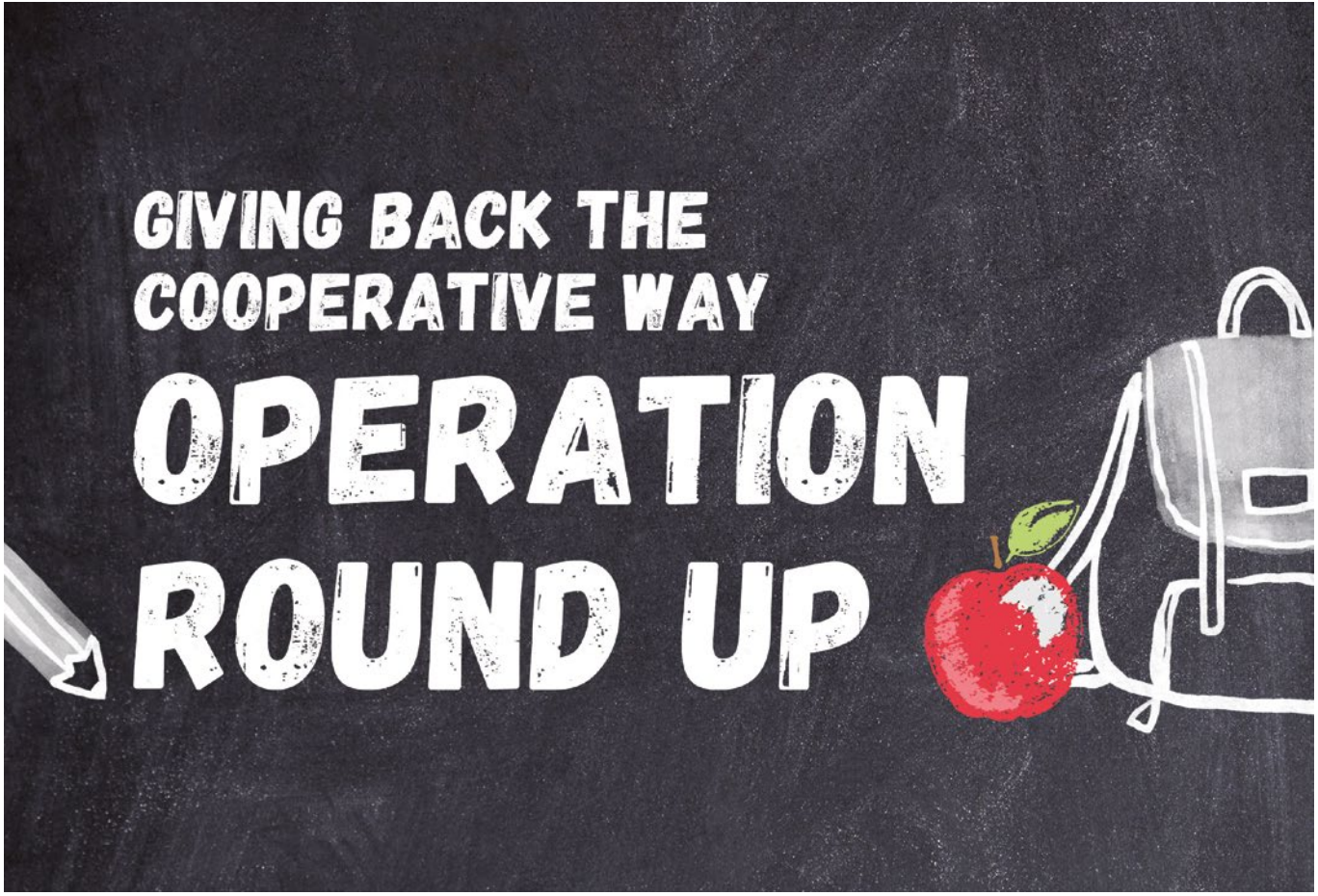


- Scholarships available
- Interested in serving?
- Planning 2025 projects
- Youth Tour deadline approaching, Jan. 17



# GIVING BACK THE COOPERATIVE WAY OPERATION ROUND UP

## GIVING BACK THE COOPERATIVE WAY:

### Operation Round Up

Cooperatives across the nation adhere to seven cooperative principles. These principles help guide decision-making, from how the cooperative operates to how the cooperative engages with local communities. Concern for community is one of the seven principles, and it is one KEM Electric Cooperative values.

Electric cooperatives have a proud history of giving back. You may find KEM Electric at events like parades, fairs and other community gatherings.

But KEM Electric members help us give back, too! Through the Operation Round Up program, members can round up their energy bills to the next dollar

amount and the extra change goes toward helping those in need, right here in the communities we serve.

#### Operation Round Up giving in 2024

Operation Round Up has been a beacon of cooperative principles for over 20 years at KEM Electric. Quarterly, KEM Electric's Operation Round Up board members, who are also KEM Electric members, meet to review and distribute Operation Round Up funds to deserving recipients across our service area. In 2024, KEM Electric donated funds to local community entities totaling over \$5,000.

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## Logan County Backpack Program

One of the deserving local entities that applied and received funds through KEM Electric's Operation Round Up was the Logan County Food Pantry for its newly established backpack program. With a passion for their community and helping kids, Cindy Weigel and Lila Wirt began brainstorming a backpack program last year.

"As a school counselor, I saw a need for a program like this in the schools," Weigel says.

Weigel was the school counselor at Napoleon Public School for many years and had the opportunity to get to know various students. Some of the conversations with students left an impression on her and had her thinking about ways she could help. Weigel began discussing a backpack program with Wirt. Wirt works with the Logan County Food Pantry and was able to help Weigel make the program a reality for the community.

The 2024-25 school year is the inaugural year for the backpack program for the Napoleon Public School. The school helped Weigel and Wirt identify students who could benefit from this program and they currently supply 20 "backpacks" for students to take home on Friday after school.

"The backpacks are actually bags that are placed in the students' lockers by Napoleon Public School staff," Weigel says.

This is a completely anonymous program. On Fridays, school staff place bags filled with nonperishable food in students' lockers for them to take home for the weekend. When the first bags were sent home, a note was included regarding the program and its goal as well as an option to opt out.

They aim to use their budget the best they can and shop in bulk and get the best deal. Wirt is the main shopper for the program and says they try to stretch the funds a bit further and help as many students as possible. Each bag includes about \$15 worth of food with the goal of lasting the student the weekend.

"What is put in the bag depends on what is available," Weigel says. "We try to put in a juice, a few fruit options, two breakfast items, two snacks or treats and two meal type items, something they can cook on their own."

Some of the students on this program may be on federal programs or their parents are working long hours, so they might not get certain treats as often, so they try to include a few fun items as well. The goal is to nourish the students, but also make them feel important, Weigel says.

The backpack program relies on donations from community entities, such as KEM Electric, but also personal donations. Monetary donations help keep



the bags consistent and help Wirt shop for the best deal.

"Our community has been very generous and excited," Wirt says.

The community has been helpful to get the program off the ground from investments being made from businesses to personal funds. Weigel and Wirt have heard many positive comments about the program being started in the community.

Weigel and Wirt are working through what the future of the program may look like, but their focus right now is being able to help as many students as they can by ensuring they have nourishment while not at school.

"We are trying to fill holes as much as possible right now," Weigel says.

They hope to collect unanimous data to see what the students who are currently being served by the program think and how they may be able to improve the program.

If you are interested in donating to the backpack program, you can mail a check to 301 Broadway Napoleon, ND 58561 payable to the backpack program. ⚡

**Operation Round Up deadlines for 2025 are the last day of each quarter: March 31, June 30, Sept. 30 and Dec. 31. For more information and to apply, visit <https://kemelectric.com/operation-round>.**



# 2025 SCHOLARSHIPS

**DEADLINE: FEB. 10**

## 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.


### **Mechanic scholarship from West Dakota Utility Services**

KEM Electric is offering one \$500 scholarship sponsored by West Dakota Utility Services LLC. Eligible applicants are high school seniors who are enrolled or planning to enroll in a certified vocational or technical school pursuing a career as a mechanic.

### **Lineworker scholarship from 3C Construction**

KEM Electric is offering one \$500 scholarship sponsored by 3C Construction LLC. Owned in part by KEM Electric, 3C Construction employs lineworkers who travel, plowing cable and assisting with projects as needed. Eligible applicants are high school seniors who are enrolled or planning to enroll in a certified vocational or technical school pursuing a career as a lineworker.



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

**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](http://www.kemelectric.com) or calling the office at 701-254-4666. Applications must be submitted by email to [msanders@kemelectric.com](mailto:msanders@kemelectric.com), or printed and mailed to: KEM Electric Cooperative, Attn: Marcy Sanders, 107 S. Broadway, P.O. Box 790, Linton, ND 58552.**

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

MANAGER'S MESSAGE:

# What does it take to be a director?



**Travis Kupper**  
Co-General Manager/CEO

As we ring in the new year, we often look at the year ahead and the potential the future holds. Simultaneously, KEM Electric Cooperative opens the doors each year to new and returning directors.

As we approach upcoming director elections, we thought it would be a good reminder to our members to consider the significant role directors play in shaping the future of KEM Electric.

Serving as a director is more than just a title. It's a

commitment to our members and communities. Our board of directors is central, to our cooperative, because it enables members to advocate for their community's interests, aligning decisions with local needs and values.


