

KEM Country LINES

KEM Electric Cooperative, Linton, N.D.

SEPTEMBER 2014

PHOTO BY NDAREC/JOHN KARY



Journey of a lifetime

Kelsie Zimmerman experienced the journey of a lifetime this summer. Inside, learn more about the Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.

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Kelsie Zimmerman tours Washington, D.C.

From touring historic national monuments to learning how to trace her own family history, Kelsie Zimmerman experienced the journey of a lifetime this summer. She is the daughter of Reed and Kathleen Zimmerman, who farm and ranch east of Napoleon, and the granddaughter of Leon and Gladys Zimmerman, who live in Napoleon.

Kelsie was among 15 high school students from across North Dakota who traveled to Washington, D.C., in June to join more than 1,600 other

students from around the nation for the weeklong 2014 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, which celebrated its 50th anniversary this year.

“The Youth Tour is the highlight of the summer for many students from North Dakota, and we were proud to send 15 of our best and brightest to Washington, D.C., this year to participate,” said Pamela Clark-Stein, director of education and member services for the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric

Cooperatives. “These students gained a firsthand understanding of the legislative process and made connections with others from across the country that will last a lifetime. Our youth are the country’s future, and we can give them the tools to succeed. We look forward to continuing the Youth Tour tradition for another 50 years.”

Kelsie, a student at Napoleon High School, was selected on the basis of an essay contest. Sponsored by KEM Electric Cooperative, Kelsie wrote an essay on the following topic: “Many North Dakota electric cooperatives are or will soon be celebrating their 75th anniversaries. Describe how rural electrification and rural electric cooperatives have contributed to the quality of life in North Dakota and your local community.”

“KEM Electric Cooperative has immensely impacted the quality of my life, the way I live, how I am able to learn in school, and my family in the generations of my family farm,” Kelsie wrote in her essay.

Kelsie represented KEM Electric Cooperative during the all-expense-paid Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., in June. During the Youth Tour, students sponsored by electric cooperatives from across the country converge on the nation’s capital. They



visit national monuments and historic sites, federal offices, and spend time with their congressional delegations. During the Youth Tour, students also learn about electric cooperatives and discuss issues facing their communities and the nation.

“The most memorable part of the trip was visiting the National Archives,” Kelsie said. “I was able to see how I could find the records of my great-grandparents moving to America and settling on the farm I’ve lived on all my life.”

Youth also met with North Dakota’s Congressional delegation to discuss the process of government and issues of the day. During visits with Sen. John Hoeven, Sen. Heidi Heitkamp and Rep. Kevin Kramer, the youths discussed events in Russia and actions they thought the U.S. government

should take.

In addition to taking in the sights of the nation’s capital, all the state groups convened for National Youth Day, sponsored by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, to learn from public figures and other inspirational speakers.

Tim Dockter, a journeyman lineworker for KEM Electric Cooperative, and his wife, Rhonda, served as chaperones for the North Dakota youth this year, with Tim applying his experiences working with youth during the past 30 years as a football coach.

“You treat them like your own,” he said.

The group received compliments about being well-mannered, Tim said. He was also impressed with the questions the youth asked during their visit with the North Dakota Congressional delegation.

Tim himself was intrigued with the tour of the Capitol, the historical aspects and George Washington’s Mt. Vernon plantation.

“There’s so much history there. You forget about that until you see the Bill of Rights or Declaration of Independence,” he said.

“Some of those monuments are huge. You don’t realize how big they are until you start walking around them,” he added.

Kelsie encourages others to write an essay to earn the trip next year.

“Take that chance and apply,” she said. “Don’t doubt yourself. Be outgoing, passionate about things you love, and never doubt yourself. Keeping a positive attitude is everything if you want to go far in life.”

Kelsie has been active in the Napoleon FFA chapter. She is also involved in band and choir, and she is the pianist for choir, and occasionally plays for Grace Baptist Church in

Gackle. Kelsie’s hobbies include reading, playing piano, writing, spending time with friends, and going to Crystal Springs Baptist Camp.

“I would like to thank KEM Electric for allowing me to go on the trip of a lifetime to Washington, D.C.,” Kelsie said.

The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour has brought high school students to Washington, D.C., for the past 50 years. Students apply and are selected for this program by their local electric cooperative and the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives. Nearly 50,000 students have participated in this program. For more information, visit www.youthtour.coop. ■

Youth Tour alum remembers trip

As the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, one former participant took a moment to recall her experiences on the Washington, D.C., tour.

Ashlee (Bernhardt) Cournia was sponsored by KEM Electric Cooperative in 2008. Now newly married and a teacher in Fargo, she still stays in touch with friends she met during the trip.

“I’m still really good friends with four of the people I went with,” she says.

As a junior in high school at the time, she gained a new perspective on becoming an active citizen, she said.

“Knowing that people are there working for you and that you do have a say in it and you can reach the representatives and the senators if you need to and you do have a say on the decisions being made,” she said.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BASIN ELECTRIC

Hello, KEM Electric is calling

Periodically, KEM Electric Cooperative calls each of its members through an Interactive Voice Response system to alert members about planned outages or to leave other messages.

The system allows KEM Electric to call members with important information without staff having to dial the phone. The feature is offered through Security and Response Services, a 24-hour dispatching service provided by Basin Electric Power Cooperative, which also provides KEM Electric Cooperative's wholesale power.

Not only does Security and Response Services answer outage calls for KEM Electric Cooperative after-hours, but it also dispatches local electric cooperative crews when outages occur.

"It's seamless, like they are part of our regular staff," says KEM Electric Cooperative Office Manager Roberta Nagel.

KEM Electric also uses the IVR

system service to call all cooperative members with important notices.

"We find it can be very effective, allowing us to reach a large number of members with time-sensitive information," Nagel says. "Sometimes we only have a day to inform hundreds of members that we have a service outage coming up. No one likes to be without power, but with this, they can make some accommodations. Using a prerecorded message, we can call them all in a short period of time, giving them as much advance notice as possible."

Through the IVR system, KEM Electric Cooperative members will receive a message at the telephone number on file at the cooperative's office. KEM Electric uses the service when there will be an entire substation outage; not during shorter maintenance outages. KEM Electric Cooperative's outage time per member was only 24 minutes in 2013.

When a call is answered in person, the IVR message is played.

The majority of calls are answered by a person or an answering machine, which works with the IVR system. However, there are limitations to using IVR to reach members.

- When the phone goes unanswered after a certain number of rings, the system moves onto the next call. If the line is busy, the IVR will circle back and recall the number.
- The IVR allows for answering machine messages before broadcasting the notice, but the IVR message may still be missed under certain circumstances. If the answering machine or voicemail is full, the IVR message could be rejected. Also, some answering machines limit the length of a message a caller may leave, which could cause a portion of the IVR message to be cut off.
- After a "voice" response from an answering machine is received and ends, the message will

automatically begin playing. If your answering machine for incoming calls exceeds 30 seconds, it can miss the co-op's message. The IVR message is waiting for your conversation to end. When the answering machine information is too long, the IVR system classifies it as "Outgoing message too

long" and hangs up. This may occur if an answering machine lists several options or other phone numbers.

- It's also important that KEM Electric Cooperative has the most up-to-date telephone numbers and that the person using the service has a telephone number on record. The system

cannot call multiple numbers for one account, so one updated telephone number is vital.

- Text messaging does not work with the IVR system.
- IVR will not work if there is a telemarketing block on a phone.

If you have any questions about the IVR system, please call KEM Electric at 701-254-4666.

What to do in a power outage

KEM Electric Cooperative strives to provide you with reliable, uninterrupted service every day of the year. While KEM Electric Cooperative uses sound engineering practices and preventative maintenance, it is impossible to completely protect the distribution system from nature's wrath. Sometimes, Mother Nature creates unavoidable power outages.

KEM Electric Cooperative wants you to remain safe during severe winter weather, so consider preparing now for the possibility of power outages this winter. Follow these important steps if an outage does occur:

- 1. Confirm the outage.** Check your own fuses and circuit breakers first.
- 2. Check with a neighbor.** Confirm if a neighbor is also experiencing an outage before you call the cooperative. This will help KEM Electric determine the extent of the outage.

