

Manager's message: We love our community!



"To move forward, you have to give back." This quote from Oprah Winfrey reflects the special bond and obligation that ties KEM

Electric to the members we serve. With Valentine's Day approaching, we can't think of a better time to express how much we appreciate serving you, the members of the co-op.

We know when we helped to bring electricity to rural North Dakota many years ago, the quality of life improved for all. Through the years, other issues needed to be tackled, and we have been at the forefront of helping to address some of those issues. We want to help meet the long-term needs of our service area to ensure it continues to thrive.

While our top priority is to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to you, equally important is our mission to enrich the lives of the members (that's you!) that we serve. This focus to benefit the larger community is central to the way we operate as a cooperative. KEM Electric knows that electricity is a critical need for modern-day life, but it takes more than poles and power lines to make a cooperative.

Over time, our co-op has evolved to meet the changing needs of

our area, thereby improving the quality of life for everyone. And that can mean many different things. It can mean programs for North Dakota's youth, such as education scholarships or the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, where we take our community's brightest young people to Washington, D.C. for a week-long immersion to experience democracy in action. In contributing to Operation Round-up we help local organizations and individuals. It means partnering with organizations through the RDFC Fund and other worthy programs.

We all benefit from these programs because of you and your neighbors. You empower the KEM Electric through your membership and through your participation in and support of these programs.

As a local business, we are proud to power your life and bring good things to our service area. We hope you will continue to guide our efforts by sharing your perspective as we plan for the future. The energy landscape is undergoing dramatic change fueled by evolving technology and consumer desires for more options. While the larger environment in which we operate is constantly changing, one thing remains the same. By working together, I'm certain that we can continue to do good things for our membership. ⚡

Travis Kupper

Celebrating 20 years of giving

For the past 20 years, KEM Electric members have raised nearly \$124,000 with simply rounding up their electric bill to the nearest dollar. For the majority of members, that amounts to an annual donation of only \$6. The cost is nearly that of a coffee from a specialty store, yet its impact is great and has allowed members the ability to give back to the community with over 334 donations – and counting.

When members "round up" their monthly bill from KEM Electric and donate to this fund, they are making a big difference in someone's life, explained Susan Meidinger, Operation Round Up board member. "No one ever really knows the struggles people and communities are going through. It seems there is never enough money for programs to be successful. Operation Roundup is a way to help these good deeds come to fruition," she said.

Through KEM Electric Operation Round Up, contributions are collected through billing, and then deposited to a separate trust fund. A trust fund board is responsible for the distribution of all funds. Currently members include Sue Wald from Napoleon; Michael Knoll from Hague; Derry Pool from Pollock; Tami Naaden from Braddock; Susan Meidinger from Zeeland; Sherry Fettig from Wishek; and Charley Cichy from Dawson.

To read more about KEM's giving efforts within the community, check out this month's issue of *North Dakota Living*. ⚡

OFFICERS

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

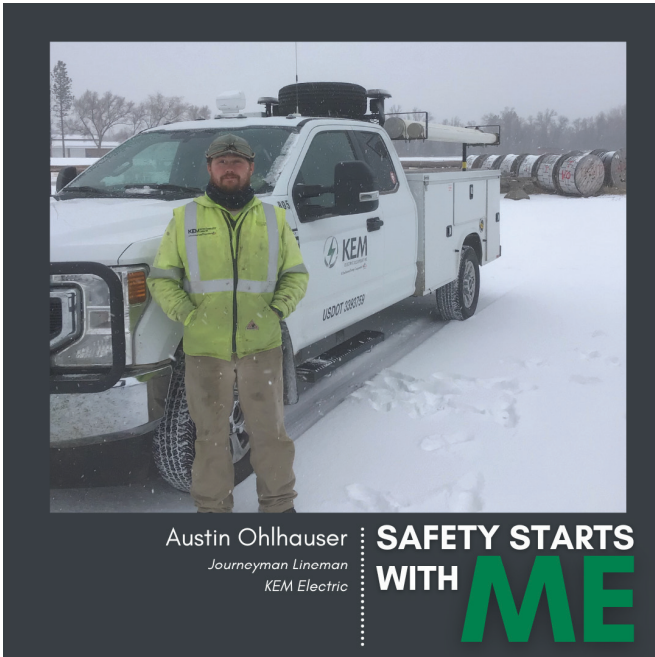
DIRECTORS:

Dean Dewald • Dean Hummel
Carmen Essig • Neil Meidinger

CO-GENERAL MANAGERS/CEOS:

Travis Kupper
Jason Bentz

Safety starts with me: Austin Ohlhauser



You might be aware of the green metal box in your yard, but do you know what they are for? These boxes are known as pad-mount transformers and are crucial in converting electricity to a voltage that is safe for use in homes and businesses.

“Although crucial, pad-mount transformers can be potentially dangerous and should not be messed with,” said Austin Ohlhauser, KEM Electric’s Journeyman Lineman.

“Pad-mounted transformers are connected to primary high voltage lines, and secondary lines can extend in several directions to distribute power to homes and businesses,” said Ohlhauser. “Be mindful of underground cabinets and transformers before removing snow, planting shrubs or trees, setting fence posts, installing sprinkler systems and digging as this may damage underground lines.”

During the winter months, snow removal can be very important around these important pieces to our grid. “The North Dakota winter can sometimes camouflage these pieces of equipment, making snow removal that much more

dangerous,” said Ohlhauser. “Be sure to know the location, if near one, to make snow removal safe and easy.”

Use these tips to keep you and your family safe around pad mount transformers:

- Remove snow around pad-mount transformer. Snow piled on electrical equipment can impact your safety and electric service to your home. In the event of an outage, have the pad-mount transformers cleared of any snow will make it easier for linemen to

restore power.

- Never touch, climb or play near or on a pad mount transformer- Inform your children the dangers of this piece of equipment.

- Keep the area around a pad mount transformer clear of any obstructions- a 10-foot radius is recommended. This includes any trees, shrubs, or other obstructions.

- Do not dig around a pad mount transformer- Below are underground lines that can cause damage to you and the electrical systems if hit. Always call 811 before you dig.

- Report any damaged or unlocked transformer to your local cooperative- If you notice anything wrong with the equipment, call 701-254-4666.

“At KEM electric, we want to provide you with electricity as well as protect your livelihood,” said Ohlhauser. “Please take this information into consideration to keep you and others around you safe.” ⚡

Mann combats pheasants decline through SAE project.

Hunting for many North Dakota families is a generational pastime, and the same holds true to Karissa Mann, a junior at Napoleon High School and her family. While learning about the threat of a population decrease in pheasants, Mann became motivated to combat the decrease and preserve her family’s hobby. She rolled her sleeves up and began to broaden her knowledge and learn more about raising pheasants as part of her Supervised Agricultural Experiences (SAE) project for FFA.

“I had two goals with this project. The first goal was to help repopulate pheasants in North Dakota and the second was to start my own business,” said Mann.

With her goals and a plan in mind, Mann set off to raise funds for her project. “I applied for a local grant, won that. Then I applied for a state grant and a national grant and received both,” said Mann. “That money went to startup costs like shelter, food and other essentials I knew the pheasants would need.”

To read more about Mann and her SAE project, check out this month’s issue of *North Dakota Living*. ⚡

Safety at KEM Electric

KEM Electric is an advocate of working safely. In fact, it is our way of life; the culture of your cooperative. We look out for the safety of ourselves and others — before, during and after work. Did you know that members also play a key role in keeping our system safe? At times, you are our eyes in the sky and on the ground.

Should you see a power line issue that may need KEM Electric’s attention, please call the office or send us an email at safety@kemelectric.com with your concern. This correspondence should include the description of the location, your name and complete contact information, and a photo if possible. Working together helps ensure the safety of all! ⚡