Board members provide critical oversight of operations and finances, shaping the cooperative's strategic direction and fostering transparency. Overall, active participation in governance is key to maintaining a responsive and effective cooperative.

Here are some key qualities that make an effective director.

- **Commitment to service:** Directors should have a passion for serving our members, always striving to enhance their quality of life.

- **Strategic thinking:** A strong director must think critically, making informed decisions that align with our cooperative's long-term goals.
- **Community engagement:** Active involvement in the community is vital. Understanding and responding to the needs of our members is crucial for effective leadership.
- **Collaboration:** Directors must work well with fellow board members and staff, fostering a culture of teamwork and transparency.
- **Adaptability:** The energy landscape is ever-changing. A successful director must embrace change and navigate challenges.

If you or someone you know is interested in taking this vital role, consider the impact you can make on our cooperative and the community we serve. You can learn more about what it takes to be a director by visiting [www.kemelectric.com](http://www.kemelectric.com) or calling our office at 701-254-4666. Your voice matters in shaping a brighter future for all. ⚡



## YOU'RE INVITED!

JOIN US FOR OUR MEMBERSHIP APPRECIATION NIGHT!

Join us for an open house event to connect with our CEOs, board of directors and employees! Stop by to learn more about your cooperative and enjoy a delicious meal.



4-6:30 p.m. on Jan. 28



Barry-Hoof American Legion Hall,  
69 Broadway St, Napoleon



MESSAGE FROM MEMBER RELATIONS:

# Interested in serving? Nomination petitions now open



**Marcy Sanders**  
Manager of  
Member Relations

Are you passionate about your community and making a difference? We invite you to join the KEM Electric Cooperative board of directors.

KEM Electric currently has an at-large vacant seat that needs to be filled, along with the District 3 position up for election.

Running for a director position for an electric cooperative can be a meaningful and impactful decision. Board

directors collaborate with like-minded individuals on decisions that impact your future, from energy to community growth.

We're seeking individuals with diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives who share our commitment to serving the members of KEM Electric.

If you're ready to make a meaningful impact, we encourage you to visit [www.kemelectric.com](http://www.kemelectric.com) to learn more. Nomination petitions open on Jan. 11 and must be turned in by the end of day on March 12.

For inquiries or more information, please contact Marcy Sanders at 701-254-4666 or email [msanders@kemelectric.com](mailto:msanders@kemelectric.com). ⚡

## Congratulations LEO CADENA, KIDDER COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL!

### NOVEMBER 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 **January**, KEM Electric will be accepting nominations of students from **Napoleon Public School**.

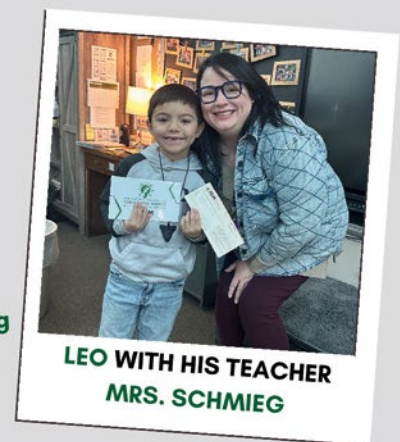
The deadline for nominations is Jan. 15.

This sponsorship is open to any K-12 student.

*"Leo is kind, smart and always makes people laugh"*

*"His attitude brings joy to people around him"*

*"Leo is always willing to help others and is a great friend"*



Scan the QR code to nominate a student or for more information, or visit [www.kemelectric.com/touchstone-energy-student-month](http://www.kemelectric.com/touchstone-energy-student-month).

## MESSAGE FROM OPERATIONS:

# Cooperative plans for 2025 projects



**Dale Nagel**

*Chief of Staff/  
Line Superintendent*

As we look ahead to 2025, KEM Electric Cooperative is excited to share upcoming projects that will help shape the future of our cooperative, bringing more reliability and safety to our system. A team of engineers and operations employees from KEM Electric have thoughtfully planned to ensure seamless execution of the upcoming projects. A few projects include overhead power line conversion, new reclosure installation and technology upgrades to the system.

Once the ground thaws, line crews will start preparing for underground cable installation. One of the projects includes seven miles of three-phase underground cable installed in the Tappen substation going south. Once crews complete the underground cable installation, the existing overhead power line will be retired. This specific area has seen issues due to the conditions of the line. Transitioning overhead power lines to underground cable helps reduce outages due to the cable being underground and not exposed to weather elements or animals, which cause blinks and often outages.

KEM Electric has been upgrading circuit reclosures as the current oil-circuit reclosures (OCRs) age out and began to need maintenance. OCRs are being replaced with TripSavers, which are oil-free and require less maintenance when compared to the traditional reclosures, ultimately reducing outages due to failures and creating better coordination throughout our system. A few areas of focus are the Linton substation and the Midway substation located south of Napoleon.

As reclosures are being upgraded, so is the technology compatible with them. This year, KEM Electric plans to install reclosures in some substations that will be supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) technology compatible. SCADA technology acts as a remote data monitoring and control system, allowing the cooperative to have real-time data and control at its fingertips.

As we continue into the winter season, we would like to remind members to report outages as they occur by calling the office at 701-254-4666. This information helps us assess where the cause of the outage may have originated from. KEM Electric continues to focus on the goal of providing safe, efficient, reliable service to our members.

We look forward to working and visiting with you in the new year. ⚡

## Statement of nondiscrimination

KEM Electric Cooperative is a recipient of federal assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible

agency or USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at 800-877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD3027, found online at [www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call 866-632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: 1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410; 2) fax: 202-690-7442; or 3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

KEM Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider.

SAFETY STARTS WITH ME:

## Winter storm preparation and safety

Once winter weather conditions are upon us, we often wonder when a snowstorm will hit and what the impact will be. Although KEM Electric Cooperative hopes storms will have little to no impact, we are always prepared and ready to act when called.

“When an outage call comes in, we are ready to head to the shop, grab our gear and get on the road to the outage location,” says Dillon Steinolfson, a journeyman lineworker. “When the forecast calls for storm weather, we plan ahead at the shop and ensure we have all the equipment we may need for an outage.”

KEM Electric is prepared for winter storms and we want to help you be prepared for them as well. Here are a few tips to keep in mind when it comes to winter storm outages:

- **Always report an outage.** Do not assume someone else has already called about an outage. We aim to keep members up-to-date on social media, but it is not monitored 24/7, so we advise not to report outages through our social media messages. If you have a medical need, such as requiring oxygen, please notify our member service team when reporting an outage.
- **Have a backup plan for you and your family.** We suggest having items, such as water, nonperishable food sources, blankets, batteries, flashlights and a charging bank, although these items vary depending on your family’s needs.
- **Do not plug generators into household wiring, unless you have an appropriate transfer switch installed.** If a generator is connected to a home’s wiring without a transfer switch, power can backfeed along power lines and harm lineworkers making repairs.

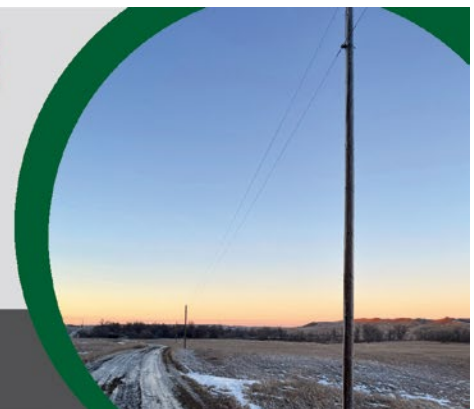


We know storm outages can be unsettling, but we want to assure you our team is working behind the scenes to ensure your power returns. Safety is our No. 1 priority, so if weather conditions are too dangerous, crews may not be able to work until it becomes clear. All of us at KEM Electric are committed to ensuring safe, reliable electric services for you. We appreciate your patience during uncertain times like these, but urge you to give us a call with any questions regarding an outage. ☎

## REPORT EVERY OUTAGE

**TO REPORT AN OUTAGE, CALL  
US AT 1-800-472-2673 OR  
701-254-4666.**

*Please keep in mind, our social media pages and emails are not connected to our dispatch center. Call one of the numbers above to ensure your outage is reported.*



# KEM ELECTRIC BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS: **Oct. 29, 2024**

The meeting of the board of directors of KEM Electric Cooperative was held on Oct. 29, 2024 in Linton. The meeting was called to order at 9:37 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.

**Consent agenda:** The consent agenda was approved as presented.

**Strategic/action:** Bentz and Kupper provided the co-general managers' report, which included updates on the Basin Electric Power Cooperative district manager meeting, Rural Utilities Service environmental review, wildfire mitigation plan 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:** The board discussed strategic planning as well as other items.

**Department reports:** Craigmile provided the financial report. Nagel provided a department report on projects. 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.

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 Jan. 28 in Napoleon. If you wish to be placed on the agenda, please call the office. ⚡



**ENTER YOUR YOUTH TOUR ERA**  
**JUNE 15-21, 2025**

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! **The application deadline is Jan. 17.** *Yeah, Youth Tour hits different.*

**HONORING WWI HEROES @ WWI MEMORIAL**



Learn more at [kemelectric.com/youth-tour](http://kemelectric.com/youth-tour)

## 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](http://kemelectric.com)  
 Email address: [info@kemelectric.com](mailto:info@kemelectric.com)

FIND US ON:

