Electric is an equal opportunity provider.

## 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, Director-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**

Hazelton, 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:

