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The Hayloft located north of Ashley.



The Hayloft has a dedicated group of cast members.

THE HAYLOFT: Real country entertainment

Our travels rejuvenate us, but can also spark inspiration that helps guide us in future community endeavors. Scott Schlepp knows this firsthand as a trip more than 15 years ago inspired the opening of The Hayloft north of Ashley.

"It was a trip to Texas that was the inspiration for the idea," says Schlepp, who owns The Hayloft. "We stayed in a barn hayloft that has a kitchen and horses downstairs."

Now, Scott and his wife, Ermalene, along with family and countless volunteers, host, produce and feed hundreds of people for five nights of tremendous theater in southcentral North Dakota.

The Hayloft began as a hunting lodge, but in 2007 Scott started to think about what else The Hayloft could be. As he was pondering the future of The Hayloft, Scott knew he wanted something the community could enjoy.

"I kept thinking about what more to do for The Hayloft and thought, 'Let's try to do a play and see how that works,'" Scott says.

Scott's idea flourished, and the first production at The Hayloft was standing room only. Since that first play, "A Shootist," The Hayloft's productions have grown. With the success of the play, Scott kept thinking about how to improve and continue the productions.

A trip to Pierre, S.D., sparked another idea for Scott.

The community has supported this endeavor from the beginning by volunteering and with monetary donations, in return, Scott knew he needed to showcase the support in some way.

"I went to a play in Pierre, and they had their sponsors listed in a booklet," he says. This became an integral part of showing the community support of The Hayloft.

Scott, Ermalene and their family wear many hats when it comes to The Hayloft, serving as producers, production staff, costume designers and more. Scott heads up the production department by choosing the play, gathering the cast and practicing for the big nights.

"When I am working on picking a play for the year, I consider who would be good for which part," Scott says.

He has had over 100 people perform on his stage

"We used to run a restaurant, and we missed the people. We needed something where people could come to us, and this was it. We enjoy the people."

– Scott Schlepp

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over the years, and they always want to come back. With a cast from 13 to 75 years old, one of Scott's favorite parts about the summer shows are the practices and seeing the evolution of the cast. He says he has had generations perform on his stage. Ermalene sometimes finds herself sewing a new piece for a cast member, but Scott says they've amassed quite the costume collection over the years.

"It has been a community building thing," Scott says.

From costumes to equipment for the shows, the community has been a large contributor to The Hayloft for the Schlepps. He says they have learned things from people that have helped them be successful in aspects such as sound and lighting. His children and grandchildren help at The Hayloft throughout the summer as well, whether helping with concession food or selling items.

This year's opening night will be on July 22 for "Witchapalooza." All the plays at The Hayloft are family friendly, and this play is a 75-minute comedy. The five nights of shows will begin with a dinner theater July 22 and 23, with a meal catered by the Ashley Country Club. Additional, play only performances will be July 24-26. For more details and information, call Scott at 701-288-3759 or visit The Hayloft on Facebook or thehayloftmc.com. ⚡



Many community members have been on The Hayloft stage performing in plays.



The Hayloft presents **"Witchapalooza"!**

July 22-26

Join us for dinner theater July 22 and 23. Dinner will start at 6 p.m. and will be catered by the Ashley County Club.

Play only performances will be July 24 and 25 at 6 p.m. A manatee performance will be at 2 p.m. on July 26.

For more information and to purchase tickets, call Scott at 701-288-3759 or visit The Hayloft on Facebook or thehayloftmc.com.

MANAGER'S MESSAGE:

How power gets to you



Travis Kupper

Co-General Manager/CEO

Every time we flip a switch, we often take for granted the complex journey electricity travels – from generation to transmission – before it lights our homes and powers our lives. Have you ever wondered how the electricity that powers your home travels from generation plants to your outlets? Understanding this journey can deepen your appreciation for the reliable service we strive to provide. Here's a more detailed look at how power reaches you:

Employees at KEM Electric Cooperative are committed to providing you with reliable service. In the event of outages, they work diligently to assess the situation and restore power quickly. We use technology to pinpoint issues and prioritize repairs, focusing first on critical services and areas with the most members affected.

Understanding how power is delivered allows you to appreciate the complexities of our system and the importance of maintaining it. We encourage you to ask questions, share concerns and participate in our in-person events. ⚡



Generation

Electricity is produced at power plants using various resources, including coal, natural gas, nuclear and renewable sources, such as wind, solar and hydro. Each source plays a vital role in creating a balanced energy mix that meets our communities' needs, while keeping a reliable source of energy for our membership.

Transmission

After generation, electricity enters the high-voltage transmission system. These large towers carry electricity over long distances to minimize energy loss. Our regional grid connects multiple power plants and allows for a reliable flow of electricity, helping to balance supply and demand.

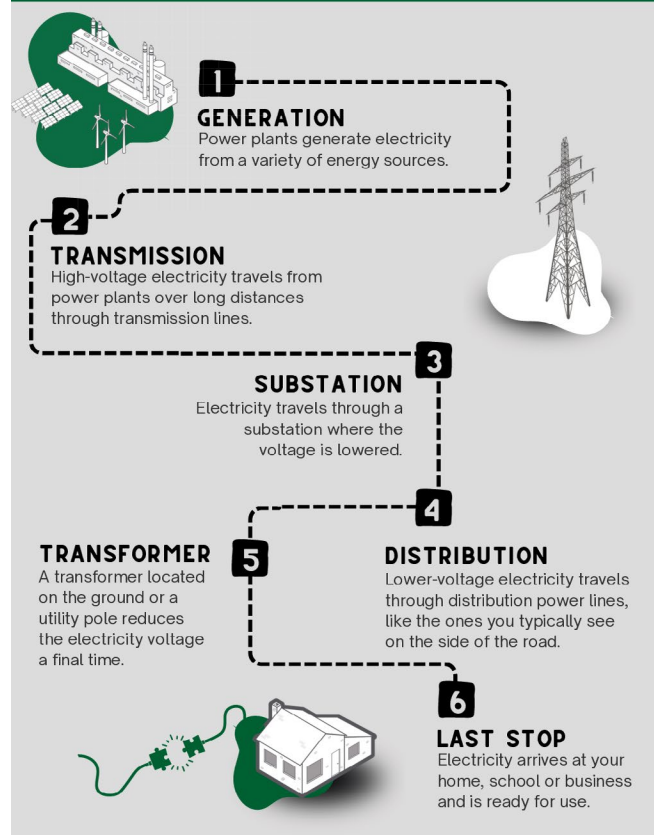
Substation transformation

Once the electricity arrives at substations, it undergoes a transformation. Here, the high-voltage electricity is stepped down to a lower voltage suitable for distribution. Our substations are equipped with advanced technology that monitors the flow of electricity and ensures it meets safety standards. Additionally, this technology allows efficiency during outages by allowing access from remote sites to help restore power.

Distribution network

From substations, electricity travels through a network of distribution lines. This system is designed to deliver power directly to homes and businesses in our service area. Our dedicated teams regularly inspect and maintain these lines, ensuring they remain safe and efficient.

CRITICAL CONNECTIONS



MESSAGE FROM BASIN ELECTRIC:

A year of growth, innovation and resilience

BY BASIN ELECTRIC POWER COOPERATIVE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND GENERAL MANAGER TODD BRICKHOUSE
AND BOARD PRESIDENT WAYNE PELTIER

Basin Electric Power Cooperative continues to adapt to challenges, while ensuring reliability and affordability for its members. In 2024, growth continued across Basin Electric's service territory, with the 2025-34 financial forecast showing the cooperative's projected load growth over the next 10 years is expected to reach 3% – significantly higher than the national average of less than 1%.

To meet this demand, Basin Electric's 2025-34 financial forecast is showing significant infrastructure investments of nearly \$8 billion in projected capital expenditures over the next decade, nearly doubling its balance sheet. This figure is anticipated to increase with future iterations of the financial forecasts.

Strategic investments

With rapid growth, Basin Electric has taken proactive steps to expand its generation and transmission capacity. In 2024, the cooperative continued making significant investments through major capital projects and additional strategic investments across its system. These investments support long-term system resilience, enhance grid reliability and accommodate increasing energy demand. Several notable projects and developments include:

- **Dynamic Line Rating (DLR) Technology:** Installed DLR technology to enhance grid reliability and optimize transmission capacity in northwestern North Dakota.
- **Leland Olds Station Substation:** A new 345-kilovolt (kV) substation, one of Basin Electric's largest, is under construction near Stanton, with completion expected by this summer.
- **Pioneer Generation Station Phase IV:** Progressing toward an additional 580 megawatts (MW) of capacity by 2025 to support load growth and grid stability in the Bakken region.
- **Roundup to Kummer Ridge transmission line:** A 33-mile, 345-kV transmission line was energized in December 2024, five months ahead of schedule, enhancing grid reliability and reducing congestion.
- **Bison Generation Station:** Basin Electric spent 2024 planning its next major baseload generation facility, the Bison Generation Station, which was approved by the board of directors in January. This \$4 billion, 1,470-MW natural gas facility near Epping will be Basin Electric's largest solely owned power plant. It is expected to begin operations in 2030.



President **Wayne Peltier**, left, and CEO and General Manager **Todd Brickhouse** held lead Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

Carbon capture and environmental stewardship

Basin Electric continues to lead the nation in CO₂ capture and storage. In February 2024, the Great Plains CO₂ Sequestration Project went into service, with Dakota Gasification Company capturing and sequestering additional CO₂ via permanent geologic storage reservoirs adjacent to the plant. The facility reached a milestone in August 2024 by sequestering over 1 million metric tons of CO₂.

In November 2024, Basin Electric updated its sustainability report, showcasing the cooperative's commitment to reliable, affordable and sustainable energy, environmental stewardship and member-focused governance.

Regulatory challenges and advocacy

Basin Electric remains committed to defending its all-of-the-above energy strategy, ensuring reliable,

affordable power for members by prioritizing dispatchable resources, such as coal and natural gas alongside wind and solar.

The Environmental Protection Agency's regulatory overreach continued to threaten reliability, making it critical to advocate for policies that support dispatchable resources.

In 2024, Basin Electric strengthened partnerships with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the other generation and transmission entities, and industry allies to challenge regulatory threats while continuing to serve reliable power to its members.

Looking ahead

Basin Electric remains focused on providing reliable, affordable and sustainable power for its

members. Through strategic investments, thoughtful decisions and regulatory advocacy, the cooperative will continue to adapt, innovate and invest to ensure long-term success. ⚡

Basin Electric's mission: *Basin Electric is a safe, environmentally responsible cooperative that provides reliable, affordable power, products and services to sustain the quality of life for its member-owners across rural America.*

Editor's note: *Basin Electric Power Cooperative supplies much of the power distributed to KEM Electric Cooperative members throughout the service area. We asked Todd Brickhouse and Wayne Peltier to update our members on what is happening at Basin Electric.*

SAFETY STARTS WITH ME: Tips to reduce wildfire risks

While much needed rainfall has brought relief to many of our drought-impacted areas and reduced the immediate risk of wildfires, KEM Electric Cooperative remains committed to fire mitigation. Weather conditions can change quickly, and we prioritize taking precautions to ensure safety for our employees, members and communities.

"As we work across the service territory, we are equipped with fire mitigation equipment," says Tyler Jacob, a journeyman lineworker. "This equipment includes a water tank and fire extinguisher on each co-op vehicle."

Cooperative employees are also briefed with the fire mitigation plan to ensure they can respond accurately to an emergency while working in the field. Through regular vegetation management, grid maintenance and hardening practices, KEM Electric is proactively working to reduce risks and improve the reliability of our local system.

As a member of KEM Electric, there are steps you can take to prevent wildfires as well.

- **Follow local fire regulations.** Always check for burn bans or restrictions in your area before burning anything or using open flames outdoors.
- **Don't burn on windy days.** Avoid outdoor burning when it's windy or dry, as embers can easily spread and ignite surrounding areas.
- **Use equipment safely.** Tools like lawnmowers or chainsaws can spark fires. Use them during cooler times of the day and keep them in good working condition.



- **Clear vegetation and debris.** Maintain a defensible space around your home by removing dry leaves, dead branches and other flammable materials.
- **Properly extinguish campfires.** Always douse your campfire with water, stir the ashes and ensure everything is cool to the touch before leaving the area.

Let's all work together to make this summer memorable and do what we can to ensure safety across our service area. ⚡

MESSAGE FROM OPERATIONS:

Lineworkers attend Hotline School



Dale Nagel

*Chief of Staff/
Line Superintendent*

Each day, lineworkers come face-to-face with work that may potentially be hazardous, such as working on “hot” or energized power lines. Continuing education and training opportunities help the lineworkers at KEM Electric Cooperative be prepared to face situations that may arise in the field. The North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC) hosts an annual Hotline School to ensure lineworkers are prepared

to work in energized power line situations and learn new techniques.

Earlier this summer, two of KEM Electric’s lineworkers attended the hotline training, apprentice lineworker Nick Nieuwsma and Linton area foreman Kevin Horner. Horner attended the training to assist as

an instructor. During the two-day course, lineworkers rotated through hands-on training simulations that help enhance their skills of working on energized power lines.

Being able to work on energized power lines helps prevent electrical service interruption to members during routine maintenance and new construction when possible. Training lineworkers with these skills also allows them to work safely and diligently during these situations. Having lineworkers participate in training opportunities helps familiarize them with new equipment, industry changes and keeps their skills up to date.

Safety remains our top priority at KEM Electric. To ensure our employees possess the knowledge and training to keep themselves, our team, members and communities safely powered, we are fortunate to have access to training opportunities like Hotline School through NDAREC. ⚡

Apprentice lineworker **Nick Nieuwsma** (right) engages in a hotline simulation.



Linton Area Foreman **Kevin Horner** (right) volunteered as an instructor for the two-day training.





Members were welcome to visit booths to learn more about cooperative programs and initiatives.

MESSAGE FROM MEMBER RELATIONS:

Members gather for 2025 Annual Meeting

KEM Electric Cooperative members and guests gathered in Linton at the Linton Civic Center for KEM Electric's Annual Meeting on June 10. Upon arrival, participants were welcomed and received an appreciation gift. Before the meeting began, folks enjoyed coffee and kuchen and could visit the operations and safety booth to register for an additional prize and learn about upcoming projects and safety initiatives.

As the business meeting began, KEM Electric Chairman Victor J. Wald welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the Annual Meeting. Linton High School students Emma Sanders and Alexis Vetter led the membership in the national anthem, while the American Legion Post No. 54 of Linton presented the U.S. and N.D. flags. The membership voted to fill the board positions from District 3 and District-at-Large. Neil Meidinger from Zeeland was reelected to represent District 3. Todd Schnabel from Lehr was elected to represent the District-at-Large position. Additionally, the membership voted to approve the 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes and a bylaw amendment.

Members listened to cooperative updates from Co-General Managers/CEOs Travis Kupper and Jason Bentz and Chief Financial Officer Alex Craigmile. Department and program updates were also provided by Chief of Staff/Line Superintendent Dale Nagel and Manager of Member Relations Marcy Sanders. Susan

Meidinger, vice chairperson of the Operation Round Up board, highlighted the charitable foundation's 2024 giving.

Students who received scholarships from KEM Electric, as well as the Youth Tour recipient, Addyson Erbele, were recognized. Students who were awarded KEM Electric's Touchstone Energy® Student of the Month were also highlighted. Additionally, KEM Electric awarded two \$500 Luck-of-the-Draw scholarships to Lillian Mittleider from Kidder County High School and Lawson Nieuwsma from Strasburg High School.

Tom Bair, KEM Electric's legal counsel, who has retired, was also recognized during the meeting for his 40 years of dedication to the board of directors and cooperative.

After the business meeting, members enjoyed a complimentary meal made by Deb Schumacher and were awarded door prizes. Members also enjoyed cake and ice cream celebrating Bair's retirement. Emmons County 4-H Club Prairie Rascals assisted members and guests with food, drinks and cleanup.

The board of directors, co-general managers and staff at KEM Electric wish to thank members for participating in the annual meeting of the membership and look forward to continue serving you and seeing you at future membership events. ⚡

KEM ELECTRIC BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS: **APRIL 22**

The meeting of the board of directors of KEM Electric Cooperative was held on April 22 in Linton. The meeting was called to order at 9:38 a.m. by Chairman Victor Wald. A quorum was present. Also present were co-General Managers/CEOs Travis Kupper and Jason Bentz, Legal Counsel Tom Bair, Chief of Staff/Line Superintendent Dale Nagel, Chief Financial Officer Alex Craigmile and Executive Assistant Connie Hill.

Consent agenda: The consent agenda was approved as presented.

Strategic items: Bentz and Kupper presented the co-general managers' report, which included updates on federal issues, North Dakota managers group and others. Several additional Basin Electric Power Cooperative board documents were available for review.

Department reports: Craigmile provided the financial report. Nagel provided a department report,

which included safety training and projects on which the line crews are working. Sanders provided a written department report, which included annual meeting information and May local pages. Chief Information Officer Charlie Dunbar provided a report for the board to review. Bair provided an update on policy review.

Action items: Action items were discussed and resolved.

Discussion/general information: The board discussed upcoming meetings and other information.

Executive session: The board entered an executive session.

The meeting concluded with an adjournment. Secretary-Treasurer Carter Vander Wal certified the accuracy of the minutes.

Next meeting date: The next meeting is at 9:30 a.m. on July 29 in Linton. If you wish to be placed on the agenda, please call the office. ☎

KX/Co-op Day at the North Dakota State Fair

**Wednesday, July 23
10 a.m. to 3 p.m. CT**

Stop by for free breakfast, prizes, cash drawings and an ice cream social. Stop by our office for coupons to save on gate and rodeo admission, rides and more!



KEM ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC.

DIRECTORS:

Victor Wald, Chairman Napoleon
Carmen Essig, Vice Chairman Lehr
Carter Vander Wal, Sec.-Treas. Pollock
Dean Dewald, Director Dawson
John R. Beck, Director Linton
Neil Meidinger, Director Zeeland
Todd Schnabel, Director-at-large Lehr

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

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday through Friday,
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Website: kemelectric.com
Email address: info@kemelectric.com

FIND US ON:

