

Gefre retires from KEM Electric Cooperative

BY ANNE HANSEN



As a KEM Electric Cooperative (KEM) member, you've likely noticed Jeff Gefre, a journeyman lineworker, working on power lines and other electrical equipment in our communities.

Although Gefre will be retiring in April, his 33 years of service will leave a lasting impact on those who worked with him, and the members he served.

"Jeff's knowledge of the cooperative's system has helped the younger employees grow and learn our system better," said Dale Nagel, chief of staff and line superintendent. "In addition to his knowledge, Jeff is a great operator with all the trucks and other machines we have. He loves to remind us of how he could back a trailer all the way to Wishek, but we are all still waiting to see that!"

Gefre began working for KEM in April 1989 in the Wishek outpost.

"When I began, the hardest challenges were getting familiar with all the backgrounds and locations of our members," he said.

Although there would be many more challenges to come, Gefre never stopped enjoying serving members.

"Jeff comes to work with a good attitude and improves everyone's as well," Nagel said.

Gefre experienced many changes throughout the years, but one thing that did not change was his gratefulness to have good members who always helped the lineworkers

throughout the years.

"Our members are great. We could call anyone in the middle of the night, and they would help if we needed it," he said.

Gefre is looking forward to his retirement, which will include riding motorcycle with his wife and family, spending time with family at the lake and fishing.

He is also proud of the time he served KEM members.

"Looking back, I am proud to know I did my part to help the cooperative and members," he said.

Gefre has left his mark on the cooperative.

"Jeff has a way of leaving any conversation better than it started, which has been of great value to KEM Electric. His charismatic attitude and ability to make people smile will be missed," Nagel said. ■

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The power behind your power

BY ANNE HANSEN

National studies consistently rank power line installers and repairers among the most dangerous jobs in the country, and for good reason. Laboring high in the air wearing heavy equipment and working directly with high voltage creates the perfect storm of a dangerous and unforgiving profession. But electric lineworkers are up to the task. These brave people are committed to safety, as well as the challenges of the job.

KEM Electric Cooperative's lineworkers are responsible for

Meet our dedicated lineworkers:

keeping power flowing day and night, regardless of national holidays, vacations, birthdays or other important family milestones. Beyond the years of specialized training and apprenticeships, it takes internal fortitude and a mission-oriented outlook to be a good lineworker. In fact, this service-oriented mentality is a hallmark characteristic of lineworkers. The job requires lineworkers to set aside their personal priorities to better serve their local community. ■



Jeff Gefre
journeyman lineworker
33 years

The best part of my job is talking to members.
When I'm not working, I can be found fishing, riding motorcycle, camping and spending time with family.



Gerald Zink
journeyman lineworker
15 years

The best part of my job is my mobile office.
When I am not working, I can be found fishing.



Martin Messer
area foreman
10 years

The best part of my job is working outdoors.
When I'm not working, I can be found fishing and camping with my family.



Austin Olhauser
journeyman lineworker
10 years

The best part of my job is being outside and working with my hands.
When I'm not working, I can be found camping, ranching and just enjoying life.



Kevin Horner
area foreman
10 years

The best part of my job is doing something different every day and working with the members.
When I am not working, I can be found working on the farm.



Kirk Praus
journeyman lineworker
9 years

The best part of my job is working outdoors.
When I am not working, I can be found fishing, hunting and spending time with family.



Tyler Jacob
journeyman lineworker
4 years

The best part of my job is being outside.
When I am not working, I can be found hunting or golfing.



Dillon Steinolfson
journeyman lineworker
3.5 years

The best part of my job is working outdoors.
When I am not working, I can be found fishing and hunting.



Matt Craven
journeyman lineworker
3 years



Tyler Schummer
journeyman lineworker
2 years

The best part of my job is working outdoors, and meeting new people in the service area.
When I'm not working, I can be found fishing and hunting.

MANAGER'S MESSAGE:

Thank a lineworker April 11


Travis Kupper

If you were asked to associate an image or a person with KEM Electric Cooperative, I bet you would picture a lineworker. One of the most visible employees of the co-op, lineworkers work tirelessly to ensure our members receive uninterrupted power 24/7.

“Lineworker” is listed as one of the top 10 most dangerous jobs in the United States. This

is understandable, as they perform detailed tasks near high-voltage power lines. Regardless of the time of day, having to brave stormy weather and other challenging conditions, lineworkers must climb high in the air, often carrying heavy equipment to get the job done.

Being a lineworker is not a glamorous or easy profession. It takes years of specialized training, ongoing education, dedication, and equally important, a sense of service and commitment. How else can you explain the willingness to leave the comfort of their home to tackle a challenging job in difficult conditions, when most are sheltering comfortably at home?

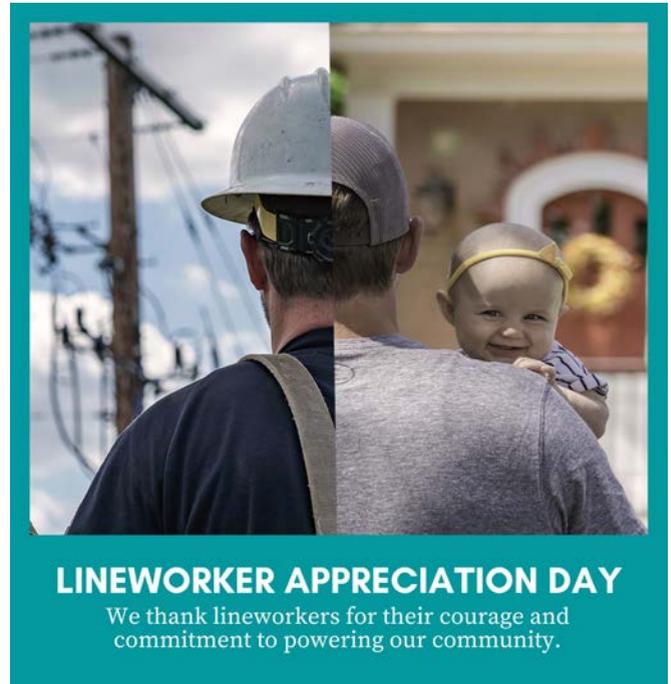
This dedication and sense of service to the community is truly what sets them apart. That’s why we set aside the second Monday in April to celebrate and recognize those who work around the clock to keep the lights on.

While lineworkers may be the most visible employees at KEM Electric Cooperative, it’s important to note there is a team of highly skilled professionals working behind the scenes. Engineers provide ongoing expertise and guidance on the operations side of the co-op. Member service representatives are always standing by to take your calls and answer your questions. Our information technology experts are continuously monitoring our system to help safeguard sensitive data. And these are just a few of the

folks who work together to ensure we can deliver the service and reliability you expect and deserve. Without them, our lineworkers wouldn’t be able to “bring the light” to our community.

Our dedicated and beloved lineworkers are proud to represent KEM Electric Cooperative, and they deserve all the appreciation and accolades that come their way on Lineworker Appreciation Day.

On April 11, and any time you see a lineworker, I hope you’ll join me in thanking them for their exceptional service. I also hope you’ll remember you have a dedicated team of professionals working behind the scenes at the co-op, whose commitment to service runs just as deep.


LINWORKER APPRECIATION DAY

We thank lineworkers for their courage and commitment to powering our community.

BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Feb. 22

- Approved Jan. 25 board meeting minutes
- Heard co-general manager/CEO reports
- Discussed Energy Transfer Partner update
- Approved proposed bylaw amendment changes to be voted on by the membership at annual meeting
- Cater Vander Wal awarded a Director Gold Certificate
- Approved new branding for KEM Electric
- Beck was nominated voting delegate for NRECA PowerXChange
- Heard revenue financial report
- Heard operations report
- Heard board meeting reports

RDFC approves 2022 grants

The Rural Development Finance Corporation (RDFC) has approved a 2022 grant allotment of \$2,000 on behalf of KEM Electric Cooperative to be used to support community-owned entities, nonprofits and community-based projects.

Eligible projects: Community-owned businesses (café, grocery store, motel, other); community facilities (ambulance services, fire districts, recreation, hospital/clinic, community center, other); or community-based projects (school/youth projects, other) that benefit rural areas and lead to community betterment. RDFC does not provide funds for medical fundraisers or general operating costs.

Matching funds: \$4 of other funds to every \$1 of RDFC funds. The member cooperative is responsible for verifying the matching funds. The matching funds DO

NOT need to come from the utility cooperative.

Timeframe: Now through Dec. 31

Process: Call KEM Electric Cooperative at 701-254-4666 or 1-800-472-2673, or email us at info@kemelectric.com.

If it meets the qualifications, the member should complete an application and submit to KEM Electric Cooperative for consideration. From there, the application will be presented to the board of directors for approval.

If approved, the grant application will be submitted to RDFC for final consideration.

The RDFC board gives final approval on grant requests. Once approved, a check will be made out to the recipient entity listed on the application and mailed to the contact person listed on the application. ■



SAVE THE DATE: JUNE 16, 2022

KEM ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ANNUAL MEETING
LINTON, NORTH DAKOTA

Interested in becoming a director?

KEM Electric Cooperative's 2022 annual meeting will be held Thursday, June 16. This year, the director seats up for election are those of Dean Hummel, director at-large, and Neil Meidinger, District 3.

KEM Electric Cooperative is governed by a seven-member board of directors that is elected by you. The current board of directors includes District 1, John Beck; District 2, Carter Vander Wal; District 3, Neil Meidinger;

District 4, Victor (Chuck) Wald; District 5, Dean Dewald; at-large directors, Carmen Essig and Dean Hummel.

If you would like to place your name on the ballot, pick up a petition at the KEM Electric Cooperative office or on the KEM website, under Your Community and Annual Meeting. Petitions must be returned to the cooperative office no later than May 2. For more information, call the KEM Electric Cooperative office. ■

Safety Starts with ME: Marty Messer

BY ANNE HANSEN

Growing up on a family ranch, Marty Messer, Steele area foreman, has always enjoyed and appreciated the outdoors. His love for the outdoors is what attracted Messer to a career at KEM Electric Cooperative as a lineworker.

“I appreciate the trees that offer shade and a habitat for all sorts of wildlife,” said Messer, who is also an avid hunter. “But as a lineworker, I understand the importance of keeping power lines clear of vegetation, ensuring a reliable power supply, and most importantly, a safe system for our members.”

Overgrown vegetation and trees pose a risk to power lines, and that is why KEM Electric Cooperative lineworkers take note of overgrown vegetation and trim to ensure reliability.

“One of the biggest benefits of a smart vegetation management program is reliability, Messer said. “Strategic tree trimming reduces the frequency of downed lines causing power outages.”

A proactive approach also diminishes the chances of fallen branches, sagging trees due to heavy frost or severe weather events that make it more complicated and dangerous for lineworkers to restore power.

More so, vegetation management also helps keep our members safe. For example, if trees are touching power lines in our members’ yards, they can pose grave danger to families. If children can access those trees, they can potentially climb into a danger zone. Electricity can arc, or jump, from a power line to a nearby conductor like a tree.

“We care about our members and put their safety and that of my co-workers and lineworkers above all else,” Messer said.



Messer noted that members can help by:

- Planting new trees and vegetation away from the power lines and pad-mounted transformers to avoid future issues.
- Call the co-op if you notice that you have vegetation growing near the power lines. ■

Safety Starts with ME is a monthly column showing what our employees do to help keep members, co-workers and themselves safe.



CO-OP NIGHT WITH THE BISMARCK BUCKS!

Join KEM Electric for Co-op Night, as the Bismarck Bucks take on the San Diego Strike. In appreciation of Co-op Night, KEM Electric members and their families are invited to redeem FREE general admission ticket by visiting our website at kemelectric.com The game takes places at 3:05 p.m. on May 1.

Co-op member addresses needed

KEM Electric Cooperative needs new addresses to mail members their capital credit allocation statements and/or capital credit check written last year.

The following list of KEM Electric Cooperative members and their current address on file (last known address) were mailed allocation statements and/or checks

that were returned from the post office because it was “not a deliverable address,” “unable to forward” or “attempted not known.”

If you know of a current address, please call the KEM Electric Cooperative office at 701-254-4666 or 800-472-2673.

Abell, Bert	Erbele, Elda	Haas, Jean	Johnson, Tina
Aberle, Florian	Estate Of Veronica Glatt,	Haas, Clark	Kaseman, Don
Adams, William	Farmers Union Oil Co-op	Hager, Don	Kaseman, Edward
Affeldt, Betty	of Linton,	Haibeck, Ross	Kemmet, Terry
Applebaum, Arnold	Feist, Robert	Haibeck, Ruth	Kirschenmann, Ramona
Argent, Marthyn	Feist, Gordon	Haibeck, Curtis	Klein, Charles
Arp, Terry	Ferderer, Kevin	Hardy, David	Knoll, Wilbur
Bakker School Dist.	Ferguson, Lorraine	Harter, Tara	Knudson, Jason
Baumgartner, David	Fetzer, Frances	Hartman, Jodi	Knudson, Wanda
Beck, Emery	Fine, James	Hasper, Jason	Koester, Steve
Becker, Audrey	Fisher, Lorraine	Hasper, Arlyn	Kramer, Ray
Belile, Arthur	Flemmer, Leo	Heinemeyer, Marilyn	Kramlich, Violet
Bender, Donavon	Fransen, Jan	Heinemeyer, Trent	Kramlich, Mike
Bitz, Marcella	Frederick, Daniel	Heyne, Raymond	Kratz Aerial Ag Service
Blue, Rob	Gabriel, Darius	Hoff, Mark	Krumm, John
Bosch, Francis	Gefroh, Douglas	Hoff, Alfred	Kulanda, Diane
Bosch, Clyde	George, Larry	Hoff, Amanda	Kuntz, Frank
Brandner, David	Giese, Lloyd	Hoffman, Gary	Kunz, Michael
Burlington Northern	Gimbel, Terry	Horner, Gene	Laber, Patty
Railway Santa Fe	Glaesman, Derrick	Huber, Myron	Laine, Paul
Chadwick, Eric	Glaesman, Travis	Huber, Louis	Lang, Terry
Christensen, Marjorie	Glass, Mark	Huizenga, Mavis	Lang, Larry
Claeys, Mark	Glass, Clarence	Hummel, Esther	Langeliers, Edward
Cusey, James	Goldade, Gerard	Iszler, Byron	Lauinger, Jerry
Dahlstrom, Mark	Graham, Vance	Iszler's Outback,	Lawler, Clinton
Dammell, Agnes	Green, Andrew	J&H Buffalo,	Lawler, Margaret
Davis, Tom	Grenz, Matthew	Jacob, Steven	Leahey, Chris
Dendinger, John	Grenz, Steven	Jacob, Michael	Lee, Brodrick
Devore, Elwood	Grinsteiner, Dave	Jangula, Jerome	Leier, Mark
Dockter, Karen	Gross, Val	Jangula, Paulina	Leier, Joseph
Doll, Anton	Gross, Bill	Janke, Laverna	Leier, Brian
Doll, Theresia	Gross, Alvin	Job, Brian	Leigh, Mick
Doll Farm Enterprises	Gross, Tim	Job, Sandy	Macfie, Sandra
Dykema, James	Grunfelder, Jon	Johnson, Owen	Mahin, Aaron
Enzminger, Claudette	Gullickson, Michael	Johnson, Edwin	Malard, Valda
Erbele, Tim	Haas, Dale	Johnson, Mrs. Burton	Marshall, Rose



Masset, Floyd
Mattern, Myron
Mccrory, Glenn
Mckeeman, Oren
Mehlhaff, Stella
Meidinger, James
Messner, Jason
Miller, Marvin
Miller, Miles
Miller, Robert
Mindt, John
Ming, Dennis
Minnesota Tower Systems
Moch, Martha
Moch, Troy
Mock, Caroline
Mock, Anthony
Moser, Gary
Mueller, Richard
Nelson, Vickie
Nelson, Debra
Nelson, Daniel
Nickisch, Mrs. Steve
Nieuwsma, Dale
Nistler, Beverly
Northern Plains Natural
Gas Co.
Nygaard, Dale
Oliver, Kevin
Olson, Paul
Olson, Ryan
Opp, Correne
Oster, Robert
Ottmar, Christine
Peterson, Edward
Pfaff, Luke
Pfeifer, Charles
Pfeifer, David
Privratsky, Isabelle
River View Alfalfa
Roesler, Alvin
Rohrich, Valentine
Rohrich, Michael
Rudy, Gordon
Sauter, Clinton

Saville, Carol
Saylor, Lillian
Schaeffer, Milton
Schatz, Bryan
Schauer, Lucille
Schell, Vangie
Schenbeck, Colby
Scherr, Alvin
Scherr, Joyce
Schiermeister, George
Schlosser, William
Schmidt, Mark
Schock, Dennis
Schwab, Jack
Seppanen, Fred
Serr, Rodney
Serr, Steve
Severson, Ellef
Shaw, Charles
Silbernagel, John
Smith, Scott
Soule, Gloria
South Central Threshing
Assoc.
Sperle, Robert
State Line Water
Cooperative Inc.
Stateline Resort LLC
Steele Park Board
Stevahn, Ryan
Stewart, Lynette
Stokes, Arthur
Streyle, Elaine
Stroh, Mark
Stroh, Peter
Stroh, Shawn
Stroh, Damon
Strom, Myron
Strom, Melody
Surber, Ira
Svanes, Alan
Svanes, Dana
Thurman, Ralph
Tschosik, Max
Ulmer, Deloris

Ulmer, Clarence
Us Sprint Communications
Co.
Van Beek, Judy
Van Boven, Dennis
Van Vugt, John
Van Vugt, J.
Vander Vorst, Gerald
Vander Vorst, Tim
Vander Vorste, Louis
Vetsch, Edward
Vetter, Tony
Volk, Kirk
Vollmers, Rose
W&S Ranch
Wagner, Keith
Wagner, Tom
Wahl, Monte
Wald, Duane
Wald, Andrew
Wald, Pius

Wald, Anton
Walth, Gordon
Walth, Troy
Walther, Leroy
Wanner, Mildred
Wanner, Edward
Waste Management Linton
Webb, David
Weber, Doris
Weiser, Bill
West, Byron
Western Wireless
Corporation
Williams, Harold
Woehlhoff, Courtney
Wohl, Clarence
Wolbaum, Margaret
Wolf, Grady
Wykoff, Richard (Dan)
Zimmerman, Vivian
Zimmerman, Bradley



Call before you dig!

Planting a tree? Planning construction work? Remember to contact North Dakota One Call first! The first step to any project is safety, and damaging an underground facility while you dig can cause injury or even death.

Numerous utility lines may be buried on your property, ranging from electric and telephone lines to water and sewer lines, but North Dakota One Call will help you locate these lines before your project begins.

Contact North Dakota One Call and utility line owners will locate and mark their lines. These locates do not include any lines you may have installed to your private facilities, such as detached garages, wells or yard lights.

Go online at www.ndonecall.com or call **800-795-0555** or **811**.

It's free, it's simple and it's the law.

The 811 process:

1. NOTIFY

Notify the North Dakota One Call center by calling 811 or making an online request at least two full business days before work begins, excluding weekends and holidays. You'll give the operator information about how to contact you, where you are planning to dig and what type of work you will be doing, or go online to www.ndonecall.com to enter this information. Utility companies who have potential facilities in the area of your dig site will be notified about your intent to dig.

2. WAIT

Wait the required amount of time for affected utility operators to respond to your request.

3. CONFIRM

Confirm that all affected utility operators have responded to your request and marked underground utilities. Compare the marks to the list of utilities the One Call center notified. You can also view your ticket online and see each utility's response for your dig site.

4. RESPECT

Respect the marks. The marks provided by the affected utilities are your guide for the duration of the project. The marks are valid for 21 calendar days.

If you are unable to maintain the marks during your project, or the project will continue past your request's expiration date, please call 811 or go online to file a RESPOT request.

5. DIG CAREFULLY

Dig carefully around the marks. No mechanical excavating can take place within 24 inches on either side of the marked location of the underground facility. If you plan on digging within that 4-foot-wide area, hand digging is allowed, but please dig carefully and cautiously.



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:

Don FranklundCo-GM/CEO
Travis KupperCo-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

