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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

NOVEMBER 2024



Daniel Schumacher's girlfriend, **Madison Wolf**, and their daughter, **Ember**, attended Daniel's basic training graduation.



Q's Welding & Machine Inc., Ashley.

Q's Welding & Machine Inc.

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James (left) and **Daniel Schumacher** work alongside their dad, **Quentin**, in the shop.



Quentin Schumacher is a U.S. Navy veteran.

A HEART FOR COMMUNITY: **Quentin Schumacher**

BY SAMANTHA VANGSNESS

Growing up in rural North Dakota often comes with its own set of values, which may include caring for your community. Quentin Schumacher, an Ashley native, is no stranger to serving his community and his country.

Following high school graduation, Schumacher enlisted in the U.S. Navy, where he served two years, then soon returned to his hometown community. Schumacher and his wife, Gwyn, have two sons, James and Daniel. James attends the University of North Dakota and Daniel recently graduated from the Air National Guard.

Upon being released from the U.S. Navy, Quentin worked at a few different jobs before landing back in Ashley. He worked on a ranch in Nebraska, then took a job in Montana working in the oilfield. Once Quentin moved back to Ashley in 2001 he continued to travel to Montana to work until the oilfield business slowed and he opened his welding shop, Q's Welding & Machine Inc.

Q's Welding & Machine Inc.

What began as a one-man operation in a 40x60-foot shop now has three full-time employees and is expanding into its third addition to the shop facility.

"When I first started out, I was just building free-standing panels and hoping repair work would come in here and there," Quentin says. "Now, it has really taken off."

Within the first year, he found himself having less time to build free-standing panels and spending more time on repair work for farmers and ranchers in the area.

"The business kind of fell into my lap in a way," Quentin says.

A gentleman in his 80s who owned a blacksmith shop in town was looking for an opportunity to retire. Once Quentin started his business in rural Ashley, the gentleman could retire and all his customers began coming to Quentin, who bought the shop space and equipment from the retired gentleman.

"We service customers from all over the area, Mobridge to Aberdeen and even folks from the Jamestown area," Quentin says.

Each summer, he has a few college students work at the shop, which helps with a lot of the repair work coming in during that time. The winter months are a time for the crew to work on repairs, but also get some manufacturing completed before the spring comes.



Quentin and Gwyn Schumacher, KEM Electric members, attend the graduation of their son, Daniel, from the Air National Guard.

Giving back to his community

As Quentin looks back on his years of serving his local community, he reflects on the time he has spent not only in his community, but with his family.

"I started to teach my boys how to weld when they were 14 years old," he says. "Since then, they've spent every summer in here with me at the shop."

Quentin has a few more titles other than husband, dad and business owner. He also coached the South Border Mustangs football team, spent 13 years on the Ashley park board and is the current commander of the Ashley American Legion.

"It has been impactful to live and have a business where I grew up, so I am willing to serve our community," Quentin says.

He says it is not always easy for a business owner to take time off, but it is important to him to do what he can to put in the extra work for the community.

"It has been really nice being home and getting to spend time with my family and in the community," Quentin says.

KEM Electric would like to recognize Quentin and his son, Daniel for their service to our country as well as all other service members and veterans. Thank you for your sacrifice and dedication. ⚡

MANAGER'S MESSAGE:

Serving up savings



Travis Kupper
Co-General Manager/CEO

The holiday season is just around the corner and festive music will soon flood the airwaves, sparkling lights and decorations will adorn homes and businesses, and good tidings will abound.

The holidays also bring a frenzy of decorating, cooking and family gatherings. Amid the hectic hustle and bustle, you may receive higher-than-usual energy bills.

So, I thought this would be a good time to share some tips with KEM Electric Cooperative

members to help lower your monthly energy use.

Winter months typically bring some of the highest energy bills of the year. Making minor low-cost improvements, such as weatherstripping exterior doors and caulking around drafty windows, can make a positive impact on energy bills

Be festive without breaking the bank

My wife, Crissie, insists I bring the Christmas decorations down from the attic faster than we can finish the Thanksgiving turkey. With holiday lights adorning our home for well over a month, we decided to make the switch to LEDs to save energy.

LED holiday lights use 88% less energy than incandescent holiday lights. To put that into perspective, the U.S. Department of Energy estimates standard holiday decorations using LED lights typically increase energy bills by about \$5 to \$7. But with incandescent lights, energy bills will typically increase by \$33 or more. For homes that go above and beyond with incandescent holiday lighting (think Clark Griswold), energy bills could increase by as much as \$350.

Beyond energy savings, LEDs provide additional benefits, such as being shock-resistant, shatterproof and cool to the touch, making them safer for the home.

You can also lower energy use by conveniently managing holiday lighting. Smart light timers can help you save energy by connecting to a smartphone app or voice assistant to program lights to turn on and off at set times. If you don't use smart home technology, you can still save energy by using traditional timers.

Additional easy ways to save during the holiday season include turning off overhead lights and using

your Christmas tree to illuminate your home. If you have a fireplace, remember to close the flue when you're not burning a fire to ensure heat doesn't escape through the chimney.

Cook up energy savings in the kitchen

If you plan to have family and friends over this holiday season, you can cook up energy savings by using small countertop appliances, such as microwaves, air fryers and slow cookers, when possible, as they use much less energy than the stovetop or oven.

When using the oven, bake multiple dishes at once for maximum efficiency. After all, it takes as much energy to cook one dish as it does to cook several. Turn the oven off a few minutes before the recipe's end time and allow the residual heat to finish baking the dish. Once the food is done, leave the stove door ajar to allow the residual heat to warm the room. When using the stovetop, match the pan size to the burner to maximize efficiency.

I hope a few of these tips will be helpful as we approach the holiday season. Remember, we're here to answer any questions you have about managing energy use or your monthly bills. With a little planning upfront, you can find efficient ways to save on everything from holiday decor to your favorite soup recipes.

From your friends at KEM Electric Cooperative, we hope you have a wonderful holiday season. ⚡



Need a bright idea for a holiday gift this year?

Energy gift certificates are available at KEM Electric.

Call KEM Electric at 800-472-2673 or 701-254-4666.

MESSAGE FROM MEMBER RELATIONS:

Interested in serving? Join board of directors



Marcy Sanders

Manager of
Member Relations

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

KEM Electric currently has a District At Large vacant seat that needs to be filled, along with the District 3 position up for election.

Why join our board

Running for a 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.

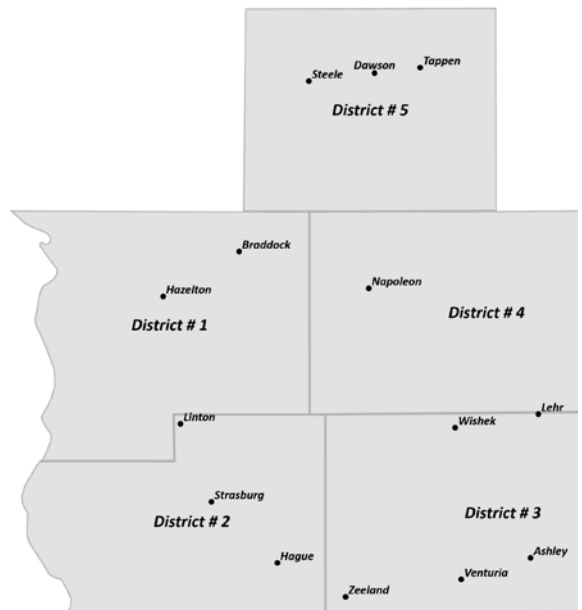
Who we're looking for

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 and service area.

- Strong communication and collaboration abilities.
- If you're ready to make a meaningful impact, we encourage you to visit www.kemelectric.com to learn more. Nomination petitions open on Jan. 11, 2025, and must be submitted by the end of day on March 12, 2025.

For inquiries or more information, please contact Marcy Sanders at 701-254-4666 or email msanders@kemelectric.com.



KEM Electric district map



Reminder:

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program applications are now being accepted until May 31, 2025. For more information, scan the QR code or contact your local human service office.



MESSAGE FROM OPERATIONS:

Co-op continues to install new technology



Dale Nagel

Chief of Staff/
Line Superintendent

KEM Electric Cooperative continually looks for ways to affordably increase reliability for our members. Over the past several years, KEM Electric has been replacing oil circuit reclosers (OCRs) with new sectionalizing technology across the service territory, known as a TripSaver.

When an outage occurs, TripSavers act like a breaker in your home. But unlike a breaker this technology makes multiple attempts to reenergize the line during a temporary fault such

as a branch hitting the line. If the fault is permanent such as a tree falling on the line, it drops open and is an easy identifier of the section of line that has a fault. This alleviates unnecessary line patrol for the line crew and helps shorten restoration time.

TripSavers are an affordable option when it comes to sectionalizing equipment for the electric grid. Unlike the OCRs, TripSavers do not have oil and do not require scheduled maintenance, saving the cooperative thousands of dollars in equipment repairs and over 200 man-hours every year.

One example of increased reliability due to TripSaver implementation is the Sukut substation

north of Lehr. Before TripSavers were installed, this substation averaged about 43 outages per year. After TripSavers were installed, the area has averaged about 21 outages per year. The installation of TripSavers has also decreased the number of minutes a member is out of power each year. Before TripSavers, a member in the area averaged over 40 minutes per year. Since TripSavers were installed, the outage time has decreased to about five minutes per year.

By implementing this technology, KEM Electric aims to increase reliability of the electric services we provide by reducing outages and decreasing outage restoration time for members. ⚡

Benefits of technology

Since late 2021, approximately 100 TripSavers have been installed around KEM Electric Cooperatives's service area to help:

- Improve reliability by preventing outages from temporary faults caused by various factors, including animals, trees and lightning.
- Ensure reliable flow of electric services to members.
- Avoid unnecessary trips to assess power lines for the cooperative crews.

SAVE THE DATE

YOU'RE INVITED TO KEM ELECTRIC'S MEMBERSHIP APPRECIATION NIGHT!

JAN. 28, 2025 |
NAPOLEON

Join KEM Electric for an open house event to connect with board members and employees, learn more about your cooperative and enjoy a delicious meal.



HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS!

Be on the lookout for scholarship information to be released soon on our social media, kemelectric.com and December issue of *North Dakota Living*.



SAFETY STARTS WITH ME:

Winter generator safety

As the winter weather arrives, KEM Electric Cooperative is preparing to deal with whatever weather hits us this season. Although we don't anticipate any outages, it is important for members to be prepared and have a plan in place in case Mother Nature throws us an unexpected curveball.

One tool that can help ease extended outages for your family and any animals in your care is a portable generator. With proper use and maintenance, portable generators can provide great convenience during an outage. However, when generators are used incorrectly, they can be extremely hazardous to both you and us!

"While generators provide convenience during power outages, they can quickly become hazardous – even deadly – if improperly operated," says Marty Messer, Steele area foreman. "Before you operate a portable generator, please become familiar with it and keep the following safety tips in mind."

If you have questions about the proper use of portable generators, we're here to help. Give us a call at 800-472-2673 or 701-254-4666. ⚡



Here is what YOU can do

The do's and don'ts when using portable generators

Do's:

- ✓ Keep children and pets away from portable generators.
- ✓ Start the generator first, before you plug in appliances.
- ✓ Position generators at least 25 feet outside the home, away from doors, windows and vents that can allow carbon monoxide to enter the home.
- ✓ Ensure your generator is properly grounded. Use a portable ground-fault circuit interrupter to prevent electric shock injuries.
- ✓ Use three-pronged extension cords rated to handle the generator's load. Inspect extension cords for cuts, frays or other damage before use.

Don'ts:

- ✗ Do not operate a generator inside your home or an enclosed (or partially enclosed) space. Generators produce high levels of carbon monoxide, which can be deadly.
- ✗ Do not open windows or doors while the generator is running.
- ✗ Do not rely on generators as a full-time source of power. They should only be used temporarily or in emergency situations to power essential equipment or appliances.
- ✗ Do not overload generators. They should only be used to power essential equipment. Make sure your generator can handle the load of the items you plan to power.
- ✗ Do not connect generators directly into household wiring, unless you have an appropriate transfer switch installed. If a generator is connected to a home's wiring without a transfer switch, power can backfeed along power lines and electrocute lineworkers making repairs.



1,800 students.
7 days.
1 unforgettable trip.

Join us on the adventure of a lifetime. On the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, you'll do it all. You'll explore monuments and museums, meet with members of Congress and get an up-close look at where our country's laws are crafted. You'll stand on the Gettysburg Battlefield, walk the halls of George Washington's iconic 18th-century mansion and witness ceremonies honoring the men and women who fought in uniform for this great nation. For one jam-packed week, you'll be immersed in the cooperative spirit that built and sustains our great nation. And all expenses are paid by your local electric cooperative!

Yeah, Youth Tour hits different.

To enter the essay-writing contest:

- You must be a sophomore or junior in high school for the school year 2024-2025.
- You and your parents or guardian must be served by KEM Electric Cooperative.

Essay question:

Why is it important to be involved in your community, and how does that prepare you to be a future leader?

The application deadline is Jan. 17, 2025.

Email entries to Marcy Sanders at msanders@kemelectric.com or mail a hard copy to: Youth Tour Essay Contest, 107 S. Broadway, Box 790, Linton, ND, 58552-0790.

Questions? Please contact Marcy Sanders, KEM Electric, at 701-254-4666 during regular business hours.



Learn more at
kemelectric.com/youth-tour

Congratulations ASHLEY PUBLIC SCHOOL & ZEELAND PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS!

SEPTEMBER TOUCHSTONE ENERGY® STUDENT OF THE MONTH

Throughout the school year, KEM Electric is choosing 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. The funds can be utilized to the student's choosing for school activities.

In **November**, KEM Electric will be accepting nominations of students from **Kidder County Public School**.

The deadline for nominations is Nov. 15. This sponsorship is open to any K-12 student.



SARA PFEIFLE
 JUNIOR AT ASHLEY
 PUBLIC SCHOOL



CONRAD RICHARDS
 SIXTH GRADER AT ZEELAND
 PUBLIC SCHOOL



Scan the QR code to nominate a student or for more information, or visit www.kemelectric.com/touchstone-energy-student-month.



KEM ELECTRIC BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS: **Aug. 27**

The meeting of the board of directors of KEM Electric Cooperative was held on Aug. 27 in Linton. The meeting was called to order at 9:36 a.m. by Chairman Victor Wald. A quorum was present. Also present were co-General Managers/CEOs Travis Kupper and Jason Bentz, Chief Financial Officer Alex Craigmile, Legal Counsel Tom Bair, Chief of Staff/Line Superintendent Dale Nagel, Member Relations Manager Marcy Sanders and Executive Assistant Connie Hill.

Consent agenda: The consent agenda was approved as presented.

Strategic/action: Bentz and Kupper provided the co-general managers' report, which included updates on Basin Electric Power Cooperative's annual meeting, the North Dakota managers meeting, Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC) and more. Basin Electric, West Dakota Utility Services and 3C Construction reports were also provided.

Action items: Action items were discussed and resolved.

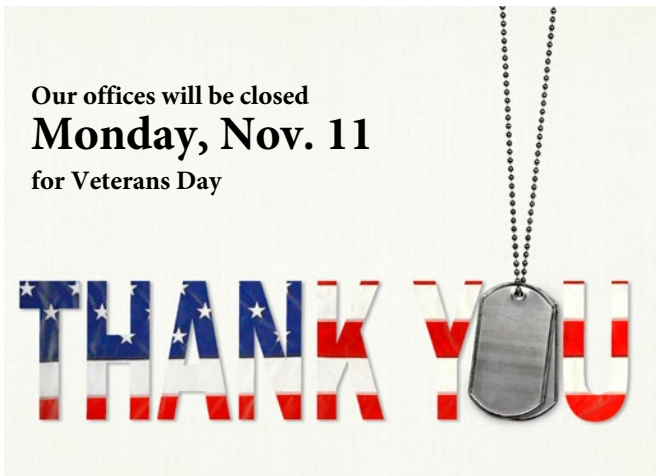
Discussion/general information: The board discussed CFC and other matters.

Department reports: Craigmile provided the financial report. Nagel provided a department report on outage information, safety statistics and safety meeting minutes. Sanders provided a department report, which included 2025 annual meeting information and local pages preview. Chief Information Officer Charlie Dunbar provided a written report for the board. Bair provided a legal counsel report.

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 12:30 p.m. Nov. 19 in Linton. If you wish to be placed on the agenda, please call the office. ⚡



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:

