

# KEM Country

KEM Electric Cooperative, Linton, N.D.

## LINES

May 2010

### Manager's report

## A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

# Changes that affect everyone

by John Knox, general manager

A lot has been happening here at KEM Electric between the storms and cleanup. We now have the contractors on site to help in the restoration process; we are busy. Again, I cannot stress the amount of work involved, especially in dealing with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). It is so important to make sure we get the paperwork and perform the work properly so we are reimbursed to the fullest amount that we can obtain.

We escaped another devastating storm on Good Friday; however cooperatives to our west and north were not so lucky. There has been catastrophic damage that will take months to re-energize and rebuild for the members of these cooperatives.

In the utility industry, there have been several changes and proposed changes that will affect all consumers. In the electric cooperative scheme of things, we have also seen many changes and the proposed changes could affect us even greater and have a significant impact on our bills.

Having worked for different cooperatives during my career, I have been able to watch these changes and witnessed the impacts to our rates. The proposed changes that we could be seeing in the near future will have a tremendous impact on the rates we pay currently.

I'm sure everyone has heard of CO<sub>2</sub> or the cap and trade legislations that are being proposed in Congress. These bills will have a significant impact on us locally, but even a greater hit to our region. With the proposed legislation, you could see an impact of 20 percent up to 50 percent of an increase in your monthly electric bill because of additional regulations.

The broader impact to our region will be even greater. Our rates and economy are based on coal. Coal is mined and used to produce our energy and a vast majority of the nation's electric energy. Without the use of coal, our region will suffer with higher electric costs, but the loss of jobs and the increase in the cost of goods produced and sold will mean less money in our pockets by the time our bills are paid.

We are all concerned for the environment; however the technology of burning coal has become cleaner and more efficient, and is expected to become even better. KEM Electric Cooperative, Basin Electric Power Cooperative and the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives have and will

continue to be engaged in making sure our message is heard statewide and nationally. Our message is important, our local and the nation's economy depends on coal and the low cost of harnessing it into reliable and low-cost electric energy.

More needs to be done for that message to get through: "Our Energy – Our Future" is up to you, the members. We need your help in spreading that message to those who need to hear it in Congress. Electric cooperatives across the nation are known for their grass-roots approach to solving issues. Our voices together carry a large impact and send an important message to our nation's capital. It's time to start using common sense in dealing with important issues that affect us; we need to be the voices heard and listened to. Please tell them to put a check on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and its rulemaking authority along with pending legislation that does not favor electric cooperatives.

As KEM Electric Cooperative's chief executive officer/general manager, I'm asking for your help to contact our legislators who can make a difference for our cooperative and other cooperatives in North Dakota and the rest of the nation. The best way to be heard is to go onto the Internet and go to this Web site, [www.ourenergy.coop](http://www.ourenergy.coop), and read and follow the instructions on getting our message heard as North Dakota residents who carry about "Our Energy and Our Future." We will also have information available to you at the annual meeting June 17, so you can be better informed to help your cooperative in keeping energy costs in check.



John J. Knox  
CEO/General Manager

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annual  
meeting!*

**KEM Electric Cooperative  
ANNUAL MEETING  
June 17 in Linton**

The priority for the evening is to address the business of the cooperative, including the election of directors. This year, the director seats up for election are those of Milton Brandner in District 3, Dean Hummel in the District at Large, and the remaining term in District 4.

*Watch for more details in the June KEM Electric Cooperative pages in North Dakota LIVING, which will include the annual report.*



## KEM Electric Cooperative cares about ***YOUR SAFETY***

May marks National Electrical Safety Month, and KEM Electric Cooperative cares about your safety.

“Eliminating electrical hazards begins with education and awareness,” says KEM Electric Cooperative General Manager and Chief Executive Officer John Knox. “National Electrical Safety Month is a time for all of us to re-examine our surroundings and determine what steps we can take to prevent electrical hazards.”

Take a moment to review the following pages that share important safety information from KEM Electric Cooperative.

### Use extension cords with care

Extension cords, with their ability to bring any appliance or lamp within easy reach of an electrical outlet, are one of the most convenient products in the home. But when they are misused, they can also be a potential source of danger.

Extension cords are generally rated in amps and volts. To determine if an extension cord is properly rated, add the total wattage of each bulb or electrical device, then divide by 120 to calculate the total number of amps. If the total number of amps is equal to or greater than the maximum rating of the cord, you must use a higher rated extension cord.

#### Follow these safety tips when using an extension cord:

- Never run extension cords through walls, under rugs or furniture, or across doorways.
- Never try to repair a damaged extension cord with electrical tape; replace it.
- Never overload an extension cord. If any part of the cord feels warm to the touch, the cord is drawing too much power and could cause a fire or shock hazard.
- Never cut off the ground pin to connect a three-prong appliance cord to a two-wire extension cord.
- Replace older extension cords if one of the prongs in the plug is not “polarized.” In a polarized plug, one prong will be wider than the other.
- Avoid placing cords where someone could accidentally pull them down or trip over them.
- Cover unused outlets on the extension cord to prevent children from making contact with a live circuit.
- Before buying any extension cord, check the product to ensure that a nationally recognized laboratory has certified the product.
- Outside the home, only use extension cords designed for outdoor use.

### Rules for those power tools

More power! Power tools help us get the job done faster and easier, but if they aren’t handled with respect, they can be dangerous. Here are some important tips to keep in mind when you pick up that power tool:

- If you need to use an extension cord for those outdoor jobs, make sure it’s weather resistant and clearly marked for outdoor use. And keep a close eye on that extension cord or your power cord. It’s easy to cut through cords if you lose track of their location.
- Never leave equipment plugged in or running when it is not in use.
- Always turn off tools when you’re carrying them from one place to another or changing attachments.
- Never remove safety guards; they are there for a reason!
- Don’t try to repair tools. Hire a qualified electrician.
- Use any safety gear recommended by the manufacturer, such as safety goggles, ear plugs and dust masks.
- If the tool is equipped with a three-prong plug, it should always be plugged into a three-hole electrical receptacle. Never remove the third prong.
- Don’t operate electric tools in wet areas or if you are standing on wet or damp ground.
- Make sure cords are in good repair.



THUNDER

## those power surges

A flash of light, a crack of thunder. You wake up with a start, realize that your family and house are safe, then go back to sleep, thinking everything is OK. But is it? You really won't know until the next day, when you might discover a power surge turned your electronics into a pile of fried microchips.

### AN INSIDE JOB

Surges are sudden and unwanted increases in voltage that can damage, degrade or destroy sensitive electronics, according to KEM Electric Cooperative.

As dangerous as lightning is, 80 percent of temporary power surges actually originate from inside the home. They're caused by motor-driven appliances like an air conditioner, dishwasher or refrigerator; or even something as small as a laser printer or coffee maker.

Three types of power surges can occur both inside and outside your home: destructive surges that "fry" your sensitive electronics; disruptive surges that cause you to have to reset or reprogram devices; and dissipative surges that degrade your sensitive electronic components over time.

The good news is that you can protect your home's sensitive electronics. A wide variety of surge protection devices are available to protect your valuable home electronics from these potentially destructive power surges. Protect your electronics with a surge protector to fit your needs, whether it is to protect the whole house or a few appliances.

Normally, a surge protector allows the electricity to flow through it to the appliance. Once a higher voltage is detected, the surge protector diverts excess voltage to a ground wire. The best surge suppressors can handle high-voltage surges and react instantly to protect the equipment.

Ordinary power strips don't provide adequate protection. Uninterruptible power supply systems are battery-backed devices that keep electricity flowing in the event of an outage. They are useful devices, but do not act as surge suppressors unless they are certified as such.

You need a true surge suppressor, which looks like a power strip but which provides much greater protection.

Before buying a plug-in surge protector, make sure it follows these criteria:

1) The highest Joule rating. A suppressor rated for use with a computer will have at least 750 Joules capacity, and can be rated into the thousands of Joules. This indicates how much energy the suppressor can absorb before passing a transient to your equipment.

2) Clamping response time of one nanosecond or less. The faster the surge suppressor responds, the better.

3) Voltage clamping level of 330 volts or less. The lower the amplitude of transient voltages reaching your equipment, the lower the chances of damage.

Separate suppressors are recommended for your cable and phone lines. Those will protect your phones, TVs and fax machines, since phone or cable lines can carry a voltage spike into your home just as easily as a power line.

Whole-home surge protectors are also available. The system should be hard-wired into your electrical system by a licensed electrician.

If you have questions about protecting your electronic equipment from power surges, contact your local electric cooperative.

It's best to unplug televisions, computers and other appliances when a nearby storm threatens, but with surge suppression in place, you can rest easier knowing that your home will be protected. You might even sleep better at nights. Except for the thunder, of course.

# Home safety checklist

Protect your family from electrical hazards by using this short checklist. These simple steps will help you identify and correct electrical dangers commonly found in homes:

- ✓ **Check the wattage of all bulbs in your lights.** Are the bulbs the appropriate wattage for the size of the fixtures?
- ✓ **Check all lamp cords and extension cords.** Are cords placed out of the walking areas and free of furniture resting on them? Are cords in good condition (not damaged or cracked)? Take any item with a damaged power cord to an authorized repair center, or safely dispose of the item and purchase a new one.
- ✓ **Check all wall outlets and switches.** Are all outlets and switches cool to the touch? Unusually warm outlets or switches may indicate an unsafe wiring condition exists. Are all outlet and switch cover plates in good condition? Replace any missing, cracked or broken cover plate.
- ✓ **Are all appliance cords placed away from hot surfaces?** Pay particular attention to cords around toasters, ovens and ranges. Cords can be damaged by excess heat.
- ✓ **Are all appliances located away from the sink?** Electrical appliances can cause a shock if they come in contact with water. Plug kitchen appliances into outlets protected by a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI).
- ✓ **Are you regularly resetting tripped circuit breakers?** Circuit breakers that are constantly tripping indicate that the circuit is overloaded or that other electrical hazards exist. Consult a qualified, licensed electrician.
- ✓ **Are the bathroom outlets protected by GFCIs?** GFCIs should be installed in kitchens, bathrooms and other areas where the risk of electric shock is high. If you have any GFCIs, do you test them regularly?

Safety message from  
KEM Electric Cooperative



SAFETY  
FIRST

## How to clean up a broken compact fluorescent light bulb (CFL)

**1** Ventilate the room.



**2** Scoop up powder and glass fragments using stiff paper or cardboard. Seal in a plastic bag.



**3** Use duct tape to pick up any fragments or powder.

**4** Immediately place all materials used to clean up and the plastic bag in an outdoor trash container. Remember to wash your hands.



**5** Discard any clothing or bedding that comes in direct contact with broken glass or powder from inside the bulb. Washing tainted items may cause mercury fragments in clothing to contaminate the machine and/or pollute sewage.

To learn more about CFLs and why you should be careful when cleaning up a broken bulb, visit [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov).



Source: *Electrical Safety Foundation Institute, YASLY*

## Planning a wiring project?

**A**re you considering rewiring your home or a farm building?

Do you plan to expand your electrical system?

With our reliance on electricity growing steadily, it's important to make sure our electrical systems fit our needs. But remember, rewiring a home or farm building, adding circuits or upgrading systems is a job for a qualified, professional electrician.



*Is your electrical wiring safe? Rewiring a home or farm building, adding circuits or upgrading systems is a job for a qualified, professional electrician.*

**If you do plan to do some wiring yourself, you must follow certain requirements even when self-wiring, including:**

1. You must both own and occupy the farmstead or residence you are going to wire. Churches, schools, commercial property and rental property are required to be wired by a North Dakota licensed electrical contractor.
2. If you do not have the ability to do the wiring yourself, you must hire a North Dakota licensed electrical contractor who is bonded and insured.
3. All electrical wiring is required to be done properly regardless of the size of the job.
4. State law requires inspection and certification in any of these instances:
  - A new service is installed. (A fuse or circuit breaker is installed in a building or for a mobile home.)
  - A service is altered.
  - A building is moved and reconnected to power.
  - The cost of additional wiring exceeds \$300. (Reasonable labor and material cost.)
  - Where a mobile home feeder is installed.

Before you start any wiring project, you must call your local state electrical inspector or the North Dakota State Electrical Board to obtain a permission number.

When the work is completed and you're ready for inspection, you'll need to send your application to the inspector.

You, your family and anyone entering the property should feel secure that all electrical work is done properly.

If you have any questions about self-wiring requirements, contact the North Dakota State Electrical Board at (701) 328-9522.

### Safety tips:

KEM Electric Cooperative strongly encourages hiring a qualified, licensed electrician to perform any electrical work in your home. However, if you decide to complete any wiring yourself, follow these important safety tips:

- Make an effort to learn about your home's electrical

system so you can safely navigate and maintain it.

- Never attempt a project that is beyond your skill level.
- Always turn off the power to the circuit that you plan to work on by switching off the circuit breaker in the main service panel.
- Unplug any lamp or appli-



ance before working on it.

- Test the wires before you touch them to make sure the power has been turned off.



*This year's graduating apprentices include (front row from left to right) Tyson Brandt, North Central Electric Cooperative, Nick Shattuck, McKenzie Electric Cooperative, Lance Brown Otter, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative, and Andrew Sonsalla, Slope Electric Cooperative, and (back row from left to right), Tyler Liebelt, North Central Electric, John Hunt, North Central Electric, Lex Lindbo, Burke-Divide Electric Cooperative, Tyler McCarthy, Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative, and Gerald Zink, KEM Electric Cooperative.*

## Zink achieves journeyman status

**G**erald Zink, a KEM Electric Cooperative apprentice lineworker based in Steele, has reached a milestone in his career. He is among nine lineworkers from across North Dakota who have completed four years of training, both in the classroom and on the job, which moves them to a new level - journeyman lineworker.

The apprenticeship program, which electric cooperatives began offering to their workers in 1963, requires participants to complete 144 hours of coursework per year and 8,000 hours of supervised work over a four-year period.

More than 400 electric cooperative lineworkers have completed the coursework so far, according to Apprenticeship, Training and Safety Coordinator Sandy Leingang, who administers the program for the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives.

Gerald "Jake" Zink joined the line crew at the Steele outpost in October 2007. He was living in Carrington on the family farm before becoming a graduate of the Bismarck State College lineworkers school in 2004. He had previously worked in Wyoming.

His love of the outdoors prompted him to pursue being a lineworker, and it's no surprise that his hobbies are geared toward the outdoors.



**CLICK ON IT!**

**[www.kemelectric.com](http://www.kemelectric.com)**

Have you visited KEM Electric Cooperative's Web site lately? You can learn more about your cooperative's events and services by visiting today!

As a Touchstone Energy® Cooperative, KEM Electric Cooperative is proud to serve you with integrity, accountability, innovation and a commitment to community.

Visit KEM Electric Cooperative's Web site today!

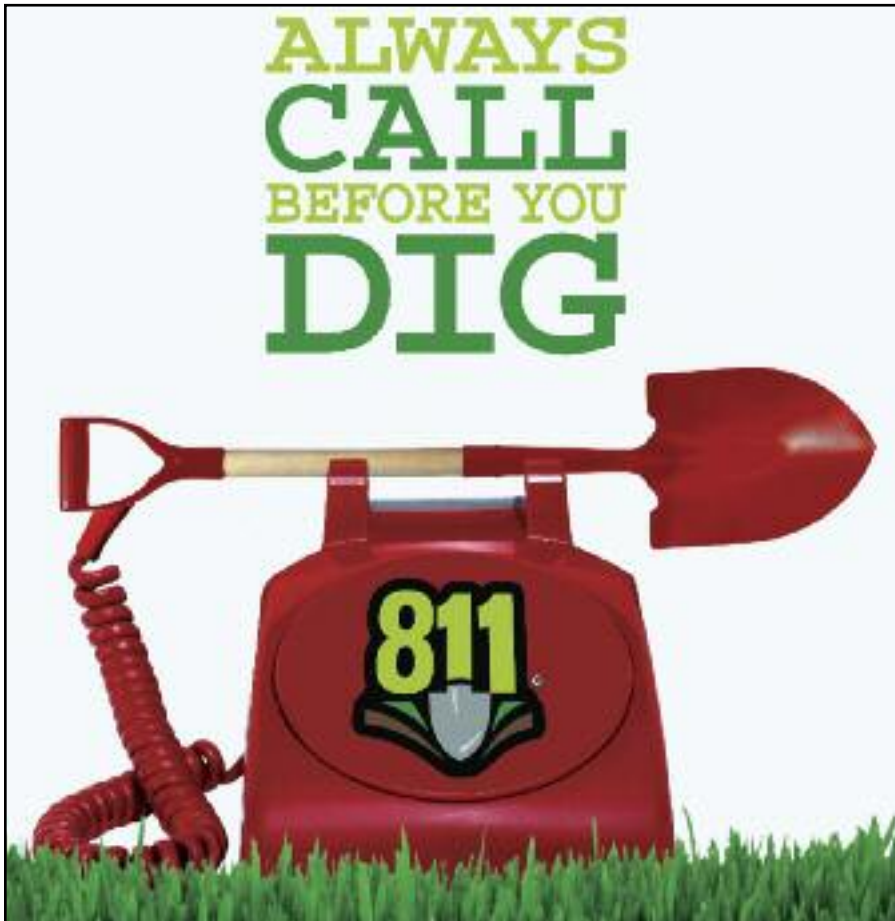


## Board meeting highlights

### KEM Electric Cooperative Inc. Board meeting highlights March 26



- Heard reports on various meetings
- Reviewed report from the Voucher Review Committee
- Reviewed monthly financial reports
- Approved the special equipment summary
- Adopted Revised Policy No. 10-4 – Vacations/Annual Leave
- Received 2009 audit report



## Remember Memorial Day!

So KEM Electric Cooperative employees can observe the holiday with their families, our office will be closed Memorial Day, May 31.

If you experience an outage, please call the cooperative's office at (701) 254-4666 or (800) 472-2673. Your call will be routed to the proper contacts and lineworkers will be dispatched.

## THE MARATHON WATER HEATER

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**Call KEM Electric Cooperative**  
**(701) 254-4666**  
**(800) 472-2673**

## KEM ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC.

107 S. Broadway - Linton, N.D. 58552

### DIRECTORS:

Dean Dewald, Chairman.....Steele  
Milton Brandner, Vice Chairman...Zeland  
Carmen Essig, Secretary.....Lehr  
Adolph Feyereisen, Director.....Braddock  
Dean Hummel, Director.....Hague  
Carter Vander Wal, Director.....Pollock  
Bair, Bair and Garrity, Atty. ....Mandan  
HDR Engineers Inc.,  
Consulting Engr.....Bismarck  
John Knox, CEO/General Mgr.....Linton

**Report outages to the following  
toll-free number: (800) 472-2673**

**Hazleton, Linton and Strasburg exchanges'  
phone number: (701) 254-4666**

### OFFICE HOURS:

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