

## **Co-ops call for member action**

BY CHRIS BAUMGARTNER



**Baumgartner**

**K**EM Electric Cooperative is concerned about the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) abandonment of an "all-of-the-above" energy strategy for a new, "all-but-one" approach that effectively removes coal from the nation's fuel mix in the future, and will drive up electric rates for our members.

Electric co-ops have historically pursued "all-of-the-above" by spending billions on innovative, clean and efficient technologies.

But a new policy, proposed by the EPA, sets stringent limits on carbon dioxide emissions from future coal or natural gas plants. Even worse, the new standards are impossible to meet with existing technology.

For several years, cooperatives – including KEM Electric Cooperative's power provider, Basin Electric Power Cooperative – have tested carbon capture and storage (CCS) as a way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Unfortunately, the technology doesn't make financial sense. It has never been used at a commercial scale at a power plant over a prolonged period to demonstrate its viability or cost. In a 2012 Congressional Budget Office report, engineers estimate it would increase the cost of producing electricity from coal-based plants by 75 percent.

The EPA's switch to an all-but-one energy approach would limit access to a plentiful and affordable resource. And now is not the time to gamble with the economic well-being of future generations or our nation's economy.

Historically, the price of coal remains affordable and relatively stable. The U.S. Energy Information Agency reports the United States has 236 years remaining of recoverable coal reserves. Coal generates 37 percent of the nation's electricity – our biggest energy source by far.

And while history offers important lessons, sometimes it's best to learn from those

experiences and avoid harmful policies. We saw this all-but-one approach in 1978 when Congress passed the ill-conceived Power Plant and Industrial Fuel Use Act. Never heard of it? Few have, but for several years the government banned natural gas for power generation. Yes, natural gas – the fuel source being sold to the nation today as a cleaner fuel option. With gas off the table, electric co-ops were forced to choose between building coal or nuclear plants.

Back then, co-ops were in the midst of a major power plant building cycle. With few options, they invested heavily in coal-based generating plants in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Thankfully, Congress repealed its mistake, but not for nine years.

Now is the time for electric cooperative members to join their voices together to send a clear message: Please remember consumers as you are writing these regulations.

You can help by visiting [www.Action.coop](http://www.Action.coop) today and sending a comment to the EPA.

While these regulations are technical, the potential increase in electric rates is something we take personally because we know it's difficult to make ends meet month-to-month. We know the tough choices you face – we all face – in trying to live on a budget. That's what sets cooperatives apart from other utilities and that's why we must stick together. ■

### **MARCH 2014 IN THIS ISSUE**

- Annual meeting date set
- When to pull the plug
- Board highlights
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# ATTEND **YOUR** ANNUAL MEETING!

**JUNE**

**19**

**2014**

**KEM Electric Cooperative  
2014 annual meeting  
Thursday, June 19, 2014  
Linton Public School, Linton**

## ***Interested in becoming a director?***

If you are interested in becoming a director for KEM Electric Cooperative, you must understand the process for filing a petition.

KEM Electric Cooperative's 2014 annual meeting will be held June 19 at the Linton Public School. This year, the director seats up for election are those of Victor J. Wald in District 4, Dean Dewald in District 5 and Carmen Essig in an at large position.

KEM Electric Cooperative is overseen by a seven-member board of directors which 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, Milton Brandner; District 4, Victor J. Wald; District 5, Dean Dewald; at-large director, Dean Hummel; and at-large director, Carmen Essig.

Below is the section of the bylaws pertaining to filing a petition for a director 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 25 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. ■

### ***Important dates:***

***Feb. 5: Earliest day to begin circulating petition***

***May 5: Last date for nomination by petition***

***June 19: Annual meeting***



*District 1*  
**John Beck**



*District 2*  
**Carter Vander Wal**



*District 3*  
**Milton Brandner**



*District 4*  
**Victor J. Wald**



*District 5*  
**Dean Dewald**



*At-large director*  
**Dean Hummel**



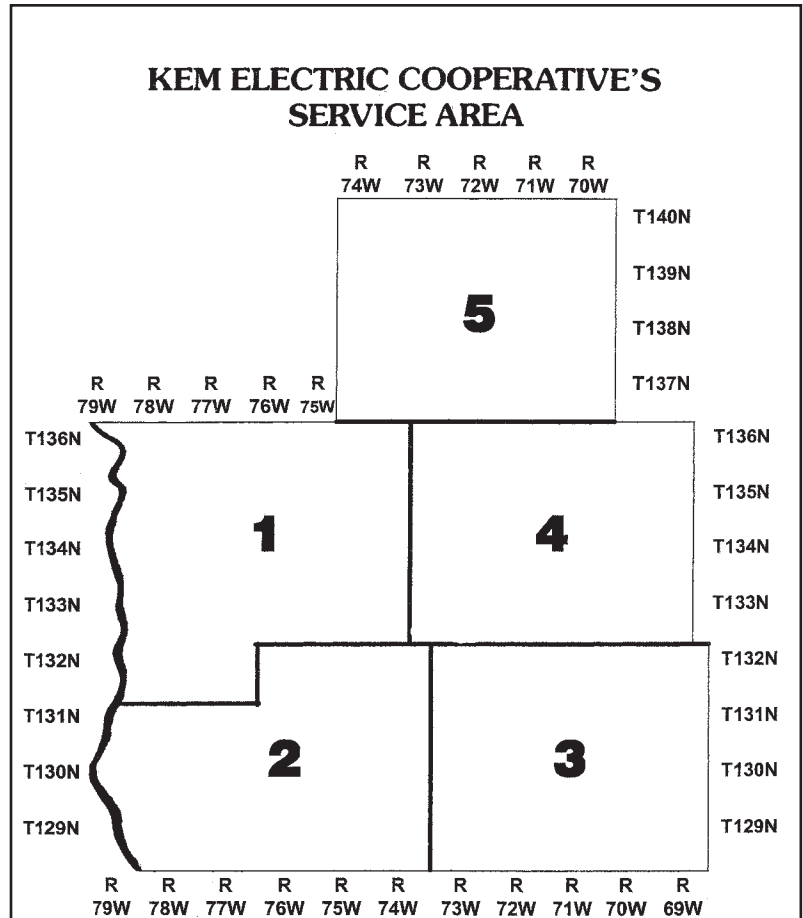
*At-large director*  
**Carmen Essig**

## **Directors represent the members**

**K**EM Electric Cooperative is overseen by a seven-member board of directors elected by you – the members. During the annual meeting each year, KEM Electric Cooperative member elect fellow members to represent them on the board of directors.

If you are interested in serving on the board of directors, here are some pointers:

- Directors devote a certain amount of time the cooperative. At a minimum, a director attends monthly board meetings.
- An understanding of members' expectations, industry issues and how a cooperative functions is vital. To help directors with their responsibilities, training is offered through the cooperative's statewide association. Courses cover director duties and liabilities; understanding the electric industry; board roles and relationships; strategic planning ;and financial decision-making. ■



### **Director positions in 2014 election include:**



*District 4*  
**Victor J. Wald**



*At-large*  
**Carmen Essig**



*District 5*  
**Dean Dewald**



the garage. Instead, say goodbye and recycle the energy-guzzler.

Was your dishwasher built before 1994? If so, you're paying an extra \$40 a year on your utility bills compared to neighbors with an Energy Star-qualified model.

PHOTOS BY LAYN MUDDER

## When to pull the plug

BY LUANN DART

**S**aying goodbye to an old friend can be daunting. But pulling the plug on an outdated refrigerator or dishwasher might save you money; new appliances are often considerably more energy-efficient.

A new refrigerator consumes 75 percent less energy than a 1970s model. Replace a vintage clothes washer and save \$60 on utility bills and nearly 5,000 gallons of water a year, according to the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers. Not every new appliance is a good bet; always look for the ENERGY STAR label. It signals energy-efficient models.

Ready to save? Walk through your home to find opportunities to pull the plug!

### Cleaning kitchen, laundry costs

In the laundry room, a full-sized Energy Star-certified clothes washer uses 15 gallons of water per load, compared to the 23 gallons used by a standard machine. During the

machine's lifetime, this saves 27,000 gallons of water.

Replace your kitchen's classic refrigerator with an Energy Star-certified model to save between \$200 and \$1,100 in lifetime energy costs. Today's average refrigerator uses less energy than a continually lit 60-watt light bulb. Resist the urge to move the old refrigerator to the basement or

### Screen savings

Televisions might be a little more baffling. As screen sizes increase, energy consumption may also rise. You can still be a savvy shopper. Energy Star-certified TVs are about 25 percent more efficient than conventional models. LED screens use 20 percent less energy than LCD TVs.

Once you purchase a TV, calibrate it by adjusting the contrast and brightness to a moderate level. By default, new televisions are set to

		
<b>Refrigerator</b> Typical wattage – 725 <b>New vs. old:</b> Save more than \$100 a year <b>Way to save:</b> Adjust the temperature settings	<b>Clothes washer</b> Typical wattage – 350-500 <b>New vs. old:</b> Save more than \$100 a year <b>Way to save:</b> Use cold water when possible	<b>Dishwasher</b> Typical wattage – 1,200-2,400 <b>New vs. old:</b> Save \$40 a year <b>Way to save:</b> Set water heater temperature to 120 degrees

dynamic, high-contrast settings. This consumes more power than standard, lower-contrast settings.

### **Smart settings**

Attached to old appliances? You can still save with smart settings. For example, heating water creates the greatest expense when washing dishes or clothes. Set your water heater at 120 degrees and be sure your clothes washer or dishwasher is full whenever used.

Here are a few other ways to save without buying new appliances:

**NOT TOO COOL FOOD:** In the kitchen, don't keep your refrigerator or freezer too cold. Recommended temperatures are 37 to 40 degrees for the fresh food compartment and 5 degrees for the freezer section.

**TOAST, DON'T ROAST:** Use toaster ovens or microwave ovens for small meals rather than your large stovetop or oven.

**AIR DRY DISHES:** Use the dishwasher's "eco" option or use a no-heat air dry feature. Scrape food pieces off the plates, rather than rinsing them.

**COLD CLOTHES:** In the laundry room, wash your clothes in cold water using cold-water detergents whenever possible. Adjust load settings for smaller loads.

**LOSE LINT:** Clean the lint screen in the dryer after every use to improve the dryer's efficiency.

For other tips on how to save energy, call KEM Electric Cooperative. Find out how little changes add up to big savings at [www.TogetherWeSave.com](http://www.TogetherWeSave.com).

*Sources: Energy Star, Consumer Electronics Association, Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers, U.S. Department of Energy, Natural Resources Defense Council*



**Kirk Praus** visits about the advantages of energy-efficient light bulbs during the ag show.

## **Co-ops appear at Agri-International**

Area cooperatives collaborated to share information at the 2014 KFYP Agri-International in Bismarck. Kirk Praus, member support technician, represented KEM Electric Cooperative during the show in February, sharing information energy-efficient products.

KEM Electric joined Basin Electric Power Cooperative, Capital Electric Cooperative, McLean Electric Cooperative, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative and Roughrider Electric Cooperative at the show.

The 37th annual Agri-International included nearly 400 booths during the farm show. One of the largest show attractions is the Living Ag Classroom, where approximately 1,300 students learned more about agriculture.

KEM Electric Cooperative is proud to be involved with events that promote agriculture in the area.



**Kirk Praus** represented KEM Electric Cooperative at the KFYP Agri-International in Bismarck.

# Understanding your home's electrical system

KEM Electric Cooperative delivers safe, reliable electricity to our homes to keep us warm, cook our food or recharge our cell phones. We also rely on our home's electrical system to bring us power when and where we need it.

Understanding the basics of your home's electrical system will help you maintain it and stay safe, too.

Electricity enters your home from a series of outdoor power lines or an underground connection. A typical service consists of two, 120-volt wires and one neutral wire that deliver power to lights and appliances around the home.

The 120-volt circuits use one phase of the electrical service to power standard home appliances. However, certain larger appliances such as water heaters, stoves or clothes dryers require a 240-volt circuit, which is created using both 120-volt wires and the neutral wire.

The electric meter is typically mounted where electricity enters your home. This device is used to measure the amount of electricity consumed in your home. The meter is monitored by your electric cooperative and is protected by law – tampering with it is both extremely dangerous and illegal.

The electrical service panel is the central distribution point for delivering electricity to switches, outlets and appliances throughout the house. Located near the electric meter, the service panel is equipped with breakers or fuses that shut off power to the circuits if an electrical system failure occurs.

Grounding is the method used to connect an electrical system to the earth with a wire.

Grounding adds critical protection against electric shock and electrocution by using a grounding rod to provide



a third path for conducting electricity in the event of a short circuit or an overload. Grounding will help protect the person working on the system, the system itself, and any appliances and equipment that are connected to the system.

Grounded outlets have a round hole for the grounding conductor in addition to the two vertical slots. The circle slot is connected to a ground wire. Grounded outlets are required to be installed in all modern homes today. If your home does not have grounded

outlets, then your electrical system is likely missing critical safety features. Consult an electrician about updating your home.

## **Electrical service panel**

Every home has a service panel that distributes electricity to switches, outlets and appliances. The service panel is usually found in the basement, garage or utility area.

When a short or overload shuts down power to a circuit, this is where you can restore the flow. It is also where you

will shut down power to a circuit before starting a project or repair.

Mark each fuse or breaker with a label specifically indicating which location it serves.

### **Fuses and circuit breakers**

All service panels are equipped with fuses or circuit breakers that protect the wires in each circuit from overheating and causing a fire. In general, older service panels use fuses, while more modern systems rely on circuit breakers.

Fuses and circuit breakers are safety devices that help prevent overloading of your home electrical system and prevent fires. They stop the electrical current if it exceeds the safe level for some portion of your home electrical system.

### **Fuses**

Service panels installed before 1965 use fuses to protect each individual circuit. Early fuses were commonly used in 30- and 60-amp service panels. Today, new homes require 100- to 200-amp service panels in order to provide proper protection.

There are several different types of fuses, and picking the right one may seem confusing at first. Each fuse is marked with a code, which provides information about the type of base and the degree of time delay, if any.

If your home still uses fuses, it may be time for a system upgrade.

### **Instructions for replacing fuses:**

Once a fuse is blown, it must be unscrewed and thrown away. When replacing fuses in your service panel:

- Always make sure that the replacement fuse matches the amperage rating of the circuit.
- Never replace a fuse with one that has a larger amperage rating. This is a dangerous practice and a serious fire hazard.
- Before changing a fuse, unplug anything on that circuit.

### **Circuit breakers**

All newer homes are protected by circuit breakers. Unlike a fuse that must be replaced when it blows, a

circuit breaker that has “tripped” can be mechanically reset to resume operations once the problem has been resolved. A tripped breaker is likely the result of too many appliances overloading the circuit and should be fixed immediately.

Sometimes a breaker may appear normal, but if you believe a circuit breaker has tripped, reset it.

### **Instructions for resetting a tripped breaker:**

- Unplug or turn off appliances in the room.
- Find your main breaker panel and open the cover.
- Locate the tripped breaker or blown fuse. A tripped circuit breaker will be in the off position or in a middle position between on and off.
- To reset the breaker, switch it to off position and then back to on. This may restore power to the room. If the problem continues, there may be more serious issues. Contact an electrician to diagnose the problem.

# Is it time for an upgrade?

Our dependence on electricity is increasing every day, and we are expecting more out of our home electrical systems.

