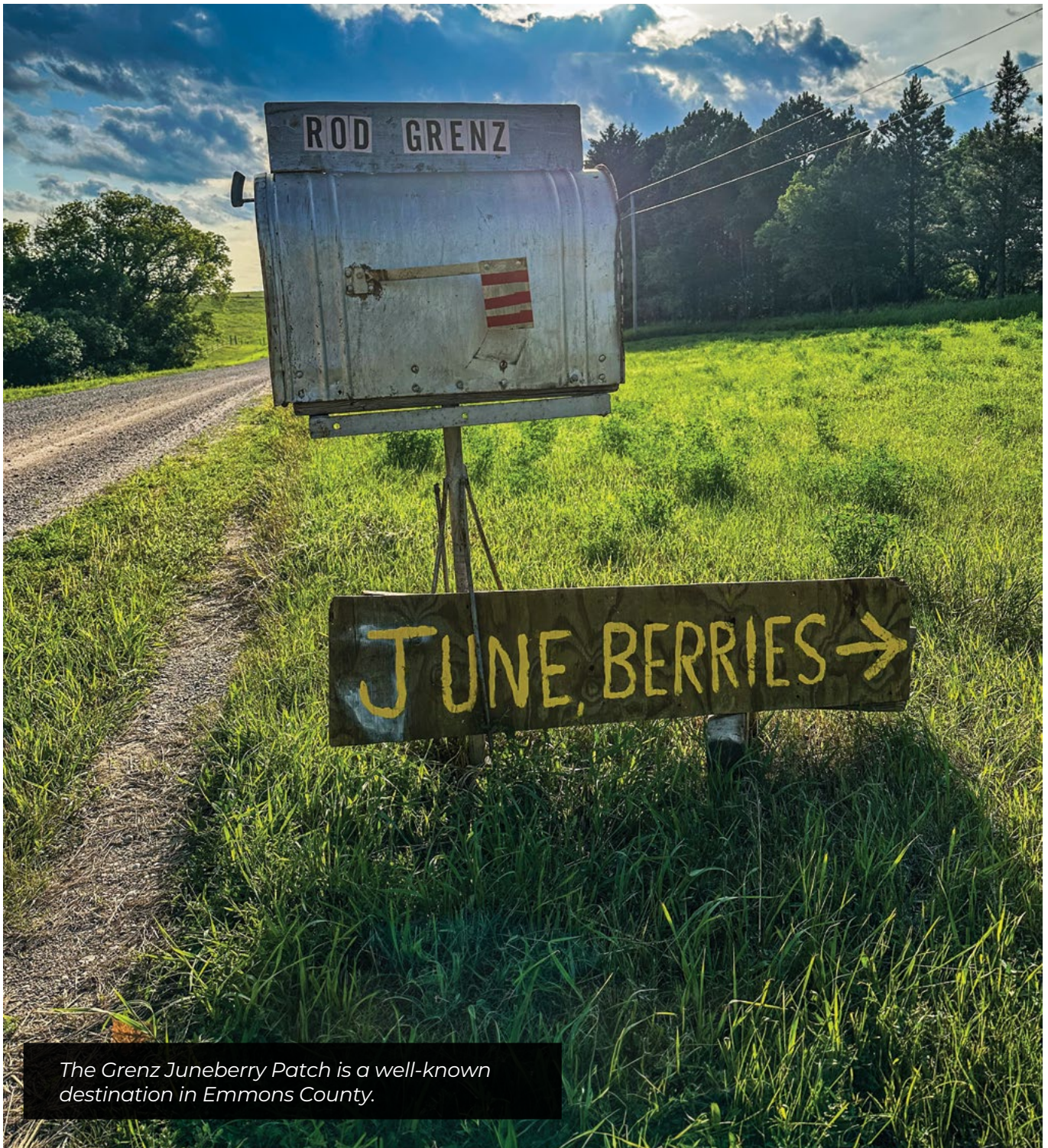


- Playing it safe online
- Generator safety
- Apply for Youth Tour
- Student of the Month selected



*The Grenz Juneberry Patch is a well-known destination in Emmons County.*

## PICKING TRADITION AND MEMORIES: **Grenz Juneberry Patch**

BY SAMANTHA VANGSNESS

In Emmons County, the tradition of picking juneberries brings back memories of spending time with family in the hills of North Dakota. For over 22 years, Rodney and Linda Grenz have been building and maintaining a memorable staple in the community, the Grenz Juneberry Patch. The patch is home to nearly 950 trees and three varieties of juneberries.

### **Cultivating resilience**

The juneberry patch is located on the Grenz family farm near Hazelton. The popular destination for picking the sweet berries did not always produce the abundance of fruit it does today.

“I remember picking wild juneberries while growing up. Every year, there would be less and less berries to pick due to diseases,” Rodney says. “Eventually, we were only able to pick every three to four years.”

Rodney began working with a friend in 2001 to identify plant varieties suitable for the North Dakota climate and resistant to diseases. It did not take long to land on the three varieties currently grown in the patch, such as Smokey, which is Rodney’s favorite. Over the years, through harsh winters and hot summers, the Grenzses have enjoyed meeting new people, sharing recipes and seeing the community enjoy their juneberry patch.

The winter weather can be a double-edged sword for this unique-tasting berry. The wet, heavy snow can sometimes be too much for the branches of a juneberry tree, which causes branches to break. Part of Rodney and Linda’s spring work on the patch is assessing the trees for branch breakage and cutting the branches, so new shoots can start growing for the summer harvest.

The snow is also a vital part of growing the plant. As the snow melts, it is stored in the trees’ roots for those hot summer days when the tree needs an extra drink between summer showers. You would think the dark purple berry would be gobbled by bugs and birds, but Rodney says that is not a concern.

“Fortunately, we do not need to spray the fruit, and the bugs and birds are not an issue for the juneberries,” he says.

### **Continuing tradition**

In mid-June, phone calls begin from individuals asking about the juneberry patch and their plans to pick gallons of juneberries. Although the name would lead one to believe the harvest happens in June, many

are surprised to learn otherwise.

“Juneberries are misnamed,” Rodney says. “The berries begin to ripen during the hottest time of the summer, mid-July.”

In mid-July, community members from all walks of life can be found in the Grenz Juneberry Patch. Many continue the tradition of picking berries, with grandparents bringing their children and grandchildren, and all kinds of fellow juneberry lovers. Individuals can pick their own berries for \$10 a gallon. Some even pack a picnic and make a day out of it, Rodney says.

“We enjoy walking around the patch when it is full and people are talking about some of the same memories made as a kid picking juneberries in the wild with family,” Rodney says. “I like to hear that.”

Although the Grenzses enjoy sharing the fruits of their labor, they do keep some juneberries for themselves to enjoy each year. Although there are many ways to enjoy the berries, including putting them in pancakes, Linda is sure to make Rodney’s favorite juneberry recipe, juneberry crisp, which is juneberries with an oatmeal crumble topped with some ice cream. Yum! ⚡



**Rodney and Linda Grenz** show the juneberries they grow in Emmons County.

## MANAGER'S MESSAGE:

# Playing it safe online



Travis Kupper

In today's world, most of us don't leave the front door unlocked. We protect our homes, loved ones and valuables from intruders with locks, alarms and other security measures. Cybersecurity is no different. It's the practice of protecting other valuables, such as your identity, banking, health records and other sensitive information, from digital attacks and theft.

In addition to pumpkin spice lattes and crisper air, fall is the time of year we often see a rise in phishing scams. While taking necessary steps to protect our personal information is a year-round practice, KEM Electric Cooperative uses this time to share helpful cybersecurity reminders across our team of employees.

Given our increased reliance on internet-connected devices and gadgets, I'd like to share a few cybersecurity tips and let you know how KEM Electric is working to boost our own cybersecurity efforts.

According to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency, an agency of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, which is responsible for strengthening cybersecurity and infrastructure protection, these are the four best ways to keep you and your family safe online.

1. **Turn on multi-factor authentication or two-step verification on your accounts.** The additional layer of protection makes it much harder for criminals to access your information. Even if hackers obtain your password, they may be unable to access your accounts if multistep verification is enabled.
2. **Update your software.** This is one of the easiest ways to protect your personal data. When downloading a software update, make sure it's coming straight from the company that created it. Beware of fake popups that request urgent downloads. Better yet, turn on automatic updates.
3. **Think before you click.** Most successful cyberattacks start with a phishing email. Don't take the bait when cyber criminals go phishing. Avoid emails (or texts) that look too good to be true, oddly urgent, poorly crafted or include unusual requests.

4. **Use strong passwords.** Use long, unique and complex words or phrases. Consider using a password manager to save time. It works across all devices, protects your identity and notifies you of potential phishing websites.

## For the young people in your household

Just as you would talk with your children about safety in the physical world, discuss ways to stay safe online. Help them understand the public nature of the internet. Young people need to know what is shared online stays online and is difficult (if not impossible) to take back. Just as you would guard your money or valuables, children need to learn to guard their personal information, especially on social networks. As a parent or guardian, help your children learn about and use the privacy and security settings on social networks and gaming sites.

## Keeping electric grid and your data secure

We're doing our share on the cyber front. Part of offering excellent service is keeping that service secure and reliable. For KEM Electric, reliability means repairing wear-and-tear, upgrading our equipment to withstand storms and severe weather, and using technology and best practices to keep our system secure from cybersecurity issues. We also work together with co-ops across the country to develop new technologies and infrastructure, learn from each other and keep the grid's network secure.

While we can't stop a storm or predict every disruption, as a co-op, we do everything we can to keep the lights on and our members protected. Because if we all do our part, our interconnected world will be safer and more secure for everyone. ⚡



# STUDENT OF THE MONTH: Haas from Ashley Public School



KEM ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE  
**TOUCHSTONE ENERGY**  
STUDENT OF THE MONTH  
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Thomas Haas was named the September Touchstone Energy® Student of the Month from Ashley Public School. Haas's nominator says he is passionate about music and continually strives to improve his music skills. We would also like to recognize Jace Nitschke and Daniel Schumacher, who were also nominated.

Throughout the school year, KEM Electric Cooperative is choosing one student who has been nominated from the schools in KEM Electric's service area to receive a \$100 sponsorship. The sponsorship can be utilized to the student's choosing for school activities. ⚡

## High school seniors!

Be on the lookout for scholarship information to be released soon on our social media, [kemelectric.com](http://kemelectric.com) and future issues of *North Dakota Living*.

## POWERING ON: KEM ELECTRIC'S CALENDAR

### NOVEMBER 2023

STUDENT OF THE MONTH –  
KIDDER COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL  
APPLICATIONS DUE NOV. 25



### NOV. 10

KEM ELECTRIC OFFICE CLOSED IN  
OBSERVANCE OF VETERANS DAY.  
THANK YOU TO ALL WHO HAVE SERVED OUR  
COUNTRY.



### NOV. 23-24

KEM ELECTRIC OFFICE CLOSED IN  
OBSERVANCE OF THANKSGIVING.  
THE LINECREW WILL BE AVAILABLE IN THE  
CASE OF AN EMERGENCY.



### DECEMBER 2023

STUDENT OF THE MONTH – LINTON PUBLIC SCHOOL  
APPLICATIONS DUE DEC. 25  
KEM ELECTRIC SCHOLARSHIPS OPEN



### DEC. 25-26

KEM ELECTRIC OFFICE CLOSED IN  
OBSERVANCE OF CHRISTMAS.  
THE LINECREW WILL BE AVAILABLE IN THE  
CASE OF AN EMERGENCY.



### DEC. 31

OPERATION ROUND UP DEADLINE  
LAST DAY FOR OPERATION ROUND UP  
APPLICATIONS.



### JANUARY 2024

STUDENT OF THE MONTH – NAPOLEON  
PUBLIC SCHOOL  
APPLICATIONS DUE JAN. 25



### JAN. 13

BOARD OF DIRECTOR PETITIONS  
BEGIN  
MORE INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT  
[KEMELECTRIC.COM](http://KEMELECTRIC.COM)



### JAN. 17

REGIONAL MEMBER APPRECIATION DAY  
11 A.M. - 1:30 P.M.  
PIFER'S AUCTION, STEELE



### JAN. 19

YOUTH TOUR APPLICATION DEADLINE



## SAFETY STARTS WITH ME: Generator safety

KEM Electric Cooperative works year-round to keep your electricity flowing and accessible, but sometimes weather conditions hinder lineworkers' response times. The safety of our members and our employees is a top priority at KEM Electric, especially during dangerous times. When storms hit our area, KEM Electric rushes to your aid as soon as weather conditions allow our lineworkers to travel and make repairs safely.

Our line crews take necessary precautions before they work on downed power lines.

"First, they verify a circuit has been de-energized, and that proper switches are opened and tagged to isolate the circuit from the system. We place ground chains on the circuit – on both sides of workers – to make sure the line cannot be energized while work's being done," says Denise Ketterling, member service representative at KEM Electric.

### Safety Starts with ME (and YOU)

Even though lineworkers are taking all the safety precautions, they still need help from you to make sure they are safe when generators are in use.

"KEM Electric is proud of our outstanding safety record, but sometimes, no matter how many steps we take to keep everyone safe, the very people we are there to help unknowingly put our lives in danger," Ketterling says. "Portable generators, widely used when power lines are down, can prove fatal to lineworkers and your neighbors when used improperly."

And KEM Electric employees are not the only ones in danger when a portable generator is used improperly. Generator owners themselves may be at risk of electrocution, fire injury, property damage or carbon monoxide poisoning if they do not follow the necessary safety rules.

Portable generators can be very helpful to consumers during outages. But we urge you to follow these safety guidelines when using one:

- Never connect a generator directly to your home's wiring unless your home has been wired for generator use. This can cause backfeeding along power lines and electrocute anyone coming in contact with them, including lineworkers making repairs. Have a licensed electrician install the equipment necessary to safely connect emergency generators to your home.
- Always plug appliances directly into generators. Connecting the generator to your home's circuits or wiring must be done by a qualified, licensed



electrician who will install a transfer switch to prevent backfeeding.

- Use heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cords. Make sure extension cords are free of cuts or tears and the plug has three prongs. Overloaded cords can cause fires or equipment damage.
- Ensure your generator is properly grounded.
- Never overload a generator. A portable generator should only be used when necessary to power essential equipment or appliances.
- Turn off all equipment powered by the generator before shutting it down.
- Keep the generator dry. Operate it on a dry surface under an open structure.
- Always have a fully charged fire extinguisher nearby.
- Never fuel a generator while it is operating.
- Read and adhere to the manufacturer's instructions for safe operation. Never cut corners when it comes to safety.

"Help us to protect the well-being and safety of your family during outages and safeguard those who come to your aid during emergency situations. When we work together for safety and the good of our communities, we all benefit," Ketterling says. ⚡

INTERESTED IN SERVING?

## Join the KEM Electric board and power the future

Are you a dedicated leader with a deep connection to our rural community? We invite you to be a driving force behind positive change by joining the KEM Electric Cooperative board of directors.

KEM Electric currently has an at-large vacant seat, along with District 1 and District 2 positions up for election.

### Why join our board?

Running for a board of director position for an electric cooperative can be a meaningful and impactful decision. Here are just a few reasons to join:

- **Make a difference:** Contribute to decisions that impact our energy future.
- **Community engagement:** Collaborate with like-minded individuals dedicated to community growth.
- **Professional growth:** Enhance your leadership skills and network.

### Who we're looking for

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

- Leadership and strategic thinking skills
- A commitment to our communities/service area
- Strong communication and collaboration abilities

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. 13, 2024, and must be turned in by the end of day on March 13, 2024.

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

## APPLY FOR A TRIP OF A LIFETIME

### ESSAY QUESTION

If chosen as a Youth Tour delegate, you will be traveling to Washington, D.C., to experience and learn about America's rich history. What moment in American history do you wish you had been a part of and what would you have contributed?

### WHAT IS YOUTH TOUR?

- An all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., paid for by KEM Electric Cooperative.
- A week of visiting historic monuments, touring world class museums, learning about electric cooperatives and meeting elected officials.
- Developing lifelong friendships with delegates from across the country!

### HOW TO APPLY

- To enter the essay-writing contest, you must be a sophomore or junior in high school, and you and your parents or guardian must be served by KEM Electric Cooperative.
- Email entries to Marcy Sanders at [msanders@kemelectric.com](mailto:msanders@kemelectric.com) or mail a hard copy to: Youth Tour Essay Contest, 107 S. Broadway, P.O. Box 790, Linton, ND, 58552-0790.
- Questions? Call Marcy at 701-254-4666 during regular business hours.
- The deadline is Jan. 19, 2024.



## JUNE 15 TO 21, 2024

AN ALL-EXPENSE-PAID TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

LEARN MORE AT  
[NDYOUTHTOUR.COM](http://NDYOUTHTOUR.COM)

NEED HELP WITH YOUR HEATING COSTS?

## LIHEAP is here to help



As the fall weather arrives, KEM Electric Cooperative members will be faced with colder temperatures in the coming months. For some, anticipation of the winter months causes stress and anxiety, as they wonder how to make ends meet. Thankfully, there are programs to help members make ends meet.

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, also known as LIHEAP, can help low-income and eligible individuals when it comes to heating and insulation costs in the winter. Through the N.D. Department of Human Services, human service zone offices and Community Options, individuals can be helped with a variety of services when it comes to heating assistance.

### Services offered

LIHEAP offers a variety of service assistance. Not only can the program help curb the costs of your heating and cooling bill, but it can also help households with weatherization to make homes more energy efficient.

“For example, if someone lives in a 100-year-old home, with outdated windows, LIHEAP can help cover some of the costs for new windows as well as insulation and furnace repairs. These upgrades make the home more energy efficient and reduce their heating costs,” says Shannon Rolandson, outreach officer at Community Options.

The assistance program may also help with the costs of furnace and chimney cleaning, emergency assistance and energy cost-reduction devices.

It is important to remember this program is not only for homeowners, Rolandson says.

“This program not only helps low-income homeowners with energy costs, but renters as well,” she says.

### Apply for LIHEAP

LIHEAP eligible members can apply from Oct. 1 through May 31.

“Some individuals can be referred to the program, but anyone is welcomed,” Rolandson says.

Upon applying for LIHEAP, an outreach coordinator will go into your home and assist you in gathering necessary documentation for the service. From there, an application and supporting documents are sent to the state for review. Results may take up to 45 days to review and process.

“This year, the team has been very busy with outreach activities across the state to share information about Community Options programs with our clients and our partnering agencies,” Rolandson says. “We started scheduling appointments to help those who are on a fixed income with their LIHEAP applications in September. Our goal is to share the most information to the most people about the economic assistance programs available.”

Last year, Community Options processed a total of 607 household applications, and 385 were approved for LIHEAP. If you, or someone you know, would like to apply, visit your local human service office for more information.

Applications will be accepted from Oct. 1 through May 31 and can be found online at [www.applyforhelp.nd.gov](http://www.applyforhelp.nd.gov) or by request at the local human service zone office or Community Options office. ⚡

# KEM Electric Board Meeting Minutes Highlights: August 22, 2023

The August meeting of the board of directors of KEM Electric Cooperative was held on Aug. 22 at Napoleon Livestock in Napoleon. President Victor Wald called the meeting to order at 9:34 a.m. All directors were present. Also present were Co-managers/CEOs Travis Kupper and Jason Bentz, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Alex Craigmile, Legal Counsel Tom Bair, Operations Manager Dale Nagel, Member Relations Manager Marcy Sanders, Executive Assistant and Board Liaison Connie Hill.

**Consent agenda:** A few additions were made to the consent agenda. The agenda was approved as amended. The July 25 meeting minutes were also approved.

**Strategic/action:** Bentz and Kupper presented the co-general managers' report, which included updates on the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC) managers meeting, RESCO and the National Information Solutions Cooperative. Their report also included an update about the Basin Electric Power Cooperative annual meeting, a KEM Electric project and the crisis communications guide.

**Action items:** The board appointed voting delegates for the Region 5-6 and NDAREC meetings. Also appointed were National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, RESCO annual meeting and Cooperative Finance Corporation district meeting delegates.

**Department reports:** Craigmile reviewed the financial report with details on the balance sheet and income statements. Nagel provided the operations report, which included the department report, outage reports and safety statistics for July. Sanders presented the manager of member relations report, which included the regional membership meeting. Bair provided a legal counsel report and chief information officer Charlie Dunbar provided a report

the board reviewed.

The board recognized the loss of fellow board member Dean Hummel and discussed the opening for an at-large seat due to his passing. It was decided his replacement will be voted on by the membership during the 2024 annual meeting.

Upcoming meetings and events were shared in the administration section.

The meeting concluded with the adjournment and Secretary-Treasurer Carter Vander Wal certified the accuracy of the minutes.

**Next meeting date:** The next meeting date was set for Sept. 26 at the BEK Communications office in Steele. ⚡

KEM Electric will be closed Friday, Nov. 10, in observance of Veterans Day, and Thursday and Friday, Nov. 23 and 24, for the Thanksgiving holiday.



Line crews will be available in the case of an emergency or power outage. We thank all Veterans and members of the military for their service and sacrifice!

## KEM ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC.

### DIRECTORS:

Victor Wald, Chairman .....Napoleon  
 John Beck, Vice Chairman .....Linton  
 Carter Vander Wal, Sec.-Treas. .... Pollock  
 Dean Dewald, Director..... Dawson  
 Carmen Essig, Director .....Lehr  
 Neil Meidinger, Director ..... Zealand  
 Director- At-Large .....Vacant

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