

- Scholarships available
- Reflecting on 2024
- Student of the Month
- Interested in serving?



Marvel Gross (right) accepted the RDFC grant funds on behalf of the McIntosh County Historical Society.



Dave Just (middle) and **George Wolff** (right) accepted the RDFC grant funds on behalf of the Wishek Fire Protection District.



Link Golz (right) accepted the RDFC grant funds on behalf of the Ashley Fire Protection District.

SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES: KEM ELECTRIC GRANTS RDFC FUNDS TO LOCAL COMMUNITY ENTITIES

KEM Electric board director, **Neil Meidinger**, awarded RDFC funding to McIntosh County Historical Society, Wishek Fire Protection District and Ashley Fire Protection District on behalf of the cooperative.

PRESERVING AND RESTORING COMMUNITIES:

Co-op awards grants

One core value of KEM Electric Cooperative is commitment to the communities and members it serves, through sponsorships, grants or participation in community events. The Rural Development Finance Corporation (RDFC) grant demonstrates the true meaning of commitment by awarding funds to local cooperatives, such as KEM Electric, which are then passed on to local entities.

Earlier this year, KEM Electric received a \$3,000 grant allocation from RDFC to benefit its service area. KEM Electric awarded funds to the Ashley Fire Protection District, McIntosh County Historical Society and Wishek Fire Protection District.

Ashley Fire Protection District

The Ashley Fire Protection District (AFPD) and its 26 volunteers serve the town of Ashley and 400 additional square miles. The AFPD received RDFC funds to purchase new cold water rescue suits. These suits will help volunteers assist and rescue during water events, such as vehicles falling into ice.

“We have had a few incidents with vehicle accidents in the water during the winter and these suits will help allow for rescue,” says Fire Chief Link Golz.

Golz recalls the fires this fall and is grateful for a helpful community which has supported the fire district and the safety of the community.

“It is humbling to see how people show up when they can and also thank us for what we do,” Golz says.

He thanks the community and local entities which have donated to help the district purchase equipment it needs to continue serving the area.

AFPD hosts a few fundraisers throughout the year, including one in January. For more information and details, visit its Facebook page, “Ashley Fire Protection District.”

McIntosh County Historical Society

The McIntosh County Historical Society helps preserve the McIntosh County Heritage Center, known as a hub of German-Russian history. The heritage center showcases German-Russian settler artifacts, such as clothing, furniture, art and much more. The group of historians at the society work hard to preserve the artifacts and stories from the past for all to enjoy. The museum at the heritage center is undergoing some upgrades to help ensure artifacts from its pioneering ancestors can continue to be safely stored. RDFC funds received by the historical society will go toward the structural updates to the museum.

“The main focus of the funds will be the museum,” says Marvel Gross, McIntosh County Historical Society board member.

The museum is home to many German-Russian settler artifacts that have been donated to the heritage center over the years. With other historical buildings on the property getting updates over the years, the museum has not been updated since 1977 and is in need of structural improvements.

“The McIntosh County Heritage Center is where we embrace our heritage and our culture is still alive,” Gross says. “Funds such as these will help us continue many years down the road.”

In the winter months, the McIntosh County Heritage Center is open to visitors by appointment only by calling 701-288-3504. You can also visit its Facebook page, “McIntosh County Heritage Center.”

Wishek Fire Protection District

The Wishek Fire Protection District (WFPD) provides an essential service to Wishek residents totaling about 342 square miles. WFPD received RDFC grant funds to build a new fire hall.

“Equipment is getting larger, and the team is outgrowing our current space,” says George Wolff, president of the fire district board.

The fire district has 30 dedicated volunteers to help ensure safe and responsive fire services to the Wishek area. The new fire hall will have five bays to house trucks and equipment. The current hall was built in 1984 and has been outgrown by an increasing number of volunteers. The district hopes to break ground on the project in the spring of 2025.

“We have several volunteers who start with the district when they are in high school and either stay with us and serve or go on to serve the community they end up in,” Wolff says.

The WFPD hosts fundraisers around the community to help get additional funds for the projects, and Wolff is appreciative of the efforts.

“We are very appreciative of the community's response to helping us raise funds for our new hall,” Wolff says. ⚡



2025 SCHOLARSHIPS

DEADLINE: FEB. 10, 2025

Download Application



Area high school scholarship

KEM Electric Cooperative will award eight \$500 scholarships to qualified applicants. KEM Electric will choose one graduating senior from Ashley, Wishek, Zeeland, Strasburg, Linton, Hazelton-Moffit-Braddock, Kidder County and Napoleon to receive scholarship funds.

Home school, GED setting or student outside of KEM service area

The co-op will also award one \$500 scholarship to a graduating senior from a homeschool setting, GED setting or a school outside of our service area.

\$1,000 Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarship

KEM Electric Cooperative will award a \$1,000 scholarship to a student who is already enrolled or planning to enroll in a full-time graduate or undergraduate program. The student must attend an accredited two- or four-year program, university or vocational/tech school.


Luck-of-the-draw scholarship

KEM Electric will award two \$500 luck-of-the-draw scholarships.

These will be awarded in June at the KEM Electric annual meeting in Linton.

All scholarships require an application form to be filled out and submitted to KEM Electric. Applications can be found by scanning the QR code, visiting our website, www.kemelectric.com or calling the office at 701-254-4666. Applications must be submitted by email to msanders@kemelectric.com, or printed and mailed to: KEM Electric Cooperative, Attn: Marcy Sanders, 107 S. Broadway, P.O. Box 790, Linton, ND 58552.



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

All applicants must have a parent or guardian who is a KEM Electric member.

MANAGER'S MESSAGE:

Reflecting on 2024



Jason Bentz
Co-General Manager/CEO

As December unfolds and we approach the end of the year, it's a fitting time to pause and reflect on the past months. This year has been one of growth, challenges and achievements, and we are deeply grateful for your continued support and partnership.

In a year filled with both triumphs and trials, your unwavering trust and engagement have been the cornerstone of our success.

Because of you, our dedicated

members, we can continue to provide reliable service and work toward a brighter future. Your involvement in our cooperative, whether through feedback, participation in events or simply being a valued member, makes a significant difference in our journey.

We also want to extend our gratitude to our dedicated team members who work tirelessly behind the scenes. Their commitment and hard work ensure we meet our goals and address your needs with the utmost care and professionalism.

Looking ahead to the new year, we remain committed to serving you with dedication and enthusiasm. May this season bring you joy, peace and time to enjoy with loved ones. Thank you for being an essential part of our cooperative family. Your trust and support mean more to us than words can express.

We wish you a wonderful holiday season and a bright start to the new year. ⚡



Congratulations ANNABELLE HUBER, HAZELTON-MOFFIT-BRADDOCK PUBLIC SCHOOL!

OCTOBER TOUCHSTONE ENERGY® STUDENT OF THE MONTH

Throughout the school year, KEM Electric is choosing one student at random who has been nominated from the schools in KEM Electric's service area to receive a \$125 sponsorship in partnership with Touchstone Energy Cooperative. The funds can be utilized to the student's choosing for school activities.

In **December**, KEM Electric will be accepting nominations of students from **Linton Public School**.

The deadline for nominations is Dec. 15. This sponsorship is open to any K-12 student.

"Annabelle is a hard worker and has a great work ethic"

"Her energy is contagious"

"Annabelle is always willing to lend a helping hand around HMB and the community"



Scan the QR code to nominate a student or for more information, or visit www.kemelectric.com/touchstone-energy-student-month.



MESSAGE FROM OPERATIONS:

Recap of 2024



Dale Nagel

Chief of Staff/
Line Superintendent

Throughout 2024, KEM Electric Cooperative crews have worked to improve system reliability by maintaining and upgrading electrical infrastructure, such as poles and substations. Before work begins each year, the engineering staff at the Innovative Energy Alliance Cooperative, which we are member-owners of, develops a work plan using historical data as well as priorities from our operations team.

This year, crews installed new services, replaced aging infrastructure, such as utility poles, and upgraded reclosures across the service territory.

In late 2023 and into 2024, south central North Dakota faced a damaging ice storm. KEM Electric's service territory was amid the storm's trail. KEM Electric lineworkers worked to restore power to members as quickly as they could by repairing snapped power poles and line. Various neighboring electric cooperatives came to help the restoration efforts. In total from the ice storm, KEM Electric repaired about 60 utility poles as well as anchors, crossarms and various power line breaks.

As winter wrapped up and spring construction began, KEM Electric crews started working on projects across the service area. Underground line was trenched and installed out of the Linton substation. Installing underground power lines in this area eliminated two miles of cross-county, overhead three-phase power lines. This upgrade reduced the number of potential outages due to the increase in voltage to members.

KEM Electric reevaluated its regulator use around the system's grid to continue to ensure reliable electric services to members. Regulators are used to provide consistent system voltage levels. By installing new equipment, retiring aged regulators and strategically moving regulators around the service area, KEM Electric has enhanced the service it provides.

In addition, KEM Electric identified aging infrastructure, including regulators and reclosures that needed to be upgraded or installed. Two substations, Sunburst by Beaver Bay and Krassna near Westfield, received new reclosures, known as TripSavers. The TripSavers are oil-free and require less

maintenance when compared to the traditional oil-circuit reclosures, ultimately reducing outages as well as truck rolls for the operations crews.

As we look to the next few weeks of 2024, you may spot KEM Electric line crews continuing to work on various projects as the weather allows. If you see them, feel free to give them a wave or say hello, but keep a safe distance, as they may be working on energized line.

Also, as a friendly reminder, if you see any cooperative equipment that looks unsafe and should be assessed by the cooperative, be sure to call the office at 800-472-2673 or 701-254-4666.

We hope outages are few and far between this winter, but want to encourage you to report outages by calling the office. Thank you for your patience and support throughout 2024. We look forward to ensuring safe and reliable services for you all in 2025!⚡

In 2024, KEM Electric crews:

Inspected
4,500 utility poles

Replaced
**60 utility poles
due to aging**

Installed
45 new services

Installed
36 TripSavers

MESSAGE FROM MEMBER RELATIONS:

Interested in serving? Join board of directors



Marcy Sanders
Manager of
Member Relations

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

KEM Electric currently has a District At Large vacant seat that needs to be filled, along with the District 3 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 and service area.
- Strong communication and collaboration abilities.

If you're ready to make a meaningful impact, we encourage you to visit www.kemelectric.com to learn more. Nomination petitions open on Jan. 11, 2025, and must be submitted by the end of day on March 12, 2025.

For inquiries or more information, please contact Marcy Sanders at 701-254-4666 or email msanders@kemelectric.com.

ENTER YOUR YOUTH TOUR ERA

JUNE 15-21, 2025

1,800 students.
7 days.
1 unforgettable trip.

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.



HONORING @WWI MEMORIAL HEROES

To enter the essay-writing contest:

- You must be a sophomore or junior in high school for the school year 2024-2025.
- You and your parents or guardian must be served by KEM Electric Cooperative.

Essay question:
Why is it important to be involved in your community, and how does that prepare you to be a future leader?

The application deadline is Jan. 17, 2025.

Email entries to [Marcy Sanders at 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.

Questions? Please contact Marcy Sanders, KEM Electric, at 701-254-4666 during regular business hours.



Learn more at
kemelectric.com/youth-tour

SAFETY STARTS WITH ME: Holiday safety

As the holiday season progresses, we will soon be joining our family and friends to celebrate the final holidays of the year. This time of year brings joy and warmth, but as the weather gets cooler and we spend more time indoors, the holidays can also bring increased energy use and a higher risk of electrical and fire hazards.

“As your local electric cooperative, our team at KEM Electric Cooperative cares about your wellbeing,” says Kevin Horner, Linton area foreman. “With that in mind, here are a few practical tips to help you stay safe and energy efficient during the holiday season.”

Safety first

- Before decorating begins, remember to always check electrical cords and light strands to make sure they aren't frayed or damaged.
- It is recommended to double check the holiday lights used outside are rated for outdoor use.
- Remember to test your smoke alarms often due to increased cooking and candle enjoyment this time of year.

'Tis the season for savings

- The thermostat is one of the best places for savings, since heating and cooling make up the majority of home energy consumption. Lower the thermostat a few degrees, especially when you have family or friends stopping by.
- Decorate with LED holiday lights. LEDs are the most energy-efficient lighting options available, and they

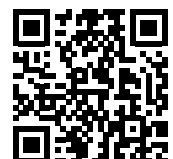


- last much longer than traditional bulbs.
 - When cooking this holiday season, remember smaller countertop appliances, such as air fryers and slow cookers, consume a fraction of the energy used to heat an oven.
- From your friends at KEM Electric, we hope your holiday season is merry and bright. ⚡



Reminder:

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program applications are now being accepted until May 31, 2025. For more information, scan the QR code or contact your local human service office.



KEM ELECTRIC BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS: **Sept. 24**

The meeting of the board of directors of KEM Electric Cooperative was held on Sept. 24 in Linton. The meeting was called to order at 9:38 a.m. by Chairman Victor Wald. A quorum was present. Also present were co-General Managers/CEOs Travis Kupper and Jason Bentz, Chief Financial Officer Alex Craigmile, Legal Counsel Tom Bair, Chief of Staff/Line Superintendent Dale Nagel, Member Relations Manager Marcy Sanders and Executive Assistant Connie Hill. Alison Deelstra with the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC) was present as a guest.

Consent agenda: A few proposed additions were made to the agenda. The consent agenda was approved as amended.

Strategic/action: Bentz and Kupper provided the co-general managers' report, which included updates on the North Dakota Industry Summit, Basin Electric Power Cooperative's Region 5-6 meeting and more. Basin Electric, West Dakota Utility Services and 3C Construction reports were also provided.

Action items: Action items were discussed and resolved.

Discussion/general information: Deelstra presented a CFC update to the board. The board conducted an annual review of board policy and discussed strategic planning.

Department reports: Craigmile provided the financial report. Nagel provided a department report on outage information, safety statistics and safety meeting minutes. Sanders provided a department report, which included 2025 annual meeting information and member appreciation events. Chief Information Officer Charlie Dunbar provided a written report for the board. Bair provided a legal counsel report.

Executive session: The board entered an executive session.

The meeting concluded with the 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 Dec.17 in Linton. If you wish to be placed on the agenda, please call the office. ⚡



KEM ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC.

DIRECTORS:

Victor Wald, Chairman Napoleon
 Carmen Essig, Vice Chairman Lehr
 Carter Vander Wal, Sec.-Treas. Pollock
 Dean Dewald, Director Dawson
 John R. Beck, Director Linton
 Neil Meidinger, Director Zeeland
 Vacancy, Director-at-large

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

MANAGEMENT:

Travis Kupper Co-GM/CEO
 Jason Bentz Co-GM/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

FIND US ON:

