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Dewitz and Welder attend Honor Flight



Rick Dewitz and his college roommate, Joe Gross, stand outside a memorial.

With the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool and the Washington Monument behind him, Mike Welder tours Washington, D.C.

Dewitz and Welder attend Honor Flight

BY ANNE HANSEN



Rick Dewitz and Joe Gross tour the memorials in Washington, D.C.

Mail call. Those two simple words brought KEM Electric Cooperative members Rick Dewitz and Mike Welder back to the early days of their service, and the joy of hearing your name announced as a recipient of mail. Back to the present day, and mail packets this time around were filled with notes from brothers, sisters, spouses, children and grandchildren, as a thank you to the veterans on the trip home from their Honor Flight.

This simple gesture was one of many that made the Western North Dakota Honor Flight a grand experience.

"This wasn't a vacation, but rather a chance of a lifetime," said Welder, who served in the U.S. Army from 1968 to 1970 and in the Vietnam War as a specialized E5 rank.

The Western North Dakota Honor Flight is a nonprofit organization created solely to honor America's veterans for all their sacrifices. It transports our heroes to Washington, D.C., to visit and reflect at their memorials for two days.

For Dewitz, who served in the U.S. Army from 1966 to 1968 and fought in the Vietnam War, the trip was more than an opportunity to see all the national monuments, but also a chance to be reunited with his college roommate and reminisce about their time in the service.

"Each and every thing that the Honor Flight did to honor us veterans were certainly felt by all on the flight," Dewitz said.

A group of 93 veterans, including Dewitz and Welder, took the Honor Flight beginning the morning of April 10 and returning home the evening of April 11. The group of veterans, geared

up in their new shirts, coats and hats, onboarded in Bismarck. The flight full of our nation's heroes was welcomed in Baltimore, Md.

"When we arrived in Baltimore, we were welcomed by the North Dakota National Guard, and a water cannon salute," Dewitz noted.

Soon after, the veterans split onto four chartered buses and arrived at their first historic site, Arlington National Cemetery, which included the Changing of the Guard Ceremony.

"For me, one of the most memorable parts was the ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier," Dewitz said.

The next stop on the tour was the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial, followed by a banquet and a social hour, where veterans were able to enjoy the camaraderie of one another and share the memories of their time in the service.

"The best part of the trip was reminiscing with everyone, the ability to experience it all with the group of people we did," Welder said.

The second day of the Honor Flight included stops at the National Archives, Lincoln Memorial, Korean War Veterans Memorial, Vietnam Veterans Memorial and World War II Memorial before their trip home.

"The Vietnam Memorial looked so much different than it looks on TV and was another one of my favorite locations on the trip," Dewitz said.

On the flight home, the surprise "mail call" added to the grand welcome home party.

"Coming back to North Dakota was unbelievable," Welder said. "When someone shouted, 'Mail call,' and started handing out the mail, well, there wasn't a dry eye on the plane."

Once entering the Bismarck airport, local dignitaries, family, friends and a local band cheered on the North Dakota veterans as they returned home.

"During my entire life, I have never come across the gratitude for the service, as I did on the Honor Flight," Welder said.

Dewitz echoed the message, "The appreciation we were shown for our time in the service makes a person feel good."

Both men also thanked the sponsors who made the trip available free of charge to North Dakota veterans. ⚡

New look, new logo, same service for members

The launch of a new logo was announced at the KEM Electric Cooperative annual meeting! KEM Electric's annual meeting theme, "Power for Generations," got us thinking about who we are and what we want to be for our members.

KEM Electric has grown and evolved over the past 78 years, and felt it was time for a change to better reflect who we are today, and to symbolize our future. After careful consideration, we chose a new logo that reflects a more modern look, yet represents the cooperative.



The circle symbolizes our unity as a cooperative, with four parts of the circle being a nod to each of the counties we serve. In the center is a green lightning bolt that symbolizes the energy we have provided our members for generations, and for generations to come.

Over the coming months, you will start to see KEM transition from our past logo to the current logo. KEM employees are excited to announce and embrace the new logo, as we continue to serve our membership. ⚡

MANAGER'S MESSAGE:

Electricity brings every day value

BY TRAVIS KUPPER

Even though I work in the energy industry, like most people, I still don't think much about the electricity I use. I expect the lights to turn on when I flip the switch and the coffeemaker to work each morning. Because electricity is so abundant, we don't think much about it. The only time we really think about electricity is when the power goes out or perhaps when the monthly bill arrives.

Given how electricity powers our modern lifestyle every day, it's a great value, especially when compared to other common services and expenses. For example, think back to the cost of a gallon of gasoline 20 years ago. Consider the cost of groceries or a cup of your favorite specialty coffee from a few years back. In comparison, the cost of electricity has remained largely flat, unlike most other consumer goods.

Like many of you, I have a cellphone to stay connected, and I subscribe to cable channels so I can enjoy more viewing options. Many of us consider these necessities for modern life. We can see what we're getting for our money, and we pay the price for those services. In contrast, when we use electricity, we don't necessarily "see" all that we're getting for our money.

But considering what electricity does for us, it's a tremendous value for our quality of life as

well as our budgets. For comparison, consider that the average rent increase was nearly 4% (from 2014-19), according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index (CPI). The cost of medical care increased 3% during this time, and education was not too far behind at 2.6%. So, where did electricity rank? According to the CPI, electricity increased by less than half a percentage point, 0.4%.

The bottom line: Electricity brings value every day. Considering that electricity is something we all use around the clock, I'm very proud of our track record. At the same time, we are striving to increase our service reliability, reduce those brief interruptions and reduce costs. We are continually working to improve our operations to ensure a smarter grid and exploring more renewable energy options where possible.

KEM Electric provides the reliable service you expect and deserve as valued members of the co-op. And as your trusted energy advisor, we want to help you save your energy and money.

If you have questions about your account or are looking for ways to save energy at home, please give us a call. KEM Electric is your electric co-op, and our sole purpose is to serve you and the needs of our community. That's every-day value. ⚡

Safety Starts with ME: Dale Nagel

“Agriculture is the backbone of our country, and our livelihood greatly depends on the crops provided by American farmers,” said Dale Nagel, line superintendent/chief of staff. “In addition to being one of the most labor-intensive professions, farming is also considered one of the most dangerous jobs in the United States.”

The hard work and exhaustive labor are tough, but rushing the job to save time can be extremely dangerous – even deadly – when farming near electrical equipment. Every year, we see collisions where tractors and other farming equipment accidentally collide with utility poles and power lines, causing injuries and power outages.

“One critical part of safety around electricity is awareness,” Nagel explained. “It’s important to remember that farm machinery is vulnerable to hitting power lines because of its large size, height and extensions. Being aware of the location of overhead power lines and planning a safe equipment route can help reduce accidents.”

If you’re preparing for harvest season, please keep the following safety tips in mind:

- Maintain a 10-foot clearance around all utility equipment in all directions.
- Use a spotter and deployed flags to maintain safe distances from power lines and other electrical equipment when working in the field.
- If your equipment comes into contact with an energized or downed power line, contact 911 immediately and remain inside the vehicle until the power line is deenergized. In case of



smoke or fire, exit the cab by making a solid jump out of the cab (without touching it), and hop away to safety.

- Consider equipment and cargo extensions of your vehicle. Lumber, hay, tree limbs, irrigation pipes and even bulk materials can conduct electricity, so keep them out of contact with electrical equipment.
- Do not stack hay under powerlines

We hope you never find yourself in a situation where farming equipment contacts power lines or poles. But if you do, we hope you’ll remember these safety tips. ⚡

BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

- Approved May 24 board minutes
- Heard co-general manager/CEO report
- Heard Basin Electric updates
- Discussed Energy Transfer Partners update
- Board approved the allocation of 2021 margin
- Approved WSPC participation agreement
- Discussed strategic planning
- Heard financial reports
- Heard operations report
- Reviewed manager of member relations report



Protect your livelihood – and your life!

Stacking hay under electrical lines can be dangerous, potentially deadly and could send your cattle's feed up in smoke.

When stacking hay, it is best practice not to do so under a power line. If you must, be sure there is over 10 feet of clearance between the neutral line and the top of your hay bales. Due to the warmer weather, lines are more likely to sag, making a contact more likely.

If you back your equipment into a guy wire and a pole bends or breaks, or if you hit an overhead line with the loader, the line could fall on the hay and ignite. The hay you need to feed your cattle – and the provisions you made to feed your family – just went up in smoke.

And that could be the best-case scenario. If you or your equipment comes into contact with a power line, you could receive an electric shock that could cause injury and even death. Having hay too close to a power line could also be dangerous if children are climbing on top of the bales.

Protect your livelihood and your life and stay away from power lines and poles. If you do make contact with a power line, call 911. Remain

seated, warn others to stay away, and wait for KEM Electric lineworkers to deenergize the lines. Do not move from the equipment.

To report system damage that is not in need of immediate repair, call KEM Electric at 800-472-2673 or email safety@kemelectric.com. If you send an email, please include the location, your name and contact information, and a photo if possible.

Members, your safety matters. Working together helps ensure the safety of all! ⚡

KX/CO-OP DAY at the N.D. State Fair July 28 in Minot

If you plan to attend the North Dakota State Fair on July 28, you are eligible to receive reduced-price tickets for \$1 off gate admission, \$5 off daily unlimited-ride wristbands for carnival rides, and \$1 off Ranch Rodeo admission and a free ice cream social at 2 p.m. at the KX/co-op tent. Give us a call at the office at 701-663-0297, 701-597-3301 or 1-800-750-8212, and we will hook you up with tickets!

Basin Electric Power Cooperative report

FROM WAYNE PELTIER, BASIN ELECTRIC PRESIDENT, AND TODD TELESZ, BASIN ELECTRIC CEO AND GENERAL MANAGER

The cooperative business model has served Basin Electric Power Cooperative and our members well for over 60 years.

The service we provide rural America is essential – reliable, affordable, responsible electricity. Together, we work hard every day, delivering on the commitment to our members. We are driven by technology and a fuel-diverse generation portfolio. We meet expectations for how we will serve our growing membership, and we have solid credit ratings from the three rating agencies.

That said, the value we provide our members as an electric cooperative lies beyond the work we do to power the membership. Our history is full of relationships built and maintained, communities boosted and supported, and people who knit a colorful tapestry to hold our family together.

Each month, Basin Electric's directors come together around the boardroom table to discuss the challenges and opportunities that impact every member in our service territory. Their perspective on how this cooperative can serve our communities is local and homegrown; every one of our directors is an end-use consumer, elected by fellow members. Very intentionally, this governance creates a line from the end-use consumers turning on their light switch to making decisions about the wholesale generation and transmission side of the business.

Basin Electric's governance structure and the cooperative business model have guided us since our founding. It is central to the cooperative's very existence and drives the unique value we bring to the people we serve.

In this way, our governance has proven itself pure and effective. Our directors meet monthly, spending the time needed to understand the issues and decisions that come before them, and forming the trust that is helpful in having spirited discussions. They meet just as often with their member cooperative boards. They live in the same communities they are elected to represent and are personally invested in the decisions



Wayne Peltier, left, and Todd Telesz

they make, because they know they will be affected right alongside their neighbors. They are accountable to and reside among the people who make up our membership of 3 million consumer-owners.

The Basin Electric team keeps the lights on for our consumer-owners, and products shipping out of the Great Plains Synfuels Plant across rural America make our board of directors proud.

Our team of employees understands the members we serve are priority. Every decision we make is framed through the lens of the best interest of our members: the farmer in eastern Montana who needs reliable irrigation for his barley crop, the single mom in western South Dakota who needs affordable electricity to keep her family safe and secure, and the industrial facilities throughout our service territory that power their local economies. We're driven to serve all with a dedication to responsible energy sources.

Basin Electric has operated as a consumer-owned-and-controlled organization for more than half a century and has done so successfully by keeping a laser-focus on the member at the end of the line. Our history of stewardship, innovation and adaptability is recorded not only in history books, but also in the lives our members have helped to change.

As we look toward our future, we know the foundation first set 60 years ago will continue to serve us. Basin Electric was built through good fortune and the grit found in necessity. Our geographical diversity, combined with the operational scale of our generation portfolio and transmission infrastructure and our financial strength, has positioned us well to successfully navigate the challenges and opportunities to come. ⚡

Western Area Power Administration report

BY LLOYD LINKE, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AND UPPER GREAT PLAINS REGIONAL MANAGER

As we enter a new normal following two years of historic events, Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) strives to rekindle and strengthen our relationships with customers, define a successful and relevant future and inspire a workforce ready to serve like our lights depend on it, all while addressing some of the new questions before us as a federal organization and electric utility.

Today, the energy industry may feel, at times, chaotic, which is a feeling we are starting to get used in what has been considered a steady and reliable profession. These changes bring new opportunities for WAPA to leverage additional benefits for our customers and continue ensuring reliable, affordable, renewable and clean hydropower and transmission services.

It is an exciting time to take the helm at Upper Great Plains (UGP) after nearly 40 years in the electrical power industry. I was raised in Bismarck, and obtained a bachelor's degree in electrical and electronics engineering at North Dakota State University. I began my federal career at WAPA in 1983, holding several positions in maintenance, construction, power billing, marketing, and power and generation operations at UGP and the Alaska Power Administration. In September 1995, I accepted the administrator position at the Alaska Power Administration before returning to WAPA in May 1996 as the UGP maintenance engineering manager. Most recently, I was the UGP vice president of power operations in Watertown, S.D., before being selected as regional manager in July 2021.

At WAPA, we remain committed to our mission and vision in an evolving industry in partnership with our customers. Our organizational theme for 2022, "Reflect, Recharge and Resolve," illustrates our commitment to honor our legacy – including our 45th anniversary in December – renew our strategy, and our connections, and move forward resolutely during this time of rapid industry change.

This year, we are focusing on critical issues, such as drought and increasingly severe weather conditions, grid reliability and resilience, and workforce and strategic planning.

Delivering renewable, reliable and affordable hydropower to rural America is our core mission,

and we face existential questions posed to us not only by systemic drought, but also by market volatility, security concerns and adverse weather conditions, like polar vortices, extreme heat events, wildfires and increasingly severe storms. Without appropriate planning and mitigation actions, an ongoing drought could cause pressure on our power rates and may also impact reliable balancing authority operations, as hydropower is a critical contributor to grid stability.

We experienced a second consecutive dry and warm winter along much of the Missouri River Basin. According to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' April hydrology update, reservoir inflows are well below average, with seasonal runoff expected to be about 17.8 million-acre feet, or 69% of average. Coupled with low snowpack and a bad water year last year, the Corps anticipates that the seven mainstem dams will generate 7.2 billion kilowatt-hours (kWh) this year compared to the long-term average of 9.5 billion kWh. The hydrologic forecast also projects poor water conditions for potentially the next five years.

WAPA and UGP are not new to prolonged drought conditions in the Missouri River Basin, having experienced a decade-long drought at the beginning of the 21st century. We recognize now there will be less power available for surplus sales beyond our contractual obligations and will get a head start with customers on drought planning to stabilize our rates and costs, including adding a possible drought-adder component to our rate starting next year.

We are also beginning a formal rate process to implement new rates before the current ones expire Dec. 31. The new rates will be put into effect for a five-year period following a public process anticipated to begin in late spring or early summer.

This year, we will also focus on reliability and system resilience, continuing to mature our asset management, security, reliability-centered maintenance and aviation programs to effectively and efficiently maintain, secure and modernize the grid. Part of this objective also includes seeking new partnerships and leveraging existing

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ones to explore implementing new protective technologies and hardening the system.

Another key priority is improving our organizational resilience. We will develop the workforce of the future, cultivating our upcoming leaders and ensuring the crucial core values and tenets of this organization remain intact during a time of employee transition and change. We are going to advance our safety-focused organizational culture, embracing inclusion, diversity, human performance improvement and just culture.

Many WAPA employees continued to report to the office throughout the pandemic, including the employees who maintain and operate the grid and their support staff. In April, we completed reentry for staff whose work can and has been done from home since March 2020. In this transition, we initiated a pilot program that permits eligible employees more telework options than before, increasing our ability to recruit and retain valuable staff

while safeguarding our traditional high levels of customer service. We are excited to reopen our doors to visitors and return in person to the communities we serve.

Finally, we are embarking on an effort to develop a new strategic plan that will guide WAPA through 2030. Late last year, we conducted environmental surveys with customers, employees and other stakeholders, requesting them to identify internal and external opportunities and challenges. With this information, we are developing strategic themes and desired long-term results through 2030. We anticipate these themes and results to be shared in May for customer input and feedback.

WAPA and customers started this incredible journey to serve the West with federal hydropower, and we will continue to travel this road together into the future, through a new strategic plan and refocused priorities. In my tenure as UGP regional manager, I look forward to working with employees, customers and communities to strengthen these relationships for a valuable and relevant future. ⚡



Explore it,
adore it and save!

In partnership with the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation, KEM Electric Cooperative is once again making excursions to Medora more affordable for families

This summer, our members are eligible for a 15% discount off the following reservations:

- Tickets to the Medora Musical
- Pitchfork Steak Fondue
- Bully Pulpit Golf Course

Lodging at any of the following:

- Elkhorn Quarters
- Badlands Motel
- Rough Riders Hotel

To make your reservations and claim your savings, call **1-800-MEDORA-1** and provide the discount code: **Touch2022**.

Call 701-254-4666 or email info@kemelectric.com to be entered into a chance to win free Medora Musical tickets.

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Report outages to the following toll-free number:

800-472-2673

Hazleton, Linton and Strasburg exchanges' phone number: 701-254-4666

FIND US ON:



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