- 3. Call the cooperative.** If the outage is widespread, the phone lines may be busy, but keep trying. Keep KEM Electric Cooperative's numbers on or near your telephone: 800-472-2673 or 701-254-4666. The customer service representative may ask for the following information:
 - Meter number
 - Correct spelling of the name on the account
 - Telephone number for the account or a number to call back
 - Time the electricity went out
 - If there are road conditions that might prevent crews from traveling, or alternate routes to your property, please share that information.
- 4. Turn off major appliances.** To prevent an overload on the system while power is being restored, take these steps:
 - Turn off every inside light except one. Leave a light switch on so

you know when electric service has been restored.

- Turn down your thermostat.
 - If the outage lasts more than 60 minutes, turn off your electric water heater.
 - Make sure the stove is off.
 - Turn off all unnecessary appliances and unplug sensitive electronic equipment.
 - When power is restored, slowly switch your appliances and lights back on and gradually return your thermostat to its normal setting.
- 5. Be patient.** Once you have reported an outage, please do not continue to call for information about when the power will be restored. Crews will work quickly to restore your power as soon as possible. If the outage is widespread, repairs may take longer. If you utilize a portable electric generator, be sure to use it safely.

To report an outage:

To report a power outage, please call KEM Electric Cooperative, day or night, at 800-472-2673 or 701-254-4666. If all dispatch personnel are busy, please use the automated system to record your outage.

During the cooperative's normal business hours from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, an employee of KEM Electric Cooperative will answer the phone. During all other hours, the telephone will be answered

by Basin Electric Power Cooperative's Security and Response Services in Bismarck. This service has been serving electric cooperatives since 1992 to respond quickly to outage reports or other emergencies. ■

Why climate regulations matter to you

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently released regulations to limit carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions at power plants that will lead to more expensive electricity for members of electric cooperatives in North Dakota.

That's why we're asking everyone to send comments to the EPA through www.Action.coop. This easy-to-use online tool directly sends your thoughts to Washington, D.C., so regulators understand the potential harm of these rules.

Six-hundred pages, plus another 1,000 of supporting documents – that's the length of the latest proposal from the EPA. It would amend the Clean Air Act (only 465 pages) to limit carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from the power plants on which we rely today. And the EPA has chosen to write regulations that rely on technology for reducing emissions that has not been proven at commercial power plants.

Besides the actual rule, a lot has been written about its legality, feasibility and complexity. But lost in the shuffle of these thousands of pages is the impact on people. How much will electric bills increase? Will manufacturers relocate? How many jobs will be lost? Which power plants will be forced to shut down?

These are difficult questions. But they're important questions. KEM Electric Cooperative works hard to keep your electricity affordable and reliable. That's why we're asking the EPA for answers to these and many other questions.

We don't want you to get lost in the shuffle. We put you – our members – first. We advocate for you. We see you every month paying your bill at the office. We work with you. We know when times are tough. We often live next door.

We care about the price of electricity because we're a cooperative and we look out for you, our members.

That's why we're encouraging everyone to take 30 seconds to sign up at www.Action.coop and tell the EPA we cannot afford these regulations.

Please raise your voice. Don't get lost in the shuffle. Together, we can tell the EPA that support for the environment and a true all-of-the-above energy policy are not mutually exclusive.

Together we'll remind regulators

and lawmakers that the impact new rules and laws have on people should be their first thought, not their last. We're concerned that the EPA is making a decision that will force an increase in what we have to pay for power.

With more than 900 electric cooperatives in the country backing us up, our voice can be heard. We have a great and positive story to tell. We can tell the story together. And it won't even take 1,600 pages.

Please take a moment to visit www.Action.coop today. ■



1.  **ABANDONS ALL-OF-THE ABOVE**
The Administration is reversing course: ditching our All-of-the-Above energy strategy for an All-But-One approach that bans new coal plants.

2.  **TECHNOLOGY GAMBLE**
New regulations essentially require technology that's **not commercially viable and prohibitively expensive** – leading to higher bills down the line.

TOP 4 FACTS
ABOUT THE EPA'S NEW CLIMATE REGULATIONS

3.  **LIMITS ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, DOMESTIC ENERGY**
By banning new coal plants, Americans forfeit a **236-year domestic source of energy** with a historically stable price.

4.  **HISTORY REPEATS: ALL-BUT-ONE DOESN'T WORK**
A 1978 mandate prevented use of natural gas & forced utilities into coal or nuclear – before common sense prevailed and it was repealed 9 years later.

COOPERATIVE ACTION NETWORK

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The drilling rig is shown during the operation. The site is about nine miles east and a mile north of Linton.

Test well shows natural gas is under Emmons County

Strata-X Energy has announced that the company has completed drilling operations on the Rohweder 1-11 well in Emmons County, the company's first proof of concept well on the company's 120,000-acre Sleeping Giant Gas Project.

In drilling the vertical well to a total depth of 1,450 feet, gas shows were encountered immediately after penetrating the regional hydrocarbon seal. In total, gas shows were encountered over an 80 foot interval of the targeted Niobrara formation, with gas shows peaking at approximately 300 units over a background of 25 units.

The well is currently being logged in preparation for setting casing to

total depth. After casing, the well will be shut-in to await completion stimulation. This will allow the company time to design an optimal method utilizing data obtained during the drilling of the well.

The company maintains a 100 percent working interest in the well. It is anticipated that three additional wells may be drilled on other large prospects mapped over the Sleeping Giant Gas Project later this year following successful production testing of this well. The company has permits for another Emmons County test well and two in McIntosh County.

The Sleeping Giant Gas Project is targeting biogenic natural gas from the prolific Upper Cretaceous

Niobrara Formation in the Williston Basin. The Niobrara Formation is a significant petroleum system in the United States and has produced over 1 Tcf of natural gas from shallow accumulations.

About Strata-X

Strata-X is a Denver, Colo.-based company and is engaged in the business of oil and gas exploration and development with a variety of exploration opportunities in North Dakota, California, Texas, Illinois and western Australia and production and development opportunities in California. ■



Nicole Hulm and James Vetter worked at KEM Electric Cooperative as summer employees this season. Nicole worked inside the office, while James was employed as an apprentice lineworker.

KEM Electric Cooperative members should be aware of scam

KEM Electric Cooperative is asking its members to be vigilant about telephone scams from strangers claiming to be KEM Electric Cooperative employees. These scammers will claim you have to pay them immediately with your credit card or face disconnection of services. If you think you are being scammed, hang up and call KEM Electric at 701-254-4666. Similar scams are occurring across the country targeting utility customers.

Another North Dakota electric cooperative has reported at least two instances where a member has received a call from someone pretending to be a cooperative employee and threatened

disconnection if payment was not made immediately. Fortunately, the member suspected it was a scam and did not provide any personal information.

These scammers are asking for a credit card number and pin numbers to make this payment. Please know that KEM Electric would never call its members and ask for a credit card number to avoid immediate disconnect. That is not how we do business.

Our goal is to help the member with payment agreements, assist the member in obtaining financial assistance from other agencies to pay their electric bill, and do everything possible to avoid an electrical disconnection.

KEM Electric Cooperative Board meeting highlights

July 28, 2014

- Held the reorganization of the board
- Approved the May and June regular board meeting minutes
- Heard department updates
- Heard reports on meetings attended
- Approved four estate retirement
- Heard Innovative Energy Alliance update
- Signed the special equipment summary for June
- Signed closeout for work order 561 and 561MP

KEM ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC.

DIRECTORS:

Dean Dewald, Chairman.....Dawson
Victor Wald, Vice ChairmanNapoleon
Carter Vander Wal, Sec.-Treas. Pollock
Carmen Essig, DirectorLehr
John Beck, Director.....Linton
Dean Hummel, Director..... Hague
Milton Brandner, DirectorZeeland

MANAGEMENT:

Don Franklund
& Chris Baumgartner Co-Managers
Roberta NagelOffice Manager
Bair Law Firm, Atty. Mandan
Innovative Energy Alliance, LLC
Consulting Engineers.....Bismarck

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: kem@kemelectric.com