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## EXPERIENCE OF A LIFETIME: Erbele chosen for Youth Tour

Each year, KEM Electric Cooperative sponsors one student to participate in a once-in-a-lifetime experience in Washington, D.C., during the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour.

A longstanding cooperative program, the Youth Tour immerses students in American history for a week. While in Washington, D.C., students learn more about electric cooperatives, visit national monuments and meet North Dakota's congressional delegation. Through this experience, students gain life skills, meet new people and make unforgettable memories.

Addyson Erbele, the daughter of Tim and Ronda Erbele and a sophomore at Napoleon High School, was chosen as this year's Youth Tour winner.

To apply for the Youth Tour, sophomores and juniors who are dependents of KEM Electric members may submit an application, which includes an essay question set forth by the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives. This year's essay question was: "Why is it important to be involved in your community, and how does that prepare you to be a future leader?"

"This essay prompt was fitting for me," Addyson says. She is active in various activities, including FFA, Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) and youth group at church. Addyson is passionate about being a leader in those activities.

"I am a Bible study leader for our FCA and have represented FCCLA at a national level," she says.

Her essay was inspired by the role she plays in these groups, and she hopes to encourage others to take leadership positions in their communities. This isn't the first time Addyson has heard about the Youth Tour, as she remembers her cousin, Teagan Erbele, being a delegate a few years ago.

"I am excited to learn more about American history and connect with other students across the United States," Addyson says.

During the Youth Tour in June, Addyson will join hundreds of students representing electric cooperatives. To hear about her experience in Washington, D.C., check back in August for a recap of her trip. Read Addyson's winning essay here.



**Addyson Erbele**, sophomore at Napoleon High School, will join students from across the nation in Washington D.C. this summer.



**Erbele** competes in the individual sale category for the FFA Ag Sales competition in Carrington.

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### **Read Addyson's essay:**

Being in an introduction to agriculture class, I learned a lot about the history of FFA, and events that I can participate in. Something that always intrigued me was the FFA motto, which says, "Learning to do, doing to learn, earning to live, living to serve." The first three lines always made sense to me, but the line that always struck me was "living to serve." As we continued to study this, I soon learned serving is the first step to becoming a good leader.

Leadership skills are important for every stage of life, whether you are just starting to head into the real world or have spent many years in it, and one of the best ways to learn and practice your leadership skills is to get involved in your community. Leadership may not always look like being head of a committee or the president of a club. Serving others, like volunteering to help with community cleanup or helping at your local nursing home, is a great example of leadership. Leadership has no age, and there is a way for everyone to get involved.

Being a leader in your community won't just benefit you, but everyone around you also. When you volunteer, you will become more aware of the issues in your community. When you are aware of these issues, you can take action on them to support your community. Learning to become aware of these issues now will teach you to become aware and act on issues in the future, whether that be in your job or even the world.

Serving in your community will prepare you to be a future leader. By embarking on the journey of volunteering and getting involved, you will be able to learn skills vital to your future. Skills that you will be able to learn include organization, listening skills, public speaking skills and many more. You can build bonds and relationships with people in your community that will last a lifetime.

Leadership has played a very important role in my own life. Being involved in many different activities in my community, I have gained many leadership skills. I have held leadership positions, such as being the junior president and social media manager of FCCLA, president of the FFA Conduct of Chapter Meetings team, a leader of a Bible study, and a worship leader in my local church and youth group. Not only have I held these leadership positions, but I have also volunteered for many different events, such as serving weddings, cleaning ditches, caroling at the nursing home and planting flowers for local businesses. Every single event I have volunteered or held a position for has given me the skills and confidence I need to be a future leader.

Being an efficient leader inspires others around you to do the same. If you take the first step in being involved in your community, you may motivate others to do the same. If everyone puts in the effort to be a leader, it will create a better community, a better country and a better world. ⚡

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## **EMPOWERING OUR FUTURE: Co-op awards scholarships**

Annually, KEM Electric Cooperative fuels the future by awarding scholarships to high school seniors within our service area. This initiative embodies our cooperative's unwavering commitment to community growth and celebrates the achievements of local students. By recognizing these students' outstanding accomplishments, we honor their drive, resilience and passion for their future.

This year, KEM Electric awarded eight scholarships. Six of those were given on behalf of KEM Electric to area seniors, while one was in partnership with Basin Electric Power Cooperative and another with 3C Construction. We are fortunate to have partners who also invest in the future of our cooperative.

### **Basin Electric/KEM Electric scholarship**

This year's winner of the \$1,000 Basin Electric/KEM Electric scholarship is Alexis Vetter from Linton Public School. Alexis, the daughter of Leland and Mary Ann Vetter, plans to attend Bismarck State College (BSC).

### **3C Construction and WDUS scholarship**

Two \$500 scholarships were made available on behalf of West Dakota Utility Services (WDUS) and 3C Construction to applicants who plan to attend a certified vocational or technical school. Zachary Dockter was awarded the 3C Construction scholarship. He plans to attend BSC in pursuit of a lineworker certificate. Zachary's parents are Jack and Connie Dockter.

No applications were received for the WDUS scholarship.



## KEM Electric high school scholarships

KEM Electric offered one \$500 scholarship to a graduating senior from each of the high schools within our service area.

**Ashley Public School:** Macy Monson, daughter of Andrew and Marsha, plans to attend Mayville State University in pursuit of an agribusiness/accounting degree.

**Kidder County School:** Abby Keily, daughter of Michael and Michelle, plans to attend Iowa State University in pursuit of an animal science degree.

**Napoleon High School:** Alexis Schneider, daughter of Jeff and Tanya, plans to attend BSC in pursuit of an agricultural-related degree.

**Strasburg High School:** Conner Rohrich,

dependent of Carter and Merlynn Vander Wal, plans to attend BSC in pursuit of a farm and ranch management degree.

**Linton High School:** Brooke Bosch, daughter of Clyde and Iris, plans to attend BSC in pursuit of an elementary education degree.

No applications were received from Hazelton Public School, Zeeland High School or Wishek High School.

**GED/high school outside of KEM Electric area/homeschool:** Braeden Kinzler, son of Rodney and Geri, plans to attend the University of Jamestown in pursuit of a physical therapy degree.

Congratulations to all who were chosen as scholarship recipients as well as to the class of 2025. We wish you all the best in your future endeavors. ⚡



*Alexis Vetter*



*Zachary Dockter*



*Macy Monson*



*Abby Keily*



*Alexis Schneider*



*Conner Rohrich*



*Brooke Bosch*



*Braeden Kinzler*

## Luck-of-the-Draw Scholarships Available

Additionally, due to not receiving scholarship applications from a few schools in our service territory, we will be awarding three additional Luck-of-the-Draw scholarships, for a total of five, at our Annual Meeting on June 10 in Linton.

If you are a graduating high school senior who is a dependent of a KEM Electric member and you were not chosen for a scholarship this year, we invite you to join us at our Annual Meeting for these additional scholarship opportunities. Students will be able to register for the Luck-of-the-Draw scholarship at our Annual Meeting and must attend with a parent or guardian.

## MANAGER'S MESSAGE:

# Make your voice heard at your Annual Meeting



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

Each year, we look forward to KEM Electric Cooperative's Annual Meeting. You, the members we serve, always bring value to the meeting, and I know our co-op team is energized by these interactions.

If you've never attended the Annual Meeting, I encourage you to participate. Why? Because input from members like you matters and helps drive the direction of the co-op.

At the Annual Meeting, we report on current initiatives and discuss the co-op's financial health and priorities for the coming years. This year's items under consideration will include director elections, proposed bylaw changes and department reports. And equally important, this is an opportunity for us to hear from you.

### You have the power

This is also a time to vote for new directors who will represent you and our communities' interests in the co-op. As a member of KEM Electric, you have the power to help shape our communities' energy future.

Electric co-ops are democratically controlled by the members we serve, which means you have a say in who governs our co-op. By voting in the annual director election, you can weigh in on the leaders who will make important decisions about the future of the cooperative and our local energy needs.

KEM Electric's directors are community-minded individuals with different skillsets. We rely on them to help us make more informed decisions on long-term

priorities and investments. We have seven directors who live in the co-op's service area. We consider them the eyes and ears of the community, because they provide their unique perspective on various local issues.

### 2025 Candidates

The following KEM Electric members are candidates for the 2025 director election.

#### District 3:

- Neil Meidinger, Zeeland

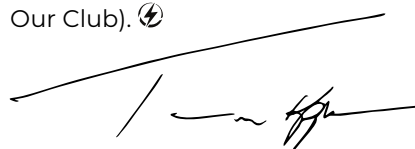
#### District At-Large:

- Albert Noel, Linton
- Michael Knoll, Hague
- Todd Schnabel, Lehr

We want to make voting as convenient as possible for our members, so we offer a variety of ways for you to participate. We hope you'll join us at the Annual Meeting on June 10 in Linton, where you can cast your vote in person. If you're unable to attend in person, you can vote by mailing your ballot ahead of time or vote online.

If you've never been to an annual meeting or it's been a while since you attended, we hope you'll stop by. Join us for food, camaraderie, door prizes and more. All members who attend will receive a "thank you" gift and will be registered for a chance to win Medora Musical tickets, bill credits and more.

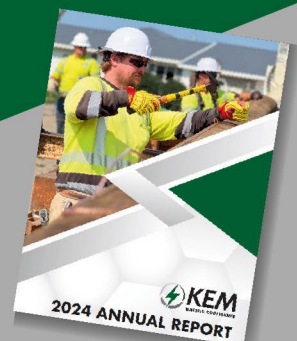
Your KEM Electric team will be ready to answer any energy-related questions you may have. We look forward to seeing you at your Annual Meeting on June 10 in Linton at the Linton Civic Center (formally Our Club). ⚡



## KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR YOUR ANNUAL REPORT PACKET!

The Annual Report packet will arrive to your mailbox soon. Inside the packet, you will find the following KEM Electric information:

- **2024 Annual Report,**
- **2025 Ballot, voting information,**
- **Annual Meeting details and more.**





## MESSAGE FROM MEMBER RELATIONS:

# Annual meeting details



**Marcy Sanders**  
Manager of  
Member Relations

We look forward to YOUR Annual Meeting on June 10 in Linton at the Linton Civic Center (formally Our Club). Whether you've attended in the past or are considering joining us for the first time, here are a few things you should know.

The Annual Meeting is a special time for co-op members to gather, hear from co-op leadership and, perhaps most importantly, vote to elect your new board members and have a say in bylaw changes.

We encourage you to attend and exercise some of the many rights you have as a member of an electric cooperative.

Our Annual Meeting is designed with you in mind! There will be various booths to visit, such as our safety booth where members can visit with our

operations department. There are also some great prizes to be given away! Not only will you leave having a better understanding of what is happening at your cooperative (and maybe win a prize!), but you will feel good knowing you had a voice in an important decision that impacts one of our most vital resources, electricity.

Along with learning more about our cooperative and visiting with fellow members, voting in board of director elections and for proposed amendments to cooperative bylaws will take place.

More information about the board of director candidates and proposed bylaw amendments can be found in the Annual Meeting Report, which you will receive in the mail this month. Also included in this report are voting instructions, a 2025 ballot and further details of the annual meeting. Please watch for it and vote by mail or online if you are unable to attend in person.

Don't miss out on this opportunity to learn and connect. We look forward to seeing you there! ⚡

# Congratulations CARTER KETTERLING, WISHEK PUBLIC SCHOOL!

## MARCH TOUCHSTONE ENERGY® STUDENT OF THE MONTH

Throughout the school year, KEM Electric has chosen 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. These funds have been utilized to the student's choosing for school activities.

We would like to thank all those who have nominated students in our service area. We have some outstanding kids! As we wrap up the school year we would like to congratulate everyone who was nominated and chosen for the Touchstone Energy Student of the Month program. We look forward to supporting these students in our communities through various youth programs in the future.

*"He is always willing to help out others and does it with enthusiasm and dedication."*

*"Carter has grit and integrity."*

*"He always tries to be a voice of reason for the student body."*



**CARTER KETTERLING**  
SOPHOMORE

## MESSAGE FROM OPERATIONS:

# Danzig Substation maintenance completed



**Dale Nagel**

Chief of Staff/  
Line Superintendent

KEM Electric Cooperative is committed to providing continuous, reliable electric service to our members. Over the past 12 months, our crews have been monitoring the Danzig Substation located south of Wishek. As the crews monitored the substation, they noted some issues that could impact members' services. The operations department identified insulators, arrestors and regulators within the substation that needed to be upgraded.

To perform the maintenance on the Danzig substation, a planned outage took place and impacted members were notified. A planned outage is usually conducted for repairs and upgrades to our electrical system, rather than waiting for the equipment to fail. This is also safer for our members

and employees. A portion of our system can be reenergized, while the primary source of power is down, through grid and system redundancy – meaning some members may only see a short loss of power while crews reroute the electricity. In our industry, we often refer to this as “backfeeding.”

After the substation was de-energized and grounded, crews could safely start working on upgrades within the substation. Crews began replacing broken and aged insulators, arrestors and regulator bypasses. While conducting the substation maintenance, crews also replaced all the regulators due to their age and current condition.

Substation maintenance and upgrades like the work done in the Danzig Substation earlier this spring is crucial and necessary to maintain reliability for you, our members. As a member, you can help us ensure reliable electric services by reporting blinks and other disruptions. These calls help us monitor the electrical infrastructure that feeds your area and determine if any maintenance or repairs need to be conducted. ⚡



**Jake Zink**, journeyman lineworker assists in loading the aged regulator.



**Austin Ohlhauser**, journeyman lineworker works to install a new transformer in the Danzig Substation.



SAFETY STARTS WITH ME:

## Electrical Safety Month

May is recognized as Electrical Safety Month, but we know the importance of practicing safety year-round. From our cooperative crews to you, the members we serve, we recognize everyone has a part to play in prioritizing safety.

“As a cooperative team, safety is a top priority from the office to the field and even at home,” says Kevin Horner, Linton area foreman. “Keeping our members safe is just as important to us as keeping each other safe.”

Here are a few practical safety tips to use around the home, office, shop or school.

- **Frayed wires pose a serious safety hazard.** Power cords can become damaged or frayed from age, heavy use or excessive current flow through the wiring. If cords become frayed or cut, replace them, as they could cause a shock when handled.
- **Avoid overloading circuits.** Circuits can only cope with a limited amount of electricity. Overload happens when you draw more electricity than a circuit can safely handle by having too many devices on one circuit.
- **Label circuit breakers to understand the circuits in your home.** Contact a qualified electrician if your home is more than 40 years old and you need to install multiple large appliances that consume large amounts of electricity.
- **Use extension cords properly.** Never plug an extension cord into another extension cord. If you “daisy chain” them together, it could lead to overheating, creating a potential fire hazard. Don’t exceed the wattage of the cord. Doing so also creates a risk of overloading the cord and creating a



fire hazard. Extension cords should not be used as permanent solutions. If you need additional outlets, contact a licensed electrician to help.

Our top priority is providing reliable electrical service to power homes, schools and businesses in our community year-round. But equally important is keeping our community safe around electricity.

If you see something that looks unsafe on a power line or around a substation, give us a call so we can evaluate the situation. ⚡

## Safety demonstration

To further inform our communities of electrical safety, we are happy to provide a safety demonstration at your local school or at an upcoming community event. Reach out to our office at 1-800-472-2673 or 701-254-4666 for more information.



## KEM ELECTRIC BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS: FEB. 25

The meeting of the board of directors of KEM Electric Cooperative was held Feb. 25 in Linton. The meeting was called to order at 9:33 a.m. by Chairman Victor Wald. A quorum was present. Also present were co-General Managers/CEOs Travis Kupper and Jason Bentz, Legal Counsel Tom Bair, Chief of Staff/Line Superintendent Dale Nagel, Member Relations Manager Marcy Sanders, Chief Financial Officer Alex Craigmile and Executive Assistant Connie Hill.

**Consent agenda:** An amendment was presented to the consent agenda. The consent agenda was approved as amended.

**Strategic/action:** Bentz and Kupper presented the co-general managers' report, which included updates on Basin Electric Power Cooperative's winter managers meeting, a Public Service Commission meeting, North Dakota managers group and others. Reports from Basin Electric, West Dakota Utility Services and 3C Construction were available for review.

**Department reports:** Craigmile provided the financial report. Nagel provided a department report, which included safety training and pole testing updates. Sanders provided a department report, which included annual meeting information, youth programs and the member appreciation event.

**Action items:** Action items were discussed and resolved.

**Discussion/general information:** The board discussed upcoming meetings as well as other items.

**Executive session:** The board entered an executive session.

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. May 27 in Linton. If you wish to be placed on the agenda, please call the office. ⚡



## Discounts offered for Medora vacation

KEM Electric Cooperative is able to offer its members a discount by being a Touchstone Energy® member. Simply call 1-800-MEDORA-1 and give the discount code of "TOUCH2025" for a 15% discount on all of the following during any night of the season.

- Medora Musical
- Pitchfork steak fondue
- Bully Pulpit Golf Course
- Gospel Bruch tickets
- Old Town Hall
- Theater shows

### LODGING AT ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Elkhorn Quarters
- Badlands Motel
- Rough Riders Hotel

*The code is good for reservations over the phone, online or in person. A green fees discount will be applied at check-in for a tee time at the golf course.*

## 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  
Email address: info@kemelectric.com

FIND US ON:

