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CARING FOR OTHERS NEAR AND FAR: **Susan Wald**

BY SAMANTHA VANGSNES

After 40 years of service to her students and school, Susan Wald retired as a teacher at Napoleon Public School and tackled her next opportunity to help others.

With a heart of service, Wald always envisioned volunteering after retirement. Beyond that vision, Wald also enjoys exploring new places, connecting with people and embracing new experiences. This combination of passions naturally led her to the American Red Cross, where her desire to help others and her love for exploration converge. Wald had the Red Cross in her thoughts for quite some time, recognizing its principles align closely with her own values and beliefs.

"They are a good service organization, with good values and longevity," Wald said, referencing the organization's inception with founder Clara Barton.

An important aspect for Red Cross volunteers is to have proper training. Wald began training in early 2023, while she was still teaching. Once her training was completed, she was able to begin actively volunteering for the Red Cross. One of

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Wald's initial Red Cross training courses was known as a disaster action team (DAT). The beginning course was a building block to other areas of training. Wald is trained in DAT as well as shelter and feeding. Wald chose those areas to align with her passion of meeting and helping people.

"The training areas are endless at the Red Cross. I hope to become trained as a case manager in the future. As a case manager, I would be able to help assist more people locally or otherwise with disasters such as house fires," Wald said.

Wald's first Red Cross deployment

Wald was able to start volunteering for the Red Cross in June 2023. Then, she got a phone call in September 2023 she couldn't turn away. This would be Wald's first deployment and the experience was filled with many emotions, including anxiousness and excitement.

In August 2023, Lahaina, a town on the Maui island of Hawaii, was faced with a devastating wildfire. Wald told the Red Cross if help is needed in Hawaii, she would be willing to go. She received a call from the Red Cross and was on a plane to Maui within 24 hours.

"Everything lined up for me to take this opportunity and I was ready to go," Wald said.

Once Wald landed in Hawaii, she was greeted by Red Cross ambassadors who took her to the headquarters or what Wald described as "the beehive." From there, volunteers got their assignments and hit the ground running. The volunteers who had been on the scene for a while trained the newer volunteers. Wald arrived

about six weeks after the fires hit the island. She noted clients were already in shelters, such as hotels. Wald worked making phone calls to make sure everyone had what they needed.

"Everyone was grateful that the Red Cross was there to help. It was a very rewarding and humbling experience," Wald said.


Part of Wald's duties while in Maui was ordering any materials clients needed while in the shelters.

"The shelters were well equipped, but if someone needed something, we could order from the Red Cross warehouse and it would be delivered the next day," Wald said.

While in Hawaii, Wald built relationships with the clients she served. She said the people there were happy the Red Cross was there to help and their needs were being met. Everyone was willing to do their part and lend a hand.

"I met a couple that was on their honeymoon, and they asked how they could help. Red Cross was able to give them an assignment for the day," Wald said.

Wald was deployed in Hawaii for three weeks, and was able to connect with other Red Cross volunteers. She said one of her first connections was with a volunteer from Oahu who was also on her first deployment. Wald keeps in contact with her as well as her team members from Maui. She says if the opportunity arises, they hope they can request to work together again.

More information about the Red Cross, including how to volunteer, can be found at www.redcross.org. 

MANAGER'S MESSAGE:

Beginner's guide to the electric grid



Jason Bentz

Electricity plays an essential role in everyday life. It powers our homes, farms, hospitals and schools. We depend on it to keep us warm in the winter and cool in the summer, charge our phones and binge watch our favorite TV shows. If the power goes out, even briefly, our lives can be disrupted.

The system delivering your electricity is often described as the most complex machine in the world, and it's known as the electric grid. We would like to take this opportunity to give our members a "beginner's guide" to the electric grid.

What makes it so complex?

We all use different amounts of electricity throughout the day, so the supply and demand for electricity is constantly changing. For example, we typically use more electricity in the mornings, when we're starting our day, and in the evenings, when we're cooking dinner and using appliances. Severe weather and other factors also impact how much electricity we need.

The challenge for electric providers is to to plan for, produce and purchase enough electricity, so it's available exactly when we need it. Too much or too little electricity in one place can cause problems. To make sure the whole system stays balanced, the electric grid must adjust in real time to changes and unforeseen events.

At its core, the electric grid is a network of power lines, transformers, substations and other infrastructure spanning the entire country. But it's not just a singular system. It's divided into three major interconnected grids: the Eastern Interconnection, the Western Interconnection and the Electric Reliability Council of Texas. These grids operate independently, but are linked to allow electricity to be transferred between regions when backup support is required.

Within the three regions, seven balancing authorities, known as independent system operators (ISOs) or regional transmission organizations (RTOs), monitor the grid, signaling to power plants when more electricity is needed to maintain a balanced electrical flow. ISOs and RTOs are like traffic controllers for electricity.

The journey begins at power plants

Power plants are like factories making electricity by using various energy sources, like coal, natural gas, solar, wind and nuclear energy. Across the United States, more than 11,000 power plants deliver electricity to the grid.

KEM Electric Cooperative receives power from our generation and transmission (G&T) cooperative, Basin Electric Power Cooperative (Basin Electric) and, Western Area Power Administration (WAPA). We work closely with Basin Electric and WAPA to provide electricity at the lowest cost possible. Being part of a G&T benefits members like you by placing ownership and control in the hands of your cooperative, prioritizing affordability and reliability, supporting local economic development and fostering a sense of community.

To get the electricity from power plants to you, we need a transportation system. High-voltage transmission lines act as the highways for electricity, transporting power over long distances. These lines are supported by massive towers and travel through vast landscapes, connecting power plants to electric substations.

Substations are like pitstops along the highway, where the voltage of electricity is adjusted. They play a crucial role in managing power flow and ensuring electricity is safe for use in homes and businesses.

Once the electricity is reduced to the proper voltage, it travels through distribution power lines, like the ones you typically see on the side of the road. Distribution lines carry electricity from substations to homes, schools and businesses. Distribution transformers, which look like metal buckets on the tops of power poles or large green boxes on the ground, further reduce the voltage to levels suitable for household appliances and electronic devices.

After traveling through transformers, electricity reaches you to power everyday life.

We're proud to be your local, trusted electric service provider. From the time it's created to the time it's used, electricity travels great distances to be available at the flip of a switch. That's what makes the electric grid our nation's most complex machine – and one of our nation's greatest achievements. ⚡



POWERFUL DECISION-MAKERS:

The Pivotal Role of Directors at KEM Electric



As stewards of rural electrification, electric cooperative directors play a pivotal role in ensuring reliable service in the heart of rural America. Directors of KEM Electric Cooperative embody a profound dedication to reliability and affordability, weaving a tapestry that harmonizes the needs of the present with the promise of a resilient and empowered future for the members they represent.

Some were encouraged to serve by previous directors and others felt compelled to serve. However a director came into the position on the KEM Electric board, one factor is consistent: Each feels a responsibility to serve the members to the best of his or her abilities.

Informed decision-making for effective governance

Being on a board means informing yourself to make the best decisions on behalf of the membership and be a valuable part of discussions. Although not everyone on the board may always agree, everyone has the opportunity to make their best argument during discussion and in the end support the decision of the board.

"It takes time and thought to be a director," says KEM Electric Chair Victor "Chuck" Wald. "Being a director means being a resource to members and being able to communicate to them what is happening and why something is done at the cooperative is an important asset."

One of the seven principles of electric cooperatives is education, training and information. Directors have the opportunity to complete educational courses through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. Through these courses, directors gain knowledge to better serve members.

"The continuing education that is available to cooperative directors is valuable in and outside the boardroom," Wald said. "I find myself utilizing information learned in the courses to make day-to-day decisions as well."

Commitment to the cooperative

The KEM Electric board meets once a month for a board meeting, with the hours dedicated to the board varying month to month and on the level of involvement a person chooses.

"Depending on what time of year it is, commitment can be around 20 hours a month," Wald said. "Our staff is very helpful and makes sure everything is in line for the monthly board meetings, so that saves the board time."

Being on a board is a time commitment, but the skills you acquire are invaluable, Wald noted. He was first elected as a District 4 director in 2010. He did not foresee himself assuming the role of board chair, yet the skills he attained helped prepare him to lead the board.

"Looking back, I am encouraged by how far my skills have evolved and that others entrust me to assume this position," he said.

"We are immensely grateful to our dedicated board members for their commitment to our cooperative," says Jason Bentz, co-manager/CEO of KEM Electric. "Board members must devote sufficient time and effort and pay attention to their role in the cooperative. Their ongoing support and leadership help ensure the collective needs of our members are heard and championed, guiding our cooperative toward a prosperous future."

KEM Electric now accepting director nominations

KEM Electric is preparing for its 2024 annual meeting and director nominations are being accepted for At-Large, District 1 and 2 positions. A director commitment is a three-year term. As a director, your responsibilities include participation at monthly board meetings and representing members on behalf of the cooperative.

"Being a director means representing the members and coming into discussions with an open mind to help achieve the goals of the cooperative," Wald said.

If you see yourself or know of someone who would be a qualified candidate to represent At-Large or in District 1 or 2, reach out to a current director or call the KEM Electric office. Help ensure longevity at KEM Electric and be part of the longstanding betterment of your rural community. ⚡

SAFETY STARTS WITH ME:

Stay away from downed power lines

North Dakota winds can be mighty and coupled with winter storms, they can damage KEM Electric Cooperative's infrastructure, including power lines. KEM Electric is continuously working through snow or shine to ensure safe, reliable electricity for our members, but sometimes environmental factors cause a bump in the road.

KEM Electric wants to remind members to stay clear of downed power lines

"Downed power lines can look relatively harmless, but don't be fooled. They likely carry an electric current strong enough to cause serious injury or possibly death," says Marty Messer, Steele area foreman.

Messer shares some safety tips to serve as reminders around downed power lines:

- If you see a downed power line, move away from the line and anything touching it. The proper way to move away from the line is to shuffle with small steps, always keeping your feet together and on the ground.
- If you see someone who is in direct or indirect contact with the downed line, do not touch the person. You could become the next victim. Call 911 instead.
- Do not attempt to move a downed power line or anything in contact with the line by using another object such as a broom or stick. Even normally nonconductive materials like wood or cloth, if slightly wet, can conduct electricity and electrocute you.
- Be careful not to put your feet near water where a downed power line is located.
- Do not drive over downed lines. If you are in a vehicle in contact with a downed line, stay in the vehicle. Honk your horn for help and tell others to stay away from your vehicle. If you must leave your vehicle



because it's on fire, jump out of the vehicle with both feet together and avoid making contact with the energized vehicle and the ground at the same time. This way you avoid being the path of electricity from the vehicle to the earth.

Help us help you. For KEM Electric to ensure safe, reliable electricity, our team needs to be able to assess and plan power restoration without any added obstacles. We work to make sure electric infrastructure is secure to mitigate these incidents, but in the case of downed power lines, remember these tips. ⚡



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. Scan the QR code below with your phone for more information and to complete the survey.



STUDENT OF THE MONTH:

Bailey Huber, Linton Public School

Bailey Huber was named the December Touchstone Energy® Student of the Month from Linton Public School. A seventh-grader, Huber was recognized for being kind and always willing to lend a hand around the school and in the gym.

“She carries kindness throughout Linton Public School,” says Huber’s nominator. “She takes initiative in helping students younger than her to feel included both in school and in the gym.”


Huber plans to put the funds toward the school’s student science program.

We would also like to recognize the other outstanding students who were nominated:

- Emma Sanders
- Chance Ryckman
- Charles Schuetzle
- Mackenzie Hendrickson
- Kensi Quigley
- Etta Stuckle
- The kindergarten class of Linton Public School. ⚡



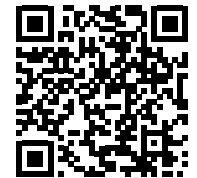
KEM ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
TOUCHSTONE ENERGY
 STUDENT OF THE MONTH

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Throughout the school year, KEM Electric Cooperative is choosing one student at random who has been nominated from the schools in KEM Electric’s service area to receive a \$100 sponsorship in partnership with Touchstone Energy Cooperative. The donation can be utilized to the student’s choosing for school activities.

In February, KEM Electric will be accepting nominations of students from Strasburg Public School. The deadline for nominations is Feb. 25. This sponsorship is open to any K-12 student.

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



THANK YOU to all our valued members who joined us at our regional member appreciation event in Steele! Your presence made it a memorable day, we’re grateful for the strong support that powers our rural cooperative!

Also, thank you to Karri Stroh for cooking a delicious meal for us all to enjoy and Pifer’s Auction (Steele) for letting us utilize your building.

The following members received a \$25 bill credit from KEM Electric Cooperative.

- Roger and Janice Koester
- Glen and Cinthia Ternes
- Daryl and Beverly Schoepp
- Bradley and Lisa Zimmerman

We look forward to seeing you at our Annual Meeting June 11 in Linton.



SAVE THE DATE

2024 Annual Meeting

June 11 in Linton



INTERESTED IN SERVING?

Join the KEM Electric board and power the future

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.

KEM Electric currently has an At-Large vacant seat, along with District 1 and District 2 positions up for election.

Why join our board?

Running for a board of 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 www.kemelectric.com to learn more. Nomination petitions are open and must be turned in by the end of day on March 13.

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

404. Member Petition-Form Information

(a) Each petition shall contain the following:

1. The name of the member nominee.
2. The director position for which the member nominee shall run.
3. The printed names, addresses and telephone numbers, date of signature and original signatures of each member signing the petition.
4. At least 10 signatures of the members of the respective district, or members at large, as the case may be.

(b) In the case of joint members, the signature of one or more than one joint member shall constitute one joint member.

(c) Firms, associations, corporations or body politics shall have the right to place one signature on a petition, the same as other members, by the signature of a duly appointed representative.

(d) Petitions may not be circulated or signed more than 60 days before the date when petitions must be filed pursuant to this bylaw. Any signatures to a nominating

petition obtained more than 60 days before that date may not be counted.

(e) All petitions must be filed at the principal offices of the cooperative not less than 90 days prior to the date of the meeting of the members, as fixed by the board of directors.

(f) After verifying that a petition complies with this bylaw, the secretary of the board of directors shall post a list of nominations for directors at the principal office of the cooperative at least 60 days before the meeting of the members.

If you would like to place your name on the ballot, pick up a petition at the KEM Electric Cooperative office or download a petition from the cooperative website at www.kemelectric.com. Petitions become available on Jan. 13. Petitions must be returned to the cooperative office no later than March 13. As a reminder, nominations from the floor will not be accepted.

KEM Electric board meeting highlights

Nov. 14, 2023

The November meeting of the board of directors of KEM Electric Cooperative was held on Nov. 14, 2023, at the KEM Electric office building in Linton. President Victor Wald called the meeting to order at 12:36 p.m. A quorum was present. Also, present were KEM Electric Co-general Managers/CEOs Travis Kupper and Jason Bentz, Chief Financial Officer Alex Craigmile, Chief Information Officer Charlie Dunbar, Legal Counsel Tom Bair, Line Superintendent/Chief of Staff Dale Nagel, Member Relations Manager Marcy Sanders and Administrative Assistant Samantha Fischer.

Consent agenda: There were no additions to the consent agenda. The consent agenda was approved as presented.

Strategic/action: Bentz and Kupper presented the co-general managers' report, which included updates from the Rural Utilities Service, Converge Strategies funding, a North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives storm debriefing meeting and a standing committee meeting. A Basin Electric Power Cooperative CEO report was also provided for

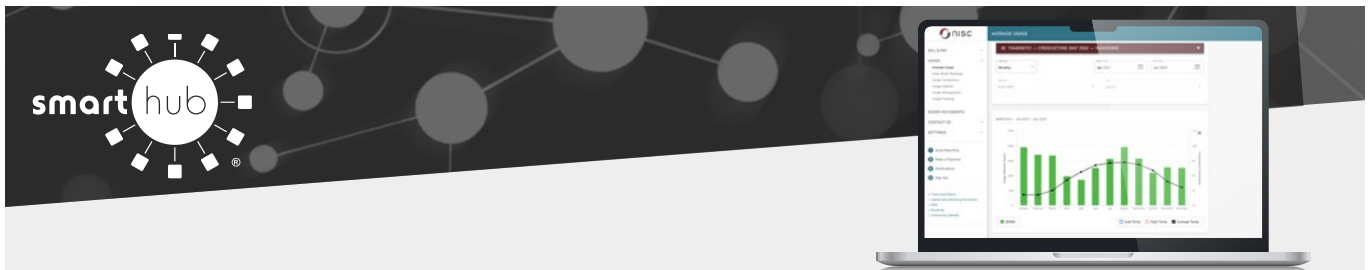
the board to review.

Action items: Craigmile presented the proposed 2024 budget, and the budget was approved. The board appointed voting delegates for the Innovative Energy Alliance annual meeting and directors for expiring terms in the Innovative Energy Alliance/Maintenance Solutions Cooperative board.

Department reports: Nagel provided a department report, which included outage reports and safety statistics for October. Sanders presented a report, which included the annual meeting, Touchstone Energy® Student of the Month, regional meetings and 2024 scholarships. Dunbar provided a report, which included software and cyber updates. Bair reviewed a legal report with the board.

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

Next meeting date: The next meeting date is set for Dec. 19, 2023, at KEM Electric's office in Linton. ⚡



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KEM ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC.

DIRECTORS:

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 John Beck, Vice ChairmanLinton
 Carter Vander Wal, Sec.-Treas. Pollock
 Dean Dewald, Director..... Dawson
 Carmen Essig, DirectorLehr
 Neil Meidinger, Director Zealand
 Director- At-LargeVacant

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

FIND US ON:



OFFICE HOURS:

Monday through Friday,
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Website: kemelectric.com / Email address: info@kemelectric.com