

Manager's message: The power behind your power



Manager Message: Tips for spotting potential electrical hazards in your home

Electricity plays many roles in our

lives, from powering baby monitors, cell phones and lighting, to running HVAC systems and appliances. No wonder we get so comfortable with its instant availability that when we flip a switch, we expect most systems or devices to do the job.

May is National Electrical Safety Month, and here at KEM Electric, we think it is a great time to look around your home and check for potential safety hazards.

Remember, every electrical device has a purpose and a service lifespan. While we can extend operations with maintenance and care, none of them are designed to last or work forever. When electricity is involved, failures can present electrical hazards that might be avoided with periodic inspections.

Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters

Outdoor outlets or those in potentially damp locations in a kitchen, bathroom or laundry room often include GFCI features. They are designed to sense abnormal current flows, breaking the circuit to prevent potential electric shocks from devices plugged into the outlets.

The average GFCI outlet is designed

to last about 10 years, but in areas prone to electrical storms or power surges, they can wear out in five years or less. Check them frequently and be sure to contact a licensed electrician to replace any failing GFCI outlets.

Loose or Damaged Outlets or Switches

Unstable electrical outlets or wall switches with signs of heat damage or discoloration can offer early warnings of potential shock or electrical fire hazards. Loose connections can allow electrical current arcing. If you see these warning signs, it may be time to contact an electrician.

Surge Protectors

Power strips with surge protectors can help safeguard expensive equipment like televisions, home entertainment systems and computer components from power spikes. Voltage spikes are measured in joules, and surge protectors are rated for the number of joules they can effectively absorb. That means if your surge protector is rated at 1,000 joules, it should be replaced when it hits or passes that limit. When the limit is reached, protection stops, and you're left with a basic power strip.

Some surge protectors include indicator lights that flicker to warn you when they've stopped working as designed, but many do not. If your electrical system takes a major hit, or if you don't remember when you bought your surge protector, replacement may be the best option.

Extension Cords

If you use extension cords regularly

to connect devices and equipment to your wall outlets, you may live in an underwired home. With a growing number of electrical devices connecting your family to the services you get from KEM, having enough outlets in just the right spots can be challenging. Remember, extension cords are designed for temporary, occasional or periodic use.

If an extension cord gets noticeably warm when in use, it could be undersized for the intended use. If it shows any signs of frayed, cracked or heat-damaged insulation, it should be replaced. If the grounding prong is missing, crimped or loose, a grounded cord will not provide the protection designed into its performance. And always make sure that extension cords used in outdoor or potentially damp locations are rated for exterior use.

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, approximately 51,000 electrical fires are reported each year in the United States, causing more than \$1.3 billion in annual property damage.

Electricity is an essential necessity for modern living, and KEM Electric is committed to providing safe, reliable and affordable power to all of our members. We hope you'll keep these electrical safety tips in mind so that you can note any potential hazards before damage occurs.

-Jason Bentz

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KEM Electric awards scholarships

KEM Electric Cooperative is pleased to announce the 2022-2023 student scholarship winners, whose families are member-owners of KEM Electric. In the spirit of the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives value of commitment to community, KEM Electric is proud to offer yearly scholarships to assist in developing rural leadership in our region.

KEM Electric/Basin Electric scholarship

The winner of the Basin Electric Power Cooperative/ KEM Electric scholarship award is Landon Schumacher from Linton High School. He will receive a \$1,000 scholarship in the fall of 2023. Schumacher plans to attend the University of North Dakota and obtain a degree in biology.

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, along with one scholarship for a student who is homeschooled, GED or school outside of KEM Service area for a total of nine \$500 scholarships awarded. This year's recipients receiving \$500 in the fall of 2023 are:

Ashley Public School chose James Tyler Schumacher, son of Quentin and Gwyn Schumacher. James will be attending University of North Dakota and pursuing a degree in biology.

Hazelton-Moffit-Braddock School chose Madison Dahl, daughter of Michelle Dahl and the late Kelly Dahl. Madison will be attending Vermilion Community College and pursuing a veterinary technician degree.

Kidder County High School chose

Alexandra Dewitz, daughter of Dawn and Toby Dewitz. Alexandra will be attending Valley City State University and pursuing an elementary education degree.

Linton Public School chose Lacey Bosch, daughter of Jenel and Ron Bosch. Lacey will be attending Bismarck State College and pursuing a degree in nursing.

Strasburg Public School chose Lilly Haak, daughter of Nicky and Wayne Haak. Lilly will be attending North Dakota State College of Science and pursuing a degree in dental hygiene.

Napoleon Public School chose Trenton Erbele, son of Shanon and Gabe Erbele. Trenton will be attending the North Dakota State College of Science pursuing a degree in electrical construction.

Wishek Public School chose Charles Herr, son of Stacey and Bruce Herr. Charles plans to attend Bismarck State College pursuing a degree in residential carpentry.

Zeeland Public School chose Loren Wolf, son of Trudy Fraase Wolf and Allen Wolf. Loren will be attending Valley City State University.

Homeschool, GED, or school outside the KEM Service Area: KEM Electric chose Landon Wolf, son of Jason and Susan Wolf. Landon will be attending Lake Area Technical Institute pursuing a degree in diesel mechanics.

Thank you to all the students who took the time to apply, and congratulations to this year's winners! KEM Electric is proud to play a small role in supporting your education and careers.



POWER
FOR GENERATIONS

SEE YOU AT THE ANNUAL MEETING

JOIN KEM ELECTRIC FOR YOUR ANNUAL MEETING ON
THURSDAY, JUNE 15, 2023
NAPOLEON, NORTH DAKOTA

Attend KEM Electric's Annual Meeting

The annual meeting is a special time for co-op members to gather, share experiences, hear from co-op leadership and, perhaps most importantly, vote to elect your new board members. Join KEM Electric Cooperative for the 2023 annual meeting, which will be held at 7 p.m. on June 15 in Napoleon, North Dakota at the American Legion Barry-Hoof Post #72.

KEM employees work hard to host this fun event, and we encourage you to attend and exercise some of the many rights you have as a member of an electric cooperative. We know the food, entertainment, and prizes are the best parts of the meeting, but there is so much more to the event.

Read more about KEM Electric's annual meeting in this month's issue of *North Dakota Living*.



KEM Electric will award two, **\$500 Luck of the Draw** scholarships to be drawn at our annual meeting on June 15 in Napoleon. Learn more in this month's issue of *North Dakota Living*.