

## Manager's message: Stay in the Know



At KEM Electric, we are constantly striving to improve our operational efficiency so we can provide the most reliable electric service

possible for our consumer-members (that's you!).

We rely on data for nearly every aspect of our operations, which is why we need your help. By making sure we have your most accurate and complete contact information, we can continue to provide the high level of service that you expect and deserve. Accurate information enables us to improve customer service and enhance communications for reporting and repairing outages. It also allows co-op members to receive information about other important programs, events and activities.

Up-to-date contact information can potentially speed up the power

restoration process during an outage. For example, the phone number you provide is linked to your service address to our outage management system. This means when you call to report an outage, our system recognizes your phone number and matches it with your account location. Accurate information helps our outage management system predict the location and possible cause of an outage, making it easier for our crews to correct the problem.

While we always do our best to maintain service, we occasionally plan outages to update, repair or replace equipment. In these instances, we can provide advance notification to affected members through automated phone messages if we have your updated contact information and communication preferences.

Keeping the co-op updated with your information also helps us when there's a question about energy use or billing. Emails and text messages are also used to notify registered members of any changes in co-op event details. In

addition, discrepancies on your account can be taken care of promptly if KEM Electric has accurate account information.

Many of you have been members of the co-op for years, and it's likely that your account information hasn't been updated for some time. We recognize that many members now use a cell phone as their primary phone service, and we might not have that number in our system.

I want to emphasize that in providing your contact information to the co-op, we will never share this information with any third parties. It is only used by KEM to send important information to you. Please take a moment to confirm or update your contact information by contacting our office. By doing so, you will be helping us improve service and efficiency so we can better serve you and all members of the co-op. ⚡

Travis Kupper

## Linemen attend AT&S Conference

The North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives hosted its 59th Annual REC Apprenticeship Training and Safety Conference on January 11-13, 2023 in Bismarck, ND. The conference is sponsored by the NDAREC AT&S program, with cooperation from the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship.

The conference drew representatives of NDAREC member-cooperatives, students at the Bismarck State

College line worker program and the electric industry for classroom sessions, equipment evaluations and award ceremonies. Training's topics included DOT updates, protective grounding, lineman safety and tool training, transformer connections, and conducting a thorough accident investigation, and more. "Participants increase their knowledge and skills of the trade by attending the Apprenticeship, Training & Safety conference and, in turn improve the

safety, resilience and reliability of the electrical system which directly impacts the quality of life for our members." said Christina Roemmich, Director of the safety services for NDAREC. During the awards banquet, Kirk Praus received his journeyman lineman certificate and KEM Electric was recognized as a successful participant in the Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program and presented the Safety Performance award. ⚡

### OFFICERS

Chair.....Victor "Chuck" Wald  
Vice Chair..... John Beck  
Secretary-Treasurer.....Carter Vander Wal

### DIRECTORS:

Dean Dewald • Dean Hummel  
Carmen Essig • Neil Meidinger

### CO-GENERAL MANAGERS/CEOS:

Travis Kupper  
Jason Bentz

# Safety starts with ME: Kirk Praus



Kirk Praus  
Journeyman Lineman  
KEM Electric

SAFETY STARTS  
WITH  
**ME**

Power surges can be frustrating, but typically happen unexpectedly and in order to reduce the member's risk of damage. It is important to be knowledgeable and prepare ahead of time if and when a power surge does strike.

"A power surge is typically caused by lightning, changes in electrical loads, faulty wiring, or damaged powerlines," said Kirk Praus, KEM Electric Cooperative's journeyman lineman. "Regardless of the cause, a power surge can cause significant damage to electronic devices and equipment in your home," said Praus.

## Common causes

Electrical overload happens when devices or appliances are plugged into an outlet that cannot handle that amount of voltage, or if multiple devices are plugged in at the same time through an extension cord. If power surges are a reoccurring event in your house due to electrical

overload, it is time to call a certified electrician to evaluate your home's circuits and electrical needs.

Faulty wiring in a home is another cause of power surges. Signs of a faulty wire include visible burns on outlets, buzzing sounds from outlets or frequently tripped circuit breakers. "If you notice these signs, it may be time for an electrical wiring repair or update," said Praus.

A quick surge of electricity may also occur after KEM restores the power after an outage. In the case of a power outage, it is important to unplug any sensitive devices around your home then wait to plug them back in after power is restored.

## Protect electronics in your home-

There are two other ways in which you can save the longevity of devices in your home.

**Point-of-use surge protection devices-** power strips can protect your devices during most power surges. Not all power strips, however, include surge protection. So, before buying a power strip, read the packaging and do not overload the power strip with too many devices.

**Whole-home surge protection-** This can protect your home from more powerful power surges. These are connected to your home's service panel and include features like thermal fuses and notification capabilities to inform when a device has been impacted by a surge. The price of this device varies and should be connected by a licensed electrician. ⚡

# Interested in becoming a director?

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

If you would like to place your name on the ballot, pick up a petition at the KEM office or find online at KEMElectric.com. Petitions become available on January 31, 2023. Petitions must be returned to the cooperative office no later than May 2nd, 2023. ⚡

# Members receive Harvest Bowl Award

March is National Agriculture Month, and during the month, KEM Electric Cooperative salutes our farmers and ranchers who make agriculture one of North Dakota's top industries.

North Dakota State University (NDSU) also acknowledges the agricultural impact on the state and recognizes leading agriculturalists through the NDSU Harvest Bowl. "The Harvest Bowl is a weekend event, where we are able to recognize agriculture and athletics, and the connection between," said Duane Hauck, NDSU Harvest Bowl chair.

During this event, five KEM Electric Cooperative members were recognized.

To read more about this year's Harvest Bowl winners, check out our local pages in this month's *North Dakota Living* magazine. ⚡

## SAVE THE DATE

JOIN KEM ELECTRIC FOR YOUR ANNUAL MEETING ON

THURSDAY, JUNE 15, 2023  
NAPOLEON, NORTH DAKOTA

MORE INFORMATION WILL FOLLOW.



**POWER**  
FOR GENERATIONS