

Touchstone Energy Student of the Month



KEM ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
TOUCHSTONE ENERGY
STUDENT OF THE MONTH



KEM Electric Touchstone Energy
Student of the Month



September marks the beginning of the Touchstone Energy® Student of the Month program, hosted by KEM Electric Cooperative in partnership with Touchstone Energy. This program aims to recognize outstanding students in grades K-12 and provide a monetary \$100 sponsorship to their school for a project or initiative chosen by the winning student.

“At KEM Electric, we firmly believe in supporting education and fostering the development of young individuals in our community,” said Marcy Sanders, manager of member relations at KEM Electric. “The Touchstone Energy Student of the Month program presents an excellent opportunity for us to celebrate and recognize students who excel in anything ranging from academics to leadership to community involvement or personal growth.”

Application process

Students can be nominated by teachers, parents/guardians, school administrators or community members. Nomination forms can be accessed online through our website. The deadline is the last day of each month. Students are eligible to be nominated and chosen

September through April. Students who are homeschooled or attend school outside of KEM's service area are also eligible to apply and will be chosen in May.

The winning recipient will receive funds for their school. The student will have the opportunity to choose a project or initiative within their school, for which the funds will be utilized. KEM Electric will work with the school to ensure smooth transition and completion of the project. Each month, we will be focusing on a different school within our service area, and will be done so as follows:

- September – Ashely Public School
- October – Hazelton-Moffit-Braddock
- November – Kidder County
- December – Linton Public School
- January – Napoleon
- February – Strasburg Public School
- March – Wishek Public School
- April – Zeeland Public School
- May – Homeschool or students outside of KEM's service area

Visit www.kemelectric.com to learn more. KEM Electric looks forward to celebrating the achievement of students in our service area. ⚡



KEM Electric adopts new technology, online outage viewer

Have you ever wondered if your neighbor reported an outage or if you should call to notify KEM Electric Cooperative? With KEM Electric's new member outage map, members can cease to guess if an outage has been reported in their area.

As outages are reported, they will populate the outage map, which members can view online. Once the outages are restored by our line crew, members will be able to see real-time as restoration progress is made. To report an outage members can call 800-472-2673.

Additionally, if a planned outage is scheduled, KEM Electric will notify by telephone using the information provided on your SmartHub account. It is important to keep your information up to date on SmartHub, so we can notify you

properly via email, text or phone. To update your information or add information, sign into SmartHub or speak to one of our member services representatives by calling 800-472-2673.

When outages are reported, they will appear in the map as color-coded by zip code depending on the number of meters out in the area. The color legend can be found on the outage map system on KEM's website.

KEM Electric strives to provide reliable, uninterrupted power. Our engineering and operations team work diligently to minimize outage frequency, while also prioritizing the safety of our line crews. If you are without power, trust that we are doing everything we can to the best of our abilities to restore your service in a timely fashion. ⚡

Back-to-school energy tips

BY SAMANTHA VANGSNESS

Electronic and mobile devices, TVs, computers and gaming stations have become common devices in today's homes. Additionally, the rise of smart home appliances, advanced technology and electric vehicles have slowly, but steadily, reshaped our homes and lifestyles.

Children are growing up in this highly connected world, where technology plays a significant role in our daily lives and energy consumption. It is crucial to teach them the importance of saving energy as a valuable lesson.

Learning by doing

We know children learn by observing what their parents do. Even if they don't say anything, children are processing their parents' actions. When you turn off the lights when leaving a room or unplug the phone charger once the device is fully charged, they will notice. Learning about energy efficiency can be fun and have a lasting impact on kids.

For younger kids, turn energy efficiency into a "treasure hunt" game to locate all the things in your home that use electricity. Depending on the age of the children, challenge them to count and group the items into categories, such as electronics, appliances or lights. If age appropriate, have them create a list. Ask which gadgets and appliances could be turned off or unplugged to save power every day. Show older children how to program smart thermostats and appliances. Shop with them for LED lights and discuss ENERGY STAR-rated appliances. Kids of all ages can learn a few simple energy-saving habits that can last a lifetime.

Energy-saving tips

The whole family can chip in and save on electricity costs by following a couple of additional energy saving tips.

- **Adjust your thermostat**

Now that there aren't as many people occupying the house all day, try turning your thermostat up a few degrees when you're not home in the warmer months and down a few degrees in the cooler months.



- **Run appliances when full**

To reduce unnecessary loads of laundry and dishes, only run appliances when full.

- **Use the fridge and freezer wisely**

When cooking meals in the warmer months, limit the number of times you open your fridge and freezer. Try getting all the ingredients you need for a meal or recipe out at one time.

- **Cook outside**

A great way to hold onto summer is cooking outside. Cooking outside also prevents you from having to heat the house by turning on the stove top or oven.

- **Unplug devices**

A simple tip everyone can do is unplug devices when not in use. Another tip is unplugging devices when fully charged and remove the charger from the outlet. ⚡

MANAGER'S MESSAGE:

Factors that impact electricity prices



Travis Kupper

The daily cost of living seems to have increased across the board throughout our state and country.

Just as inflation has impacted everything, from the price of gasoline to the price of eggs, costs for the fuels required to produce electricity have also risen. This is a timely topic, so I wanted

to help explain some of the factors impacting electricity prices (and energy bills) in this month's message.

While there is no short answer, a few key elements impact electricity prices and rates. Some of these factors KEM Electric Cooperative can manage, some of them you can impact and other factors are beyond our control. So, let me break it down.

There are two primary parts to your monthly electric bill: a base charge and an energy consumption or kilowatt-hour (kWh) charge. To understand your total energy costs and what impacts your bill, let's unpack one piece at a time.

The first is a fixed monthly base charge, which covers the costs associated with providing electricity to your home. This includes equipment, materials, labor and operating costs necessary to serve each meter in KEM Electric's service territory, regardless of the amount of energy used.

To ensure the reliable service you expect and deserve, we must maintain the local system, including power lines, substations and other necessary equipment. Like many other businesses, we've experienced supply chain issues and steep cost increases for some of our basic equipment. For example, the cost for a distribution transformer (which looks like a long metal can at the top of a power pole) increased from \$1,000 in 2021 to \$1,500 this

year, and wait times to receive this essential equipment are up to 20 weeks or longer.

Because we are a not-for-profit cooperative, some of these expenses must be passed on to our members. I should note the base charge is the same for everyone in the rate class and the costs are shared equally across the membership in that rate class.

Another component of your monthly bill is the kWh charge, which covers how much energy you consume. You've likely noticed the amount of energy you use can vary from month to month and is typically impacted by extreme temperatures. When temperatures soar or dip, your cooling or heating equipment operates longer, which increases your home energy use. Regardless, energy consumption is an area you have some control over, and you can lower your monthly bill by actively reducing energy use. Your thermostat is a great place to start, experts suggest to keep it close to 78 degrees during summer months and 68 degrees in the cooler months.

I hope this information sheds light on some of the factors impacting electricity prices. While we can't control the weather or the rising costs of fuels, please know KEM Electric is doing everything possible to keep internal costs down.

We're here to help you, too. Contact us if you have questions about your energy bill or for advice on how to save energy at home. ⚡

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Travis Kupper". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the left.



Jake
Journeyman Lineman

Safety Starts with ME: Safe hunting

Hunting season is on the horizon, as the weather cools and the days begin to get shorter. KEM Electric Cooperative encourages members to take some extra precautions to stay safe during hunting season.

“We encourage all members to be aware of electrical equipment and be safe when hunting,” said Jake Zink, a journeyman lineworker with KEM Electric. “Hunting season is an exciting time for many, but safety needs to be front of mind at all times.”

To mitigate accidents, KEM Electric encourages

you to use the following electrical safety tips for safe hunting.

- Take notice of posted warning signs and keep clear of electrical equipment.
- Do not shoot at or near power lines or insulators.
- Know the location of power lines and equipment on the land where you hunt.
- Be especially careful in wooded areas, where power lines may not be visible.
- Do not place deer stands on utility poles or climb poles. Energized lines and equipment can conduct electricity to anyone who encounters them, causing shock or electrocution.
- Do not place decoys on power lines or other utility equipment. Any non-electrical equipment attached to a pole can pose an obstruction and serious hazard to our line crews.

Safety Starts with ME (and YOU)

Safety doesn't take just two or three members; it takes a collective effort by all.

“By following these safety tips and encouraging others to do the same, we can create a safer hunting environment for everyone involved,” Zink said. If you see something that doesn't look right while hunting in KEM Electric's service area, call 800-472-2673 as soon as possible.

Hunting season is a time to make memories that will be remembered and talked about for years to come. Don't forget to take these safety tips into consideration, and encourage others to do the same to ensure a safe hunting environment for all. ⚡



Keep Food Safe

Before, During and After a Power Outage

Unfortunately, power outages do occur from time to time. It's important to know how to keep your food safe during an outage. Use these tips from USDA to help minimize food loss and reduce your risk of illness.

Before power outage



Keep refrigerator at **40° or below**. Freeze items like fresh meat and poultry that you won't use immediately. Keep freezer set to **0° or below**. Group frozen foods to help items stay colder longer.



If you anticipate an extended power outage, buy dry or block ice to keep the fridge and/or freezer cold.

During power outage

Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed!

If the doors stay closed during the length of the outage:



A full freezer will hold its temperature for **48 hours**.



A refrigerator will keep food safe for **four hours**.

After power outage

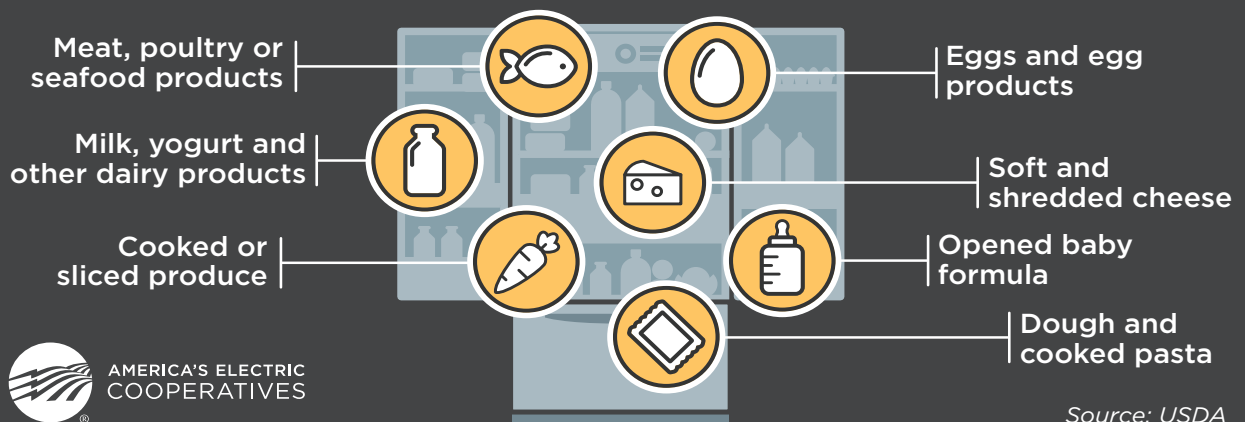


Check the temperature inside your refrigerator and/or freezer.



If the temperatures are safe, the food should be safe to eat.

Foods that should be thrown out after an extended power outage:



Source: USDA



Take the brrrr out of winter

The weather will soon get cooler, heralding the arrival of autumn. With the changing season, you have some work to do. Here are some indoor and outdoor maintenance tips that will help keep your family safe and comfortable this fall and winter, and save energy, too.

INSIDE

- **Check your heating system.** Hire a qualified professional to inspect and clean your heating system. This will help ensure efficient performance and alert you to any potential maintenance or repair issues.
- **Change your furnace filter.** Dirty filters restrict airflow, making your heating system work harder to keep you comfortable. Change your furnace filter regularly according to manufacturer's instructions.
- **Clean your chimney.** Hire a qualified professional to clean your chimney. A cleaning typically includes an inspection for soot buildup, obstructions, cracks in the chimney liner and signs of water damage.
- **Air seal your basement.** Check for air leaks around pipe or wiring holes on outside walls. Seal any leaks you find with expandable spray foam. Also, check for gaps where the wall meets the ceiling. Fill smaller gaps with caulk; fill larger gaps with insulation.
- **Test detectors.** Replace batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and test them to ensure they work. Wired detectors should also have fresh battery backups. Replace any detectors that are 10 years old or older.

OUTSIDE

- **Seal windows and doors.** Check windows and exterior doors for gaps that can let warm air escape. Seal any you find with caulk or weatherstripping.
- **Look at outdoor lighting.** With nights getting longer, check outdoor security lights and switch out bulbs at or near end of life. LEDs are highly efficient, last longer than conventional bulbs and work well in cold temperatures.
- **Clear gutters and downspouts.** Blocked gutters can keep water from melting snow from draining. This can lead to the buildup of ice dams. Clear gutters and downspouts of leaves and other debris.
- **Trim trees away from your house.** Heavy ice and snow can cause tree branches to fall. If they are hanging over your roof, they can cause serious damage.
- **Maintain your generator.** Make sure your generator is ready if needed. Change the oil and the fuel filters, as well as the spark plug and air filter as recommended. Start it up and let it run for a few minutes to test it. Always follow manufacturer's guidelines regarding maintenance and safe operation.
- **Sustain your snowblower.** Before the snow falls, change the oil and the spark plug on your snowblower. Inspect belts and auger paddles for wear and tear and replace if needed. Check the shave plate and skid shoes for wear, and reverse or replace them as necessary. ■



The Operation Round Up application deadline is Sept. 31.

Contact the KEM Electric office, or visit out kemelectric.com, for more information.



In observance of

LABOR DAY



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Our office will be closed on Sept. 4.

Line crews will be available to respond to emergencies and power outages by calling 800-472-2673.

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

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday through Friday,
 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Website: kemelectric.com / Email address: info@kemelectric.com

FIND US ON:

