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Members receive NDSU Harvest Bowl recognition

BY RACHEL NEFF

March is National Agriculture Month, and KEM Electric Cooperative salutes our farmers and ranchers who make agriculture one of North Dakota's top industries.

North Dakota State University (NDSU) also acknowledges the agricultural impact on the state by recognizing leading agriculturalists through the NDSU Harvest Bowl.

"The Harvest Bowl is a weekend event, where we are able to recognize agriculture and athletics, and the connection between," said Duane Hauck, NDSU Harvest Bowl chair.

The Harvest Bowl annually recognizes dedicated agriculturalists in all of North Dakota's 53 counties and 10 counties in western Minnesota with the naming of county agriculturalist honorees. The honorees are selected through the local NDSU Extension offices.

"Each county agent nominates an individual or couple based on active community leaders, people who are innovative and active in promoting the ag industry, and are highly respected individuals," Hauck said.

During this event, five KEM Electric Cooperative members were recognized.



Dwight and Cheryl Schilling

Dwight and Cheryl Schilling, McIntosh County

Dwight and Cheryl Schilling own and operate Schilling Feedlot and Farm, a third-generation farm and ranch operation in McIntosh County.

With the help of their son and daughter-in-law, Jace and Baily, the Schillings raise cow-calf pairs, operate a feedlot and raise a variety of crops, including rye, wheat, beans and corn.

"The feedlot is most unique to our operation, as

we take extremely good care of our cattle, feeding them specific rations before they are sold as fats," Cheryl said.

"The Schillings are great people to work with and held in high esteem in the community. Any time we need help at our Extension office with research, they are more than willing to help," said Crystal Schaunaman, NDSU Extension agent for McIntosh County.

"It is nice to be recognized by peers that you're doing something right and being good caretakers of our animals," Cheryl remarked. "The awards aren't why we do it. However, it is our way of life, and we have our heart and soul in it."

In addition to their work on the farm, Dwight volunteers as a firefighter and is a retired wrestling coach. The Schillings are avid motorcyclists and enjoy riding in their spare time. The couple has two other children and nine grandchildren.



Andy and Carla Gross

Andy and Carla Gross, Logan County

Andy and Carla Gross own and operate Gross Grass and Cattle Ranch, which includes a commercial cow-calf herd, a feedlot and grass yearling operation. They grow their own alfalfa, corn silage, oats, rye, millet and cover crops for the livestock.

"Andy and Carla Gross are well-deserved nominees for this award, because of the strength and depth of their agricultural stewardship. Andy is a former ag teacher and Extension agent and is currently an NRCS employee, while Carla is the main person managing the farming and ranch operations. Both strive to be good stewards of the land and soil," said Extension Agent Justin Leier.

Andy is a district conservationist with the U.S.

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Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service in Napoleon. He is a member of the Napoleon FFA Alumni, St. Philip Neri Catholic Church and the American Legion. Andy previously served as a volunteer first responder/driver for the Napoleon ambulance, and on the Napoleon school board and Logan County Farmers Union board.

Carla oversees day-to-day operations on the ranch. She is also employed at Napoleon Livestock Auction. Carla is an active member of the St. Philip Neri Catholic Church and is a member of the Christian Mothers Association.

The couple has six children and eight grandchildren.



Jack and Roberta Nagel

**Jack and Roberta Nagel
Ryan and Chelsea Nagel,
Emmons County**

Known for their reputation raising high-quality FI Black Baldy replacement heifers, Jack and Roberta Nagel, with their son and daughter-in-law, Ryan and Chelsea Nagel, operate a diversified farm and ranch operation, where they raise sunflowers, corn, soybeans, canola, wheat and forage oats.

Jack purchased the farmstead in 1982 and has recently semiretired from farming. Now, his days are spent helping his son, Ryan,

who has taken over the farm.

Since taking over, Ryan has implemented a variety of new techniques, including no-till seeding and planting, variable-rate prescription-based seed and fertilizer placement and rotational grazing of pastures.

"We are thankful we could raise our four children on the family farm," Roberta remarked. "Jack and Ryan are very dedicated farmers that take care of the land so diligently. It makes me proud."

"The Nagels are great producers, who have worked closely with our Extension office. They are excellent people who are involved heavily in the community and do a lot of great things with their operations," noted Emily Leier, NDSU Extension agent for Emmons County.



Ryan and Chelsea Nagel

Jack is the president of the Linton Fire Department, a director for the Independent Beef Association of North Dakota and a life member of Knights of Columbus. Roberta is a proud KEM Electric Cooperative retiree. During her 41.5 years at KEM Electric, she worked as a secretary and office manager and eventually finished her time as chief of staff.

Ryan is on the Emmons County Soil Conservation board and Emmons County Farm Bureau board. Chelsea is the radiology director at Linton Regional Medical Center.

Ryan and Chelsea have three children.



Troy and Carol Dutton

**Troy and Carol Dutton,
Kidder County**

As owners of the Steele Veterinary Clinic, Kidder County's Harvest Bowl honorees, Troy and Carol Dutton, are important partners for the agricultural community. After taking

over the practice in 2004, Troy wanted to keep its original philosophy alive.

"We view ourselves as a partner with the livestock producers. We want to help them out in situations when they arise and help manage them through that, so those things don't happen again," he said.

From vaccination protocols to disease prevention, Troy, along with four other veterinarians, attend to ranchers' needs for the health and wellness of their livestock.

"We are very humbled by the nomination, because there are a lot of deserving people of the award. It means a lot to be recognized for our commitment to the ag community," said Carol, who assists the clinic with bookkeeping and other tasks.

"The Duttons were honored this year for their long-term involvement in the community and 4-H. While their kids were in 4-H, they were actively involved in the fair association and hippology team," said Penny Nester, a former Extension agent for Kidder County.

The Duttons have two daughters. One is a graduate of NDSU, who is now pursuing veterinary school, and the other is a current NDSU student studying optometry. ⚡

MANAGER'S MESSAGE: Stay in the know



Travis Kupper

At KEM Electric Cooperative, we are constantly striving to improve our operational efficiency, so we can provide the most reliable electric service possible for our consumer-members (that's you!).

We rely on data for nearly every aspect of our operations, which is why we need your help. By making sure we have

your most accurate and complete contact information, we can continue to provide the high level of service you expect and deserve. Accurate information enables us to improve customer service and enhance communications for reporting and repairing outages. It also allows co-op members to receive information about other important programs, events and activities.

Up-to-date contact information can potentially speed up the power restoration process during an outage. For example, the phone number you provide is linked to your service address to our outage management system. This means when you call to report an outage, our system recognizes your phone number and matches it with your account location. Accurate information helps our outage management system predict the location and possible cause of an outage, making it easier for our crews to correct the problem.

While we always do our best to maintain service, we occasionally plan outages to update, repair or replace equipment. In these instances, we can provide advance notification to affected members through automated phone messages if we have your updated contact information and communication preferences.

Keeping the co-op updated with your information also helps us when there's a question about energy use or billing. Emails and text messages are also used to notify registered members of any changes in co-op event details. In addition, discrepancies on your account can be taken care of promptly if KEM Electric has accurate account information.

Many of you have been members of the co-op for years, and it's likely your account information hasn't been updated for some time. We recognize many members now use a cellphone as their primary phone service, and we might not have that number in our system.

I want to emphasize we will never share your contact information with any third parties. It is only used by KEM Electric to send important information to you. Please take a moment to confirm or update your contact information by contacting our office. By doing so, you will be helping us improve service and efficiency, so we can better serve you and all members of the co-op. ⚡



Do we have your current contact information?

If you no longer have a land line or your mobile mailbox is full - we may not be able to reach you in regards to information about your electric service. Update your phone number and email address by:



Logging into your SmartHub Account



Call us at 800-472-2673 or 701-254-4666



Annual poster contest!

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Grab your art supplies and draw a poster showing how KEM Electric Cooperative has provided power for generations!

This poster should display a clear, creative picture to help celebrate the cooperative's annual meeting in 2023, with the theme:

“Power for Generations.” All posters should display the Touchstone Energy® Cooperative logo on their entries. No matter what you draw, have fun! We can't wait to hear from you. Cash prizes will be awarded in each division.

Divisions:

- Preschool to kindergarten
- First grade to third grade
- Fourth grade to sixth grade

Deadline: Posters must be received at the KEM Electric office no later than 4:30 p.m. on March 31.

Rules:

- Posters must be on white, 8.5x11-inch paper.
- Posters must depict the theme, “Power for Generations” and display the Touchstone Energy logo.

- Print the child's name, address, age and parents' names on the back of the posters.
- Submit a photo of the child with the artwork.
- Only dependents of current KEM Electric members are eligible.

Prizes:

Each division will be awarded three prizes (nine prizes total): first-place prizes of \$15; second-place prizes of \$10; and third-place prizes of \$5.

Winners:

Winning posters will be featured in the KEM Electric local pages of *North Dakota Living*. ⚡

BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

- Approved December board minutes
- Heard co-general manager/CEO report
- Reviewed Basin Electric Power Cooperative updates
- Discussed Energy Transfer Partners update
- Heard financial report
- Heard operations report
- Received member relations report
- Heard legal counsel report



KEM Electric Cooperative's **Kirk Praus** received his journeyman lineworker certificate at the NDAREC Apprenticeship Training and Safety Conference in January, where the cooperative was also recognized for its safety performance.

Cooperative recognized for safety performance

The North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC) hosted its 59th annual Apprenticeship Training and Safety Conference Jan. 11-13 in Bismarck. The conference is sponsored by NDAREC, with cooperation from the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship.

The conference drew representatives of NDAREC member-cooperatives, students at the Bismarck State College lineworker program and the electric industry for classroom sessions, equipment evaluations and award ceremonies. Training topics included N.D. Department of Transportation updates, protective grounding, lineworker safety and tool training, transformer connections, conducting a thorough accident

investigation, and more.

"Participants increase their knowledge and skills of the trade by attending the Apprenticeship Training and Safety Conference and, in turn, improve the safety, resilience and reliability of the electrical system, which directly impacts the quality of life for our members," said Christina Roemmich, NDAREC safety services director.

During the awards banquet, Kirk Praus received his journeyman lineworker certificate, and KEM Electric was recognized as a successful participant in the Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program and was presented with the safety performance award. ⚡

Safety Starts with ME: Kirk Praus

Power surges can be frustrating, but typically happen unexpectedly. To reduce the members' risk of damage, it is important to be knowledgeable and prepare ahead of time if and when a power surge does strike.

"A power surge is typically caused by lightning, changes in electrical loads, faulty wiring or damaged power lines," said Kirk Praus, a journeyman lineworker for KEM Electric Cooperative. "Regardless of the cause, a power surge can cause significant damage to electronic devices and equipment in your home."

Common causes

Electrical overload happens when devices or appliances are plugged into an outlet that cannot handle that amount of voltage, or if multiple devices are plugged in at the same time through an extension cord. If power surges are a reoccurring event in your house due to electrical overload, it is time to call a certified electrician to evaluate your home's circuits and electrical needs.

Faulty wiring in a home is another cause of power surges. Signs of a faulty wire include visible burns on outlets, buzzing sounds from outlets or frequently tripped circuit breakers.

"If you notice these signs, it may be time for an electrical wiring repair or update," Praus said.

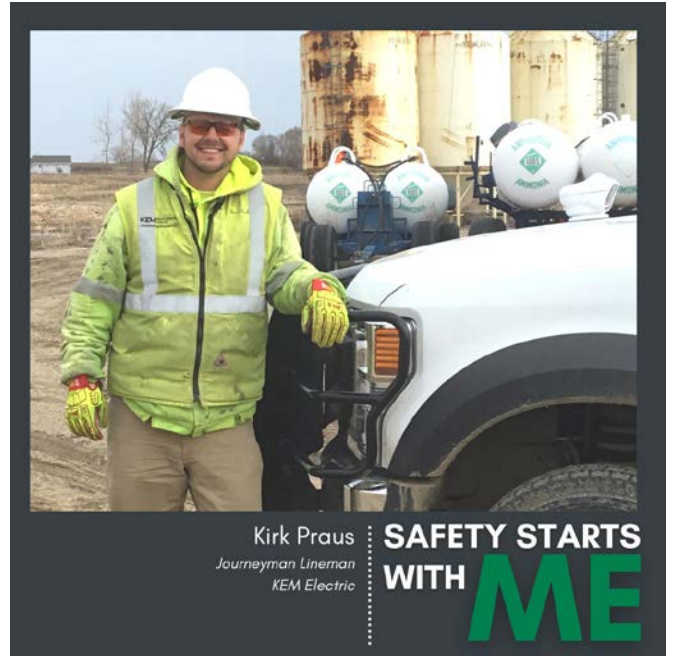
A quick surge of electricity may also occur after KEM Electric restores the power after an outage. In the case of a power outage, it is important to unplug any sensitive devices around your home, then wait to plug them back in after power is restored.

Protect electronics in your home

There are two other ways in which you can save the longevity of devices in your home.

Point-of-use surge protection devices can protect your devices during most power surges. Not all power strips, include surge protection. So, before buying a power strip, read the packaging and do not overload the power strip with too many devices.

Whole-home surge protection can protect your home from more powerful power surges.



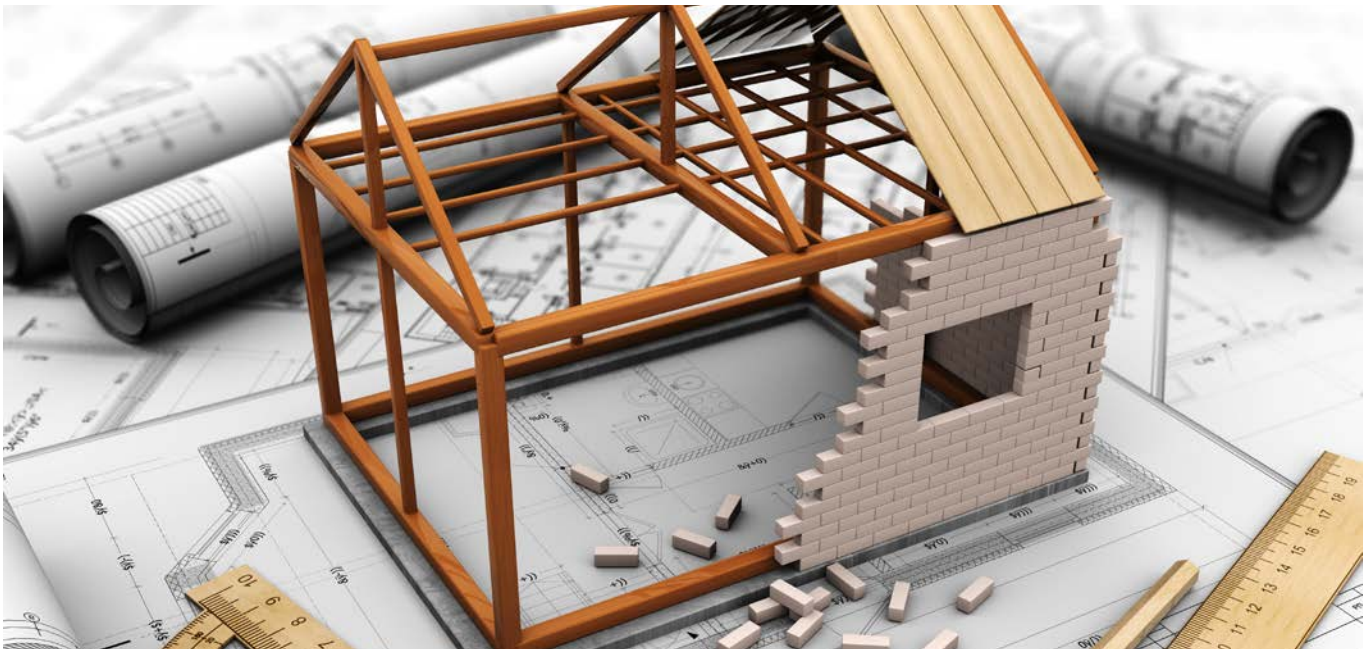
These are connected to your home's service panel and include features like thermal fuses and notification capabilities to inform when a device has been impacted by a surge. The price of this device varies and should be connected by a licensed electrician. ⚡

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Washing windows and screens is a great way to practice energy efficiency during spring cleaning. **Clean windows and screens make your home brighter by allowing more sunlight in, reducing the need for lamps and fixtures.**

Clean screens also allow more fresh air in the home when the windows are open to recycle indoor air. Natural light and clean air are energy savers, and they enhance overall health and productivity.



Planning to build or upgrade?

Whether you are looking to build a new structure or make changes to an existing structure, it is important to contact KEM Electric Cooperative in the early planning stages.

“Each year, we help our members with their construction upgrades and new builds,” said Dale Nagel, line superintendent, KEM Electric Cooperative.

“Projects can range from pasture wells to grain storage, new outbuildings, houses and businesses,” Nagel said. “For projects of all sizes, it is important to contact your local cooperative.”

By doing so, KEM Electric can help you confirm the viability of your project.

“Our engineering department can verify

whether we can serve additional load in your area and the availability and cost of equipment and materials,” Nagel said.

Information to share with the cooperative includes the type of upgrade or new build, location, timeline and power requirements.

“If you are unsure of this information, work with an electrician that can contact us,” Nagel said.

This year, it is especially important, due to the global supply chain disruptions, Nagel noted.

“We want to ensure your building project or upgrade goes as smoothly as possible, and that is why it is important to call us in the early stages,” he said. ⚡

Achieve energy efficiency

Are you planning to build a new structure on your property? Follow these tips to achieve energy efficiency:

- Location matters. If possible, carefully consider where you build your shop or barn. Be sure to consult with your cooperative on building clearances.
- Start with a sustainable design plan. A sustainable design plan, according to

the U.S. General Services Administration, includes the ability to use environmentally preferable products; protect and conserve water; enhance indoor environmental quality; and optimize operational and maintenance practices.

- Choose efficient building methods. Pole barns offer reliable shelter without costly excavation, concrete foundations or general site disruption. ⚡

Interested in becoming a director?

KEM Electric Cooperative's 2023 annual meeting will be held Thursday, June 15. This year, the director seats up for election are those of Victor "Chuck" Wald, District 4; Dean Dewald, District 5; and Carmen Essig, at-large directors.

KEM Electric Cooperative is governed by a seven-member board of directors that is elected by you – the members and owners of the electric cooperative. The current board includes John Beck, District 1; Carter Vander Wal, District 2;

Neil Meidinger, District 3; Victor "Chuck" Wald, District 4; Dean Dewald, District 5; and Dean Hummel and Carmen Essig At-Large.

If you would like to place your name on the ballot, pick up a petition at the KEM Electric office or find online at www.kemelectric.com. Petitions became available Jan. 31. Petitions must be returned to the cooperative office no later than May 2. ⚡



SAVE THE DATE
JOIN KEM ELECTRIC FOR YOUR ANNUAL MEETING ON
THURSDAY, JUNE 15, 2023
NAPOLEON, NORTH DAKOTA
MORE INFORMATION WILL FOLLOW.

POWER
FOR GENERATIONS

KEM ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC.

DIRECTORS:

Victor Wald, ChairmanNapoleon
John Beck, Vice ChairmanLinton
Carter Vander Wal, Sec.-Treas. Pollock
Dean Dewald, Director..... Dawson
Carmen Essig, Director.....Lehr
Dean Hummel, Director..... Hague
Neil Meidinger, Director..... Zeeland

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