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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

OCTOBER 2023

COOPERATIVE MONTH





Brad and Lisa Zimmerman, along with their children, **Taylor and Collin**, make their home in Steele.



The cattle station is one of the items manufactured at Zimmerman Manufacturing.

Mentorship in manufacturing

BY ANNE HANSEN

In the town of Steele, Brad Zimmerman has built more than just a successful manufacturing business. He has created a thriving community of skilled workers and aspiring young talents.

As the owner of Zimmerman's Manufacturing, Zimmerman has been at the forefront of empowering the local agricultural community through custom part production and welding services. With a passion for problem-solving and a commitment to mentorship, his journey is one of determination and dedication.

Zimmerman's love for working with his hands began at a young age.

"Growing up on a farm just north of Dawson is where I recognized my natural inclination for machining," Zimmerman said.

He pursued further education in the field, attending the North Dakota State College of Science. After years of honing his craftsmanship and acquiring valuable experience, Zimmerman acquired Agnew Steel in 2005, transforming it into Zimmerman's Manufacturing. Armed with a vision to provide topnotch welding, machining and custom part production, he set out to cater to the needs of local farmers, ranchers and businesses.

"Zimmerman's Manufacturing's expertise lies in crafting custom welding solutions, addressing equipment repairs and fabricating essential

components with precision," Zimmerman said, pointing out the introduction of computer numerical control (CNC) machines has further empowered the team, allowing them to create and cater to a wider range of customer requirements.

Farmers and ranchers rely on Zimmerman's Manufacturing to keep their essential machinery running smoothly, especially when facing part shortages from dealers.

With Zimmerman's team making parts even better than new, clients can save both time and money. One of the key aspects that sets Zimmerman's Manufacturing apart is the company's adaptability and versatility.

"The manufacturing industry is ever-changing, with each day bringing new challenges and demands," Zimmerman said.

The team at Zimmerman's Manufacturing embraces this dynamic environment, finding joy in diversifying their offerings and exploring innovative solutions. From crafting calf shelters, snow squeegees, three-point fifth-wheel hitches to bolt-on pallet forks and ATV crossovers, they are always open to new and exciting projects. The company is also a dealer for Prairie Phoenix cattle oilers, Westfield augers and Virnig skidsteer attachments. Its clientele stretches far and wide, from the local area to nearby towns

like Jamestown and Bismarck.

This commitment to his clients wouldn't be possible without the support of his family. Zimmerman and his wife, Lisa, have two children: son, Collin, and daughter, Taylor, who attend Kidder County High School.

Beyond the realm of manufacturing, Zimmerman Manufacturing takes great pride in being a center for mentorship and inspiration for the younger generation.

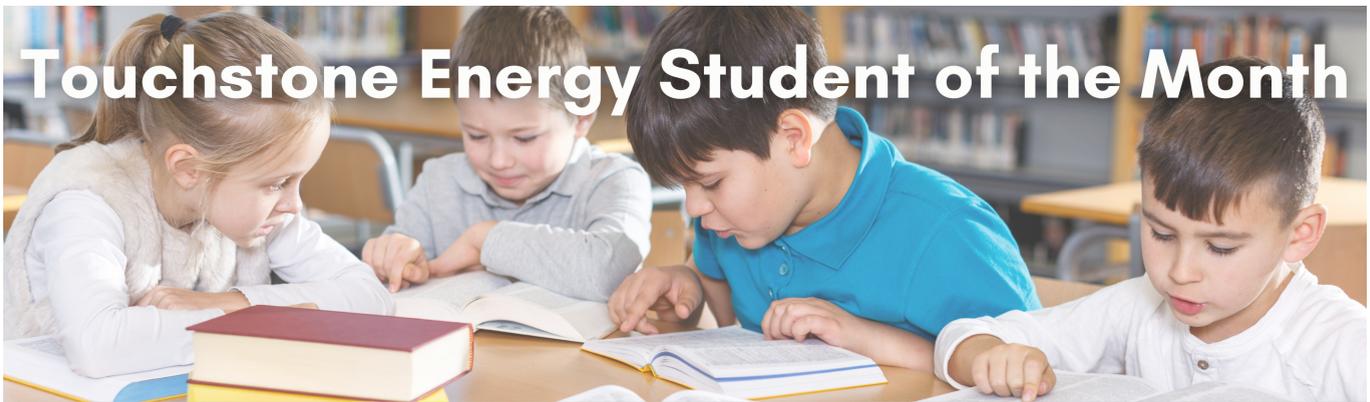
"I am deeply committed to providing learning opportunities and hands-on experiences to aspiring welders and machinists," Brad noted.

During and after school hours, he has opened his workshop to part-time students, instilling in them the values of hard work, problem-solving and teamwork. His dedication to molding future talents has not only benefited the community, but has also led to several successful stories of students who have pursued careers in welding, propelling them toward brighter futures.

As the years go by, Zimmerman's Manufacturing continues to grow, evolve and inspire. Brad's dedication to his craft and his unwavering support for the younger generation have solidified his position as not only a successful entrepreneur, but also a mentor and role model in the heart of North Dakota. ⚡



A calf shelter is another item manufactured by Zimmerman Manufacturing.



Touchstone Energy Student of the Month



KEM ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
TOUCHSTONE ENERGY
STUDENT OF THE MONTH

**In October, a deserving student from
Hazelton-Moffit-Braddock Public School
will be chosen.**

Scan here to nominate!



MANAGER'S MESSAGE: Celebrating membership



Jason Bentz

Fall is a busy time, and October is a particularly eventful month, with school, community and sports activities in full swing. It's also when all cooperatives celebrate National Co-op Month.

When I say KEM Electric Cooperative celebrates Co-op Month, it really means we are celebrating you! After

all, our co-op wouldn't exist without you, our members.

Our core business purpose is to serve as your electricity provider, but the larger mission of the co-op is to help make our corner of the world a better place. "Concern for community" is one of seven guiding principles all co-ops share.

Similar to how our wires run through our service territory, our concern for community flows through all of our decisions, because being a co-op means being a responsible partner and good neighbor.

KEM Electric works to help our community thrive through initiatives led by our employees and local board that's comprised of neighbors who live right here in our community.

We're proud to support local youth through our Youth Tour and scholarship programs. With your help, we offer Operation Round Up to provide assistance to our community.

The word "cooperative" is close to "cooperation," meaning people working together toward a common goal, mutually benefiting one another and the larger area. That's the essence of the cooperative spirit. Our employees and member-elected board members are invested in the community where they live and serve.

Above all, as a co-op, we put our members' priorities first. As your trusted energy partner, we know saving energy and money is

important to you. We want to empower you to manage energy use at home. If you haven't already, I encourage you to take a moment and download our SmartHub app. Through the app, you can conveniently monitor and manage your energy use. And we're here to help, so give us a call if you have questions about your energy bills.

KEM Electric is continuously examining ways to operate more efficiently, while continuing to provide the highest level of friendly, reliable service you expect and deserve. After all, we're your local co-op. We were built by the members we serve. ⚡



Safety Starts with ME: Use caution near cooperative equipment

Although the fall season has brought cooler temperatures, the weather is inviting us to spend time outside and enjoy the changing foliage, pumpkin patches, corn mazes and hayrides. While enjoying the cool, crisp weather, KEM Electric Cooperative reminds you to exercise caution near electrical equipment maintained by the co-op.

“Whether you have children running on hay bales or flying a kite this fall, it is important to be aware of your surroundings and be sure to stay clear of substations and power lines,” says Dillion Steinolfson, a journeyman lineworker at KEM Electric. “This equipment carries extremely high voltages, and if contact is accidentally made, the results can be very serious.”

KEM Electric urges you to take into consideration the following safety tips if you are near any power equipment:

- 1. Maintain a safe distance:** It is vital to remember the “safe zone” around power lines and substations. A general rule of thumb is to stay at least 10 feet away from power lines and farther away from substations. If you encounter an animal trapped in a tree near power lines or inside a substation, do not attempt to remove it.
- 2. Respect warning signs:** Pay attention to warning signs, barriers and caution tape indicating areas with electrical equipment. These signs are there for your safety and should be taken seriously.
- 3. Avoid flying objects near power lines:** Activities such as flying kites, drones or releasing balloons should be avoided in areas close to power lines, as they can easily get entangled in the lines, creating a dangerous situation. Remote-controlled toys should never be flown near power lines, substations or other electrical equipment. If contact is accidentally made with a power line or a transformer inside a substation, members of your community could be left without electricity.
- 4. Stay clear during emergencies:** In case of accidents or emergencies involving power lines or substations, it is essential to call



emergency services immediately and wait for professionals to arrive. Do not attempt to handle the situation yourself.

- 5. Inform children:** Children should be informed about the dangers of power lines and substations. It is important to remind them to never climb trees near power lines. If contact is made with a tree that is touching a power line, your body could become the path of electricity from the line to the ground.

Lineworkers have gone through extensive training to be able to work around electrical equipment and want to remind the public to stay clear.

“Safety around the equipment is always important to us when we are working. We use the appropriate personal protective equipment, and attend certification courses and monthly safety meetings to ensure confidence in our work,” Steinolfson says.

Here at KEM Electric, your safety is important to us. We hope you will share the message of electrical safety, so you and others can enjoy fall days filled with fun! ⚡

IN MEMORIAM: **Dean Hummel (1953-2023)**



Dean Hummel

It is with heavy hearts we remember and honor the life of KEM Electric Cooperative director Dean Hummel, who died Aug. 11 at the age of 70. A beloved husband, father, grandfather and dedicated member of our community, Dean's legacy will forever remain in the hearts of those who knew him.

Dean's commitment to KEM Electric spanned nearly two decades, marked by his dedicated service as a member of the board of directors since 2004. A proud participant in the cooperative's mission, Dean's insight and expertise on matters of rural utilities were invaluable. His penchant for meticulous research, coupled with his fearless approach to asking the tough questions, ensured KEM Electric always prioritized the best interests of its members. Dean's tenure wasn't just about

meetings; it was a testament to his genuine care for the community and his desire to see it thrive.

Beyond his boardroom contributions, Dean's engaging personality and ability to strike up conversations with anyone left an enduring impression. His involvement with KEM Electric was not just a role. It was a reflection of his social nature and genuine concern for the cooperative's impact on people's lives. Dean's legacy is entwined with the growth of KEM Electric, and his memory will forever inspire us to uphold the cooperative's values of service, community and excellence.

As we remember Dean, we honor his dedication, unwavering commitment and the significant role he played in shaping KEM Electric's journey. His passion for rural utilities and his boundless curiosity continue to be a guiding light for us all. Our thoughts and sympathies go out to his family during this time, and we celebrate a life well-lived – a life that will forever be a part of KEM Electric's story. ⚡

YOU'RE INVITED TO KEM ELECTRIC'S REGIONAL MEMBER APPRECIATION DAY

At KEM Electric, we believe in the power of our membership, and this event is our way of saying "Thank You" for being an integral part of ours.

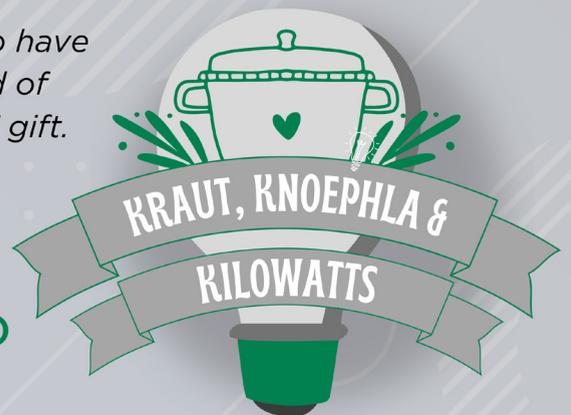
While enjoying kraut and knoepla, you will also have the opportunity to visit with our staff and Board of Directors. First 50 members will receive a FREE gift.



11:00 - 1:30 P.M. ON OCT. 24



**OUR PLACE (FORMALLY KC HALL)
120 CEDAR AVE E, LINTON ND**



KEM Electric will host an additional membership appreciation day in Steele on January 17, 2024.

APPLY FOR A **TRIP OF A LIFETIME**

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!



JUNE 15 TO 21, 2024
AN ALL-EXPENSE-PAID TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

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?

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 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.

EMPOWER



LEARN MORE AT NDYOUTHTOUR.COM

Board meeting highlights

July 25

The July meeting of the board of directors of KEM Electric Cooperative was held on July 25 at Raile Insurance in Wishek. President Victor Wald called the meeting to order at 9:36 a.m. All directors were present. Also present were KEM Electric 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 and Lance Rambousek with Brady Martz.

Board elections: Board positions remained consistent with 2022, with Victor Wald, chairman; John Beck, vice chairman; and Carter Vander Wal, secretary/treasurer.

Consent agenda: There were a few additions made to the consent agenda. The agenda was approved as amended. The May 23 and June 15 meeting minutes were approved, along with the capital credit estate retirements.

Strategic/action: Bentz and Kupper presented the co-general managers' report, which included updates on the Basin Electric Power Cooperative Manager Advisory Committee meeting, Basin Electric manager meeting and other topics. The report also included an update from West Dakota Utility Services and Basin Electric.

Department reports: Craigmile reviewed the financial report with details on the balance sheet and income statements. Nagel provided the

operations report, which included a department report, outage reports and safety statistics for June. Sanders presented the manager of member relations report, which included summer events and donations. Bair provided a legal counsel report as well. Chief Information Officer Charlie Dunbar provided a report the board reviewed.

Action items: The board approved the proposed board meeting dates for 2024 and appointed delegates for the Basin Electric annual meeting. The 2023 rate adjustment discussion led to the approval of a rate adjustment for 2023. Upcoming meetings and events were shared, and the board then entered an executive session.

The meeting concluded with the adjournment, and Vander Wal certified the accuracy of the minutes.

Next meeting date: The next meeting date was set for Aug. 22 at Napoleon Livestock in Napoleon. ⚡

KEM ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC.

DIRECTORS:

Victor Wald, ChairmanNapoleon
 John Beck, Vice ChairmanLinton
 Carter Vander Wal, Sec.-Treas. Pollock
 Dean Dewald, Director..... Dawson
 Carmen Essig, DirectorLehr
 Neil Meidinger, Director Zealand
 Director- At-LargeVacant

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 / Email address: info@kemelectric.com