Evolving to serve you better in 2018

By Don Franklund, Co-General Manager and Chief Executive Officer

Our work plan, challenges and achievements vary from year to year, but our New Year’s resolution is always the same: To listen, observe, and evolve to meet the changing needs of our membership.

This month, I’d like to reflect on a significant change that was driven by you, the member-owners of KEM Electric.

Since we implemented SmartHub, an easy-to-use online payment system, you have more control: in checking real-time updates on energy use, having the knowledge to make lifestyle changes that can ultimately lower your utility bill, paying your bill at your convenience and more.

KEM members are using www.kemelectric.com or downloading the SmartHub app to conduct routine business. These mobile services are new ways of connecting with people, and an extension of the customer service and quality services you expect us to provide.

Our shared goal is to help find ways to better control energy costs. That’s why we communicate with you about the energy industry and ways we can work together to reduce some of those costs.

One way is through a member satisfaction survey that we conduct every couple years, to help us learn your needs and how we can better serve you. We plan to do another survey sometime this spring. If you receive a call, please take the time to visit and share your thoughts. This gives us an opportunity to listen, observe, and evolve to meet the changing needs of our membership.

We wish you a healthy and happy 2018.

This is a condensed version of the manager’s column. To learn more details on how KEM is serving you, read the January local pages of North Dakota Living.
KEM welcomes Travis Kupper as co-general manager and chief executive officer

KEM Electric Cooperative has added a co-general manager and chief executive officer to partner with Don Franklund. Travis Kupper, chief financial officer for Innovative Energy Alliance Cooperative, is filling the position vacated by Chris Baumgartner, who resigned after five years of service to work for Basin Electric Power Cooperative. Kupper will start his new duties on Jan. 1, 2018.

The alliance is a professional management and services company that provides support for four electric cooperatives in North Dakota including KEM, Mor-Gran-Sou, Roughrider and Slope Electric Cooperatives, as well as the West Dakota Holdings LLC family including 3C Construction, West Dakota Utilities Service and other subsidiaries.

Kupper has 19 years of cooperative experience. He started in October 1998 doing accounting software installations and support for National Information Solutions Cooperative in Mandan. He transitioned to Slope Electric Cooperative in New England in 2007, to work as chief financial officer. In the cooperative spirit of working together to share employees and resources, streamline processes, gain efficiencies and ultimately save the members money, Kupper was hired by Innovative Energy Alliance Cooperative in August 2010 as chief financial officer.

Dean Dewald, the chairman of the Innovative Energy Alliance Cooperative board of directors, and current director for KEM Electric Cooperative, says Kupper has the knowledge and expertise to help move the alliance forward.

“Because of Travis’ background and 19 years of cooperative experiences, along with his understanding of the strengths and challenges the cooperatives face within the alliance family, he was the package deal — and we're glad to have him,” he says.

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(2) fax: 202-690-7442; or
(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov

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