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FROM GRANDMA'S KITCHEN TO STORE SHELVES

Kimmy's Kuchen

BY SAMANTHA VANGSNESS

Kuchen is a traditional family dessert many Germans from Russia families still cherish. It is often a staple at weddings and reunions or during simple days with a cup of coffee. Every grandma has a recipe that tells a story of heritage, love and time spent in the kitchen.

Kim Meidinger is sharing her grandma's recipe with families across the region. What began as a way for the farm family to supplement income has expanded into a well-known family business delivering

traditional tastes to area kitchens.

Start of something homemade

Kim began selling snack mixes and candies in 2015, when she and her husband, Keith, began Kim's Gourmet Shop. In 2016, Kim's business took a meaningful turn when she attended the Tri-County Fair, where she took part in a kuchen contest.

"I came home with all five categories at the top," Kim says.

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After that, Kim's sons continued to encourage her to sell her well-liked kuchen. In 2017, Kim decided to add kuchen to her offerings and transitioned to Kimmy's Kuchen.

Kim started to sell kuchen at vendor shows across the state, but then COVID-19 hit and the business had to switch gears.

"I told my husband, 'We need to figure something out, because if we don't, it's going to be done,'" Kim says.

But shifting gears during that time allowed Kim to expand her baked goods into grocery stores, butcher shops and other markets across North and South Dakota. Now, Kim and Keith make a loop every month to deliver orders to those shops. Each Friday, they load the truck and hit the road to deliver goods to South Dakota one week, Bismarck and Dickinson the next, Jamestown to Fargo another and along the eastern border rounding back to home the final week.

"Every week, we have a place to go," Kim says.

Recipes passed down

The recipe Kim uses is special to her, as it is her grandmother's recipe. Kim only knew her grandma for a short time, but her mom shared stories about her while she made kuchen. Kim makes her kuchen with real ingredients from scratch, just like Grandma. Even the fruit Kim uses is fresh or frozen, ensuring it is at peak flavor.

"There's nothing artificial. We use eggs, flour, sugar, butter, milk. That's what it is," Kim says.

Over the years, the kuchen recipe has not changed, but Kim has found ways to improve her process, such as purchasing a commercial oven that can fit 18 kuchen at a time compared to eight in a traditional home oven. Another upgrade is using a pizza press to help with rolling the dough versus spending hours a day rolling 100 kuchen crusts.

Everything is made fresh the week of delivery, as Kim does not keep a stock of products.

"We make them as fast as they go out," Kim says.

The commitment to fresh, simple ingredients also comes with a few extra steps.

"Because there is nothing artificial, it's not shelf stable," Kim says. "Everything has to be frozen. So, when they take it home, thaw it out in the fridge and then it's good for seven days."

Kim's inventory has spread beyond her kuchen, but she also offers other baked goods, such as bars and another German favorite, knoepla and knoepla soup.

The knoepla Kim sells is an additional family recipe from her Grandma Nitschke. Everyone has their own beloved recipe for soup and Kim tried to



Kim Meidinger prepares each batch of kuchen with fresh ingredients.



Kim and Keith Meidinger

adapt it so people can make it their own when they take it home.

"People can buy my knoepla and make it to how they like it," Kim says. "I make it so people can make it their own, because everyone has their own taste and liking."

Rooted in tradition

Kim recalls making 40 kuchen once a year while she was growing up. Now, Kim is making 100 a day, surrounded by her husband, children, nieces and grandchildren. The business headquarters is just outside of Kim and Keith's home near Zeeland, which is now Kimmy Kuchen's headquarters. Everyone helps in different ways to ensure orders are fulfilled and product is delivered.

"I'm the delivery guy, the pack mule and the quality control," Keith says. "Every once in a while, we have a misfit. That's one I could eat."

Although the shop is busy, Kim enjoys getting to spend this time at home with her family making delicious baked goods for customers.

"I don't want to become rich in this. The reason I started it was for supplemental income for my family and for my husband, so we didn't have to leave the farm," Kim says. "That is why I started doing this."

Kim's goal for the business continues with family.

"As for my shop, my goal is to keep it in my family. I am hoping that one of our children, if not our children, our grandchildren, takes it over and keeps it the way we've been running it," she says.

Rooted in family and strong tradition, Kimmy's Kuchen is filling homes all over with a sense of heritage and tradition, which brings joy to Kim. Her baked goods bring customers down memory lane and one of her favorite parts of the business is



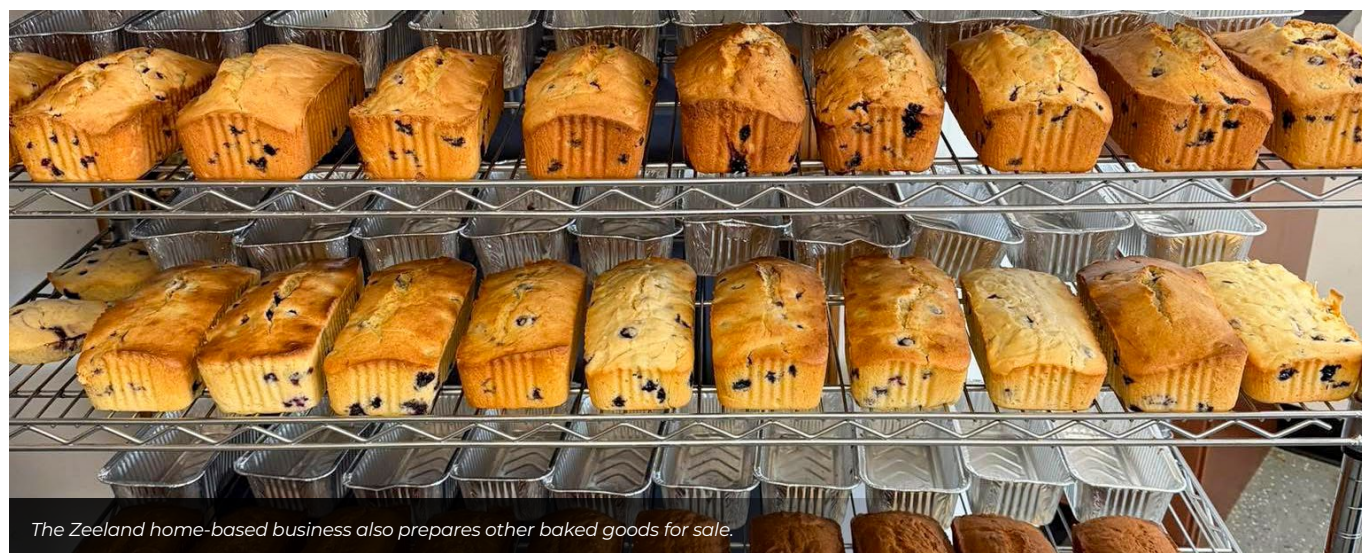
Knoephla soup is another staple offered by Kim Meidinger's business.

hearing customer comments.

"The number one thing that sticks in my mind is, 'Your kuchen reminds me so much of my grandma's kuchen,'" Kim says. "That just makes me feel really good, because that is my grandma's recipe."

Kimmy's Kuchen is more than a business. It is a way to keep family traditions alive, staying rooted on the farm and sharing food that reminds customers of home.

Kimmy's Kuchen can be found in stores across North and South Dakota. More information about the business, offerings and more can be found on Facebook at Kimmy's Kuchen. ⚡



The Zeeland home-based business also prepares other baked goods for sale.

MANAGER'S MESSAGE: UNDERSTANDING YOUR ELECTRIC RATES



Jason Bentz

Co-General Manager/CEO

As your electric cooperative, our mission is simple: Serve our members, not outside shareholders, while balancing reliability, affordability and long-term sustainability.

One of the most important topics we evaluate is rates and how they affect our members. We are committed to keeping rates as low as possible while continuing to deliver safe, dependable service. This year, our cooperative experienced a rate increase driven primarily

by rising wholesale power costs. We anticipate an additional wholesale rate increase in 2027 that is expected to put further pressure on our rates, likely necessitating another rate adjustment.

Several key factors are contributing to these higher costs.

- **New generation and transmission:** Basin Electric Power Cooperative, one of our wholesale providers, is investing more than \$10 billion over the next 10 years to expand and maintain generation and transmission infrastructure. These investments are necessary to support growing demand and ensure long-term reliability. Additionally, the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) is investing billions to modernize aging hydroelectric generation and transmission systems. While these upgrades come at a cost, they are essential to maintaining safe and reliable service for the future.
- **Inflationary pressures:** Like many industries, we face increased costs for labor, materials, contracted services and maintenance. Higher interest rates have also raised the cost of borrowing, adding to overall expenses.

- **Market volatility:** Power markets have become more unpredictable, with prices influenced by fluctuating natural gas markets, increased intermittent generation and rising electricity demand. Managing this volatility requires additional resources and planning.

We are also seeing impacts from new regional requirements to maintain higher reserve capacity margins, essentially a reliability “insurance policy” to help ensure power is available during unexpected outages or peak demand.

Despite these challenges, we are focused on controlling costs wherever possible. We partner with other cooperatives for bulk purchasing, share services through the Innovative Energy Alliance Cooperative and utilize specialized contractors and maintenance providers to improve efficiency and control expenses.

Strong financial management allows us to continue investing in infrastructure and managing risk while working to stabilize rates. Looking ahead, our management team and board of directors will carefully evaluate potential rate adjustments for 2027. Our recent cost-of-service study provides valuable guidance as we plan for the future.

We know these changes matter and we remain committed to transparency, thoughtful planning and responsible decision-making. Thank you for your continued support of your cooperative as we work together to provide reliable, affordable power for years to come. ⚡



MESSAGE FROM OPERATIONS: GUIDING HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE



Dale Nagel

Chief of Staff/
Line Superintendent

Rooted in the cooperative principle of education and training, electric cooperatives offer seasonal apprentice lineworkers opportunities to help them build skills and advance their knowledge.

This year, Zach Dockter joined KEM Electric Cooperative crews as a seasonal apprentice lineworker in May. This is an opportunity for apprentice lineworkers to gain 1,000 hours of field work while also working to achieve journeyman status. By working

alongside experienced crews, apprentices gain valuable field hours, learn essential safety practices and develop skills critical to the trade.

This experience helps recent lineworker graduates gain valuable skills in maintenance, troubleshooting and safety, which can't be replicated in a classroom. This hands-on exposure allows apprentices to build confidence and proficiency, reinforcing technical knowledge while exposing them to on-the-job expectations and responsibilities.

While working at the cooperative, apprentices experience a variety of tasks, which can include construction of new services, retiring aging infrastructure, working alongside contractors and service upgrades.

KEM Electric line crews work around the service area every day, which means they visit with our members frequently. By joining the crew, apprentices are not only learning about the technical side of the cooperative, but also about the cooperative principles.

Fostering mentorship and skill development of apprentice lineworkers helps ensure knowledge is



Zach Dockter joined the cooperative as a seasonal apprentice lineworker to gain experience in his career.

strengthened. Apprentices not only gain the hours required for advancement, but also insight into the membership and cooperative model and other values that make a successful lineworker. Through these efforts, KEM Electric continues to invest in education while maintaining the level of reliability members rely upon every day. ⚡

REPORT AN OUTAGE BY TEXT MESSAGE

If you are a SmartHub user, you can report outages by text message. If your account includes only one electric meter or service location - such as a home or business - you can report an outage by texting OUT to 844-955-2714.

MESSAGE FROM MEMBER RELATIONS: TOUCHSTONE ENERGY STUDENT OF THE MONTH RETURNS



Marcy Sanders

*Manager
of Member Relations*

As the 2026-27 school year begins, KEM Electric Cooperative announces the return of our Touchstone Energy® Student of the Month program! Thanks to the membership, this has been a successful program highlighting the youth in our service area and we are excited to continue it into this school year.

In partnership with Touchstone Energy Cooperatives, we look forward to recognizing deserving youth once again. This program aims to recognize outstanding

students in grades K-12 and provide a monetary sponsorship to their school for a project or initiative chosen by the winning student.

KEM Electric firmly believes in supporting education and fostering the development of young individuals in our community. The Touchstone Energy Student of the Month program presents an excellent opportunity

for us to celebrate and recognize students who excel in everything, ranging from academics to leadership to community involvement or personal growth.

Application process

Students can be nominated by teachers, parents/guardians, school administrators or community members. Nomination forms can be accessed online through our website at kemelectric.com. The deadline is the 15th of each month. All students who attend school in KEM Electric's service area can be nominated from September through March. Students who are homeschooled or live outside of the service area and whose parents are members of KEM Electric are also eligible to be nominated in April.

The winning recipient will receive a monetary donation to his or her school. The students will have the opportunity to choose a project within their school for which the donation will be utilized. Previous Touchstone Energy Student of the Month winners are not eligible for the sponsorship in the 2026-27 school year. ⚡



**For more information and to
nominate a student, scan the
QR code or visit our website.**



SAFETY STARTS WITH ME:

IMPORTANCE OF HARVEST SAFETY



Dillon Steinolfson

Journeyman
Lineworker

Across the fields of our service territory, harvest is underway. Whether crops are being trucked to the farm for storage or heading to the elevator, this is a busy time in the field and on the roadways. We know this is a crucial time in every producer's operation, but safety cannot take a backseat.

In 2025, 59 outages related to animals, farm equipment and vehicles were reported to KEM Electric Cooperative. We know accidents happen and it is important to report any damage

to KEM Electric as soon as possible, so crews can repair the issue and ensure further damage does not occur.

At KEM Electric, safety is a top priority for employees, members and everyone in the community. Before crew members hop in the vehicle every day, they do a 360-degree safety check. The 360-degree safety check is a complete walk around the vehicle to check for hazards or anything misplaced. Due to farm equipment's large size and additional extension, this is something that could benefit producers. No matter how familiar you are with a piece of equipment or area, it is important to identify clearance and know where power lines, utility poles, transformers and other cooperative equipment are located in the farmyard or fields.

Here are additional electrical safety tips to keep in mind this harvest season:

- Use a spotter when operating large machinery near power lines.
- Keep equipment and materials at least 10 feet from power lines, at all times, in all directions.
- Look up and use care when moving any equipment, such as extending augers or raising the bed of grain trucks, around power lines.
- Inspect the height of farm equipment to determine clearance.
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.

Keep in mind if your equipment does make contact with a power line, do not leave the cab. Immediately call 911, warn others to stay away and wait for the utility crew to terminate power. If you must exit the cab, such as in the case of a fire, jump off the equipment with your feet together, without touching the ground and machinery at the same time. Keeping your feet



Accidents happen and it is important to report any damages poles or power lines to the cooperative as soon as possible.

together, hop to safety as you leave the area.

Putting safety first requires alertness, focus and knowledge of potential hazards and safety steps. Slowing down and taking a few extra minutes to survey your equipment and surroundings can help ensure everyone can go home safely at the end of the day.

If you see cooperative electric equipment that needs attention, please call the office at 701-254-4666. From all of us at KEM Electric, we hope you have a safe and bountiful harvest season. ⚡

KEM ELECTRIC BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS: MAY 26

The meeting of the board of directors of KEM Electric Cooperative was held on May 26 in Linton. The meeting was called to order at 9:32 a.m. by Chair Victor Wald. A quorum was present. Also present were co-General Managers/CEOs Travis Kupper and Jason Bentz, Chief Financial Officer Alex Craigmile, Chief of Staff/Line Superintendent Dale Nagel, Manager of Member Relations Marcy Sanders, Legal Counsel Jennifer Grosz and Board Liaison Connie Hill.

Consent agenda: Additions were proposed to the consent agenda. The consent agenda was approved as amended.

Strategic items: Bentz and Kupper presented the co-general managers' report, which included updates on a N.D. Public Service Commission meeting, county commission meetings and a North Dakota managers meeting. Several additional Basin Electric Power Cooperative reports and board documents were available for review.

Department reports: Craigmile provided a financial report that included a review of the April financials, covering operating revenue and key ratios. Nagel provided a staff report, which included employee

updates and projects. Nagel also reviewed an operations report, including pole testing, planned outages and fire mitigation protocol being used by employees. Sanders provided a member relations department report on youth programs, community activities and other communications. Sanders also outlined various details related to the 2026 Annual Meeting. Chief Information Officer Charlie Dunbar provided a written report for the board. Grosz provided an update on easements, the wildfire mitigation plan and other matters.

Action items: The board selected a Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC) annual meeting delegate and discussed the BEK Communications ballot.

Discussion/general information: The board discussed the CFC Integrity Fund and office matters.

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. Aug. 25 in Linton. ⚡

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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
Email address: info@kemelectric.com

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