

- Twenty years of giving
- We love our communities
- Safety Starts with ME



PHOTO BY JESSICA WALD, NAPOLEON HOMESTEAD

Mann combats pheasant decline through FFA project

BY RACHEL NEFF

For many North Dakota families, hunting is a generational pastime, and the same holds true for Karissa Mann, a junior at Napoleon High School, and her family. While learning about the threat of a population decline among pheasants, Mann became motivated to combat the decrease and preserve her family's hobby. She rolled up her sleeves and began broadening her knowledge and learning more about raising pheasants, as part of her Supervised Agricultural Experiences (SAE) project for FFA.

"I had two goals with this project. The first goal was to help repopulate pheasants in North Dakota and the second was to start my own business," Mann said.

With her goals and a plan in mind, Mann started raising funds for her project.

"I applied for a local grant, won that. Then, I applied for a state grant and a national grant and received both," Mann said. "That money went to startup costs like shelter, food and other essentials I knew the pheasants would need."

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PHOTOS BY JESSICA WALD, NAPOLEON HOMESTEAD

continued from previous page

In May 2022, Mann worked long hours to complete the habitat to house her hundreds of pheasants for the coming months.

"On June 13, 2022, I received a total of 630 pheasants," Mann said. "From there, my parents, Mike and Shelly, helped me peck and count them, which took a total of three hours."

Karissa described the pecking process as dipping the hen and rooster beaks into both the food and water, so they know where to feed and drink. With little to no problems, Karissa had reached her goals by selling her pheasants to local and surrounding wildlife clubs, as well as releasing some on her family's land.

"My dad originally started off getting my business out through word of mouth, but after talking to a lot of people, they now come directly to me if they want to purchase pheasants," she said.

In total, Karissa has had 840 pheasants come through her farm, including 630 hens and 210 roosters.

"As time goes on, I want to raise more roosters, as those are in popular demand," she said.

Karissa has been an FFA member for five years and has been active for three. Within the three years she has been active, Mann has been a part of two teams that have punched their ticket to

compete in national competitions.

Her most recent trip was Oct. 23-29, 2022, to Indianapolis, Ind., where she and her team placed in the top 20 for parliamentary procedure. Along with team accomplishments, Karissa personally accomplished becoming an accredited parliamentarian by excelling on a standardized test.

In February, FFA is celebrated during National FFA Week, when many showcase what the organization does.

"The thing I love most about FFA is the social aspect," Karissa said. "You are able to meet people all across the country who have very similar interests as you." ⚡





Celebrating 20 years of giving

For the past 20 years, KEM Electric Cooperative members have raised nearly \$124,000 by simply rounding up their electric bills to the nearest dollar. For the majority of members, that amounts to an annual donation of only \$6. The cost is nearly that of a coffee from a specialty store, yet its impact is great and has allowed members to give back to the community with over 334 donations – and counting.

When members “round up” their monthly bill from KEM Electric and donate to this fund, they are making a big difference in someone’s life, explained Susan Meidinger, Operation Round Up board member.

“No one ever really knows the struggles people and communities are going through. It seems there is never enough money for programs to be successful. Operation Round Up is a way to help these good deeds come to fruition,” she said.

Through Operation Round Up, contributions are collected through billing, and then deposited to a separate trust fund. A trust fund board is responsible for the distribution of all funds. Current members include Sue Wald from Napoleon, Michael Knoll from Hague, Derry Pool from Pollock, S.D., Taami Naaden from Braddock, Susan Meidinger from Zeeland, Sherry Fettig from Wishek and Charley Cichy from Dawson.

Gathering on a quarterly basis, the board reviews applications and awards them to worthy recipients.

“We, as a board, make sure we are giving to each community that KEM Electric serves. The applications that are submitted are very diverse and always greatly appreciated,” Meidinger said.

But for Meidinger, the most satisfying donations are those made to the local emergency responders.

“These departments are purely volunteer, and raising money for proper equipment is extremely important. The last thing volunteers of the fire squads need is to have to worry about raising money to stay safe when fighting a fire. Operation Round Up gives everyone in the KEM Electric community a chance to give back for the protection of our communities,” she said.

Lasting impacts through other programs

Operation Round Up isn’t the only way KEM Electric gives back to the community. In addition, KEM Electric participates in the Rural Development Finance Corporation, which allocates \$2,000 to the cooperative annually to be used to support community-owned entities, nonprofits and community-based projects.

KEM Electric also gives to the youth through local scholarship programs and the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour.

You can learn more about KEM Electric’s giving efforts by visiting www.kemelectric.com/your-community. ⚡

MANAGER'S MESSAGE:

We love our communities



Travis Kupper

"To move forward, you have to give back." This quote from Oprah Winfrey reflects the special bond and obligation that ties KEM Electric Cooperative to the members we serve. With Valentine's Day approaching, we can't think of a better time to express how much we appreciate serving you, the members of the co-op.

We know when we helped to bring electricity to rural North Dakota many years ago, the quality of life improved for all. Through the years, other issues needed to be tackled, and we have been at the forefront of helping to address some of those issues. We want to help meet the long-term needs of our service area to ensure it continues to thrive.

While our top priority is to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to you, equally important is our mission to enrich the lives of the members (that's you!) we serve. This focus to benefit the larger community is central to the way we operate as a cooperative. KEM Electric knows electricity is a critical need for modern-day life, but it takes more than poles and power lines to make a cooperative.

Over time, our co-op has evolved to meet the changing needs of our area, improving the quality of life for everyone. And that can mean many different things. It can mean

programs for North Dakota's youth, such as education scholarships or the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, in which we take our community's brightest young people to Washington, D.C., for a week-long immersion to experience democracy in action. By contributing to Operation Round Up, we help local organizations and individuals. It means partnering with organizations through the Rural Development Finance Corporation fund and other worthy programs.

We all benefit from these programs, because of you and your neighbors. You empower KEM Electric through your membership and through your participation in and support of these programs.

As a local business, we are proud to power your life and bring good things to our service area. We hope you will continue to guide our efforts by sharing your perspective as we plan for the future. The energy landscape is undergoing dramatic changes, fueled by evolving technology and consumer desires for more options. While the larger environment in which we operate is constantly changing, one thing remains the same. By working together, I'm certain we can continue to do good things for our membership. ⚡



BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

- Approved November board minutes
- Heard co-general manager/CEO report
- Reviewed Basin Electric Power Cooperative updates
- Discussed Energy Transfer Partners update
- Heard financial report
- Heard operations report
- Received member relations report
- Heard legal counsel report

Safety Starts with ME: Austin Ohlhauser

You might be aware of the green metal box in your yard, but do you know what it is for? These boxes are known as pad-mount transformers and are crucial in converting electricity to a voltage that is safe for use in homes and businesses.

“Although crucial, pad-mount transformers can be potentially dangerous and should not be messed with,” said Austin Ohlhauser, a journeyman lineworker for KEM Electric Cooperative.

“Pad-mount transformers are connected to primary high-voltage lines, and secondary lines can extend in several directions to distribute power to homes and businesses,” Ohlhauser said. “Be mindful of underground cabinets and transformers before removing snow, planting shrubs or trees, setting fence posts, installing sprinkler systems and digging, as this may damage underground lines.”

During the winter months, snow removal can be very important around these important pieces to our grid.

“The North Dakota winter can sometimes camouflage these pieces of equipment, making snow removal that much more dangerous,” Ohlhauser said. “Be sure to know the location, if near one, to make snow removal safe and easy.”

Use these tips to keep you and your family safe around pad-mount transformers:

- Remove snow around a pad-mount transformer. Snow piled on electrical equipment can impact your safety and electric service to your home. In the event of an outage, having the pad-mount transformers cleared of any snow will make it easier for lineworkers to restore power.
- Never touch, climb or play near or on a pad-mount transformer. Inform your children of



the dangers of this piece of equipment.

- Keep the area around a pad-mount transformer clear of any obstructions. A 10-foot radius is recommended. This includes trees, shrubs or other obstructions.
- Do not dig around a pad-mount transformer. Below are underground lines that can cause damage to you and the electrical system, if hit. Always call 811 before you dig.
- Report any damaged or unlocked transformer to your local cooperative. If you notice anything wrong with the equipment, call 701-254-4666.

“At KEM Electric, we want to provide you with electricity as well as protect your livelihood,” Ohlhauser said. “Please take this information into consideration to keep you and others around you safe.” ⚡

Safety at KEM Electric

KEM Electric is an advocate of working safely. In fact, it is our way of life; the culture of your cooperative. We look out for the safety of ourselves and others – before, during and after work. Did you know members also play a key role in keeping our system safe? At times, you are our eyes in the sky and on the ground.

Should you see a power line issue that

may need KEM Electric's attention, please call the office or send us an email at safety@kemelectric.com with your concern. This correspondence should include the description of the location, your name and complete contact information, and a photo if possible. Working together helps ensure the safety of all! ⚡

Interested in becoming a director?

KEM Electric Cooperative's 2023 annual meeting will be held on Thursday, June 15. This year, the director seats up for election are those of Victor "Chuck" J. Wald, District 4, Dean Dewald, District 5, and Carmen Essig, the district at-large.

KEM Electric Cooperative is governed by a seven-member board of directors that is elected by you – the members and owners of the electric cooperative.

The cooperative is divided into five districts, with one director representing each district and two at-large board seats. 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; and at-large directors Dean Hummel and Carmen Essig.

If you are interested in becoming a director for KEM Electric Cooperative, please see the following section of bylaws pertaining to filling a petition for a director's seat.

404. Member Petition-Form.

(a) Each petition shall contain the following:

1. The name of the member nominee.
2. The director position for which the member nominee shall run.
3. The printed names, addresses and telephone numbers, date of signature, and original signatures of each member signing the petition.

4. At least 10 signatures of the members of the respective district, or members at large, as the case may be.

(b) In the case of joint members, the signature of one or more than one joint member shall constitute one joint member.

(c) Firms, associations, corporations or body politics shall have the right to place one signature on a petition, the same as other members, by the signature of a duly appointed representative.

(d) Petitions may not be circulated or signed more than 90 days before the date when petitions must be filed pursuant to this bylaw. Any signatures to a nominating petition obtained more than 90 days before that date may not be counted.

(e) All petitions must be filed at the principal offices of the cooperative not less than 45 days prior to the date of the meeting of the members, as fixed by the board of directors.

(f) After verifying that a petition complies with this bylaw, the secretary of the board of directors shall post a list of nominations for directors at the principal office of the cooperative at least 30 days before the meeting of the members.

If you would like to place your name on the ballot, pick up a petition at the KEM office or find it online at www.kemelectric.com/annual-meeting. Petitions must be returned to the cooperative office no later than May 2. ⚡

SAVE THE DATE

JOIN KEM ELECTRIC FOR YOUR ANNUAL
MEETING ON
THURSDAY, JUNE 15, 2023
NAPOLEON, NORTH DAKOTA

MORE INFORMATION WILL FOLLOW.





Annual poster contest!

Grab your art supplies and draw a poster showing how KEM Electric Cooperative has provided power for generations!

This poster should display a clear, creative picture to help celebrate the cooperative's annual meeting in 2023, with the theme:

"Power for Generations." All posters should display the Touchstone Energy® Cooperative logo on their entries. No matter what you draw, have fun! We can't wait to hear from you. Cash prizes will be awarded in each division.

Divisions:

- Preschool to kindergarten
- First grade to third grade
- Fourth grade to sixth grade

Deadline: Posters must be received at the KEM Electric office no later than 4:30 p.m. on March 31.

Rules:

- Posters must be on white, 8.5x11-inch paper.
- Posters must depict the theme, "Power for Generations."
- Print the child's name, address, age and

parents' names on the back of the posters.

- Submit a photo of the child with the artwork.
- Only dependents of current KEM Electric members are eligible.

Prizes:

Each division will be awarded three prizes (nine prizes total): first-place prizes of \$15; second-place prizes of \$10; and third-place prizes of \$5.

Winners:

Winning posters will be featured in the KEM Electric local pages of *North Dakota Living*. ⚡

KEM Electric supports students with scholarships

KEM Electric takes pride in assisting with the development of rural leadership through our scholarship program.

We are happy to continue our scholarship program and offer scholarships to qualifying seniors, who must be dependents of KEM Electric members.



**Download application at
www.kemelectric.com**

Complete applications and send to:
msanders@kemelectric.com
or by mailing to:

KEM Electric Cooperative
Attn: Marcy Sanders
107 S. Broadway | P.O. Box 790
Linton, ND 58552

Return completed application before Feb. 10.

Area high school scholarship

KEM Electric Cooperative will award eight \$500 scholarships to qualified applicants whose parents or guardians are members of the co-op. School representatives from Ashley, Wishek, Zeeland, Strasburg, Linton, Hazelton-Moffit-Braddock, Kidder County and Napoleon will select a graduating senior.

Contact your school counselor for more information. The deadline to apply is Feb. 10.

\$1,000 Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarship

KEM Electric Cooperative will award a \$1,000 scholarship to a student who is already enrolled or planning to enroll in a full-time graduate or undergraduate program. The student must attend an accredited two- or four-year program, university or vocational/tech school. All applicants must have parents or guardians who are members of the co-op.

Homeschool, GED setting or student outside of KEM service area

The co-op will also award one \$500 scholarship to a graduating senior from a homeschool setting, GED setting, or a school outside of our service area.

Students can get the applications from our website, www.kemelectric.com, or call the office in Linton. Applications can be filled out online and emailed to msanders@kemelectric.com, or printed and mailed to: KEM Electric Cooperative, Attn: Marcy Sanders, 107 S. Broadway, P.O. Box 790, Linton, ND 58552.

Luck-of-the-draw scholarship

KEM Electric will award two \$500 luck-of-the-draw scholarships to be drawn at our annual meeting. All high school seniors who are dependents of KEM Electric members and have not previously been chosen for a co-op scholarship are eligible and must attend the annual meeting. A luck-of-the-draw form is available at KEMElectric.com. ⚡

KEM ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC.

DIRECTORS:

Victor Wald, Chairman Napoleon
John Beck, Vice Chairman Linton
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:

Travis Kupper Co-GM/CEO
Jason Bentz Co-GM/CEO

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

Hazelton, 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

