

MANAGER'S MESSAGE: Beyond Kilowatts



Today, I want to take a moment to discuss an essential aspect of our cooperative's operations: base rates. A few members expressed concern about these rates in our recent member satisfaction survey, and I wanted to take the time to explain them a little more.

Base rates, which are the foundation of our rate structure, play a pivotal role in ensuring the financial sustainability and operational integrity of our cooperative. These rates represent the fixed costs associated with maintaining and operating the infrastructure necessary to deliver electricity to your doorstep, regardless of the amount of energy consumed.

It's important to understand base rates encompass more than just the cost of electricity generation. They also cover a myriad of other expenses, including transmission and distribution infrastructure, equipment maintenance, grid modernization initiatives and compliance with regulatory requirements. These investments are essential for maintaining a reliable and resilient electric system that meets the evolving needs of our members.

KEM Electric Cooperative takes great care in setting our base rates to balance the needs of our members with the financial obligations of our cooperative. Our goal is to ensure rates remain fair, transparent and reflective of the true cost of service, while also promoting affordability and accessibility for all members, regardless of their energy usage.

However, it's essential to recognize our cooperative is more than just a utility provider of kilowatt-hours. We are stewards

of an essential service that powers the homes, farms and businesses that form the backbone of our communities.

We are a community partner dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for our members and fostering economic prosperity in our service area. From supporting local initiatives and charitable causes to providing energy efficiency programs and educational opportunities, we strive to make a positive impact on the communities we serve.

Moreover, cooperatives like ours are uniquely positioned to serve areas for-profit utilities may overlook due to economic considerations, such as the challenges associated with fewer members per mile of line. Unlike investor-owned utilities, which prioritize profitability, cooperatives are driven by a commitment to serving all members of our community, regardless of geographic location or population density.

As we navigate the complexities of setting rates and financial management, it's crucial to remember our cooperative is rooted in the principles of cooperation, democracy and member ownership. Your input and participation are invaluable as we work together to shape the future of our cooperative and ensure it remains a beacon of service and integrity for generations to come.

Thank you for your continued support and trust in KEM Electric. Together, we are more than just selling kilowatts. We are providing an essential service that powers the vitality and resilience of our communities. ⚡



Jason Bentz, Co-General Manager/ CEO

"WE ARE PROVIDING AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE THAT POWERS THE VITALITY AND RESILIENCE OF OUR COMMUNITIES."

CO-GENERAL MANAGER/CEO, JASON BENTZ



OFFICERS

Chair.....Victor "Chuck" Wald
Vice Chair..... John R. Beck
Secretary-Treasurer.....Carter Vander Wal

DIRECTORS:

Dean Dewald • Neil Meidinger
Carmen Essig • Anton J. "Tony" Schaffner

CO-GENERAL MANAGERS/CEOS:

Travis Kupper
Jason Bentz

EMPOWERING OUR SERVICE AREA: Operation Round Up deadline approaching

Operation Round Up stands as a beacon of goodwill in the KEM Electric Cooperative service area. As part of this voluntary program, members can make a significant impact by simply rounding up their utility bills. Through this program, the KEM Electric Operation Round Up board receives vital support to enhance and uplift our local communities.

The board members, who are also KEM Electric members, meet and disburse funds in the form of grants

to nonprofit corporations, organizations or agencies. All the money raised by members stays in our local area.

The next Operation Round Up deadline is September 30.

To complete an application or for more information, visit our website, kemelectric.com/operation-round-up or call the office at 701-254-4666 or 800-472-2673. ⚡

INVESTING IN YOUTH: Touchstone Energy® Student of the Month



As we start the 2024-25 school year, we would like to recognize our May Touchstone Energy® Student of the Month, Abby Rivinius. Rivinius recently graduated from Gackle-Streeter Public School and was active in the school. She continues to be active around the community, too.

"She is very involved in her community. She has been volunteering for numerous years and still does with the Gackle ambulance and fire department, the Streeter Fire Department as well as many other programs," Rivinius's nominator says.

Rivinius plans to put the money toward first-aid training at the school for the students provided by the Gackle Ambulance Service. Students will be given first-aid kits upon completion of the training.

2024-25 Touchstone Energy Student of the Month

Last year, KEM Electric Cooperative launched our first year of the Touchstone Energy Student of the Month program, in

partnership with Touchstone Energy Cooperative. It was an outstanding success, as we were able to reward various well-deserving youth in our service area! The program will be returning for the 2024-25 school year, and we look forward to recognizing deserving youth once again.

This program aims to recognize outstanding students in grades K-12 and provide a monetary donation 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. The deadline is the 15th of each month. Students are eligible to be nominated and chosen September through April. Students who are members and are homeschooled or live outside of the service area are also eligible to apply and will be chosen in April.

The winning recipient will receive a monetary donation to his or her school. The student will have the opportunity to choose a project within his or her school for which the donation will be utilized. Winners from the 2023-24 school year will not be eligible for the donation in the 2024-25 school year. ⚡



Call the office or scan the QR code for more information on the Touchstone Energy Student of the Month program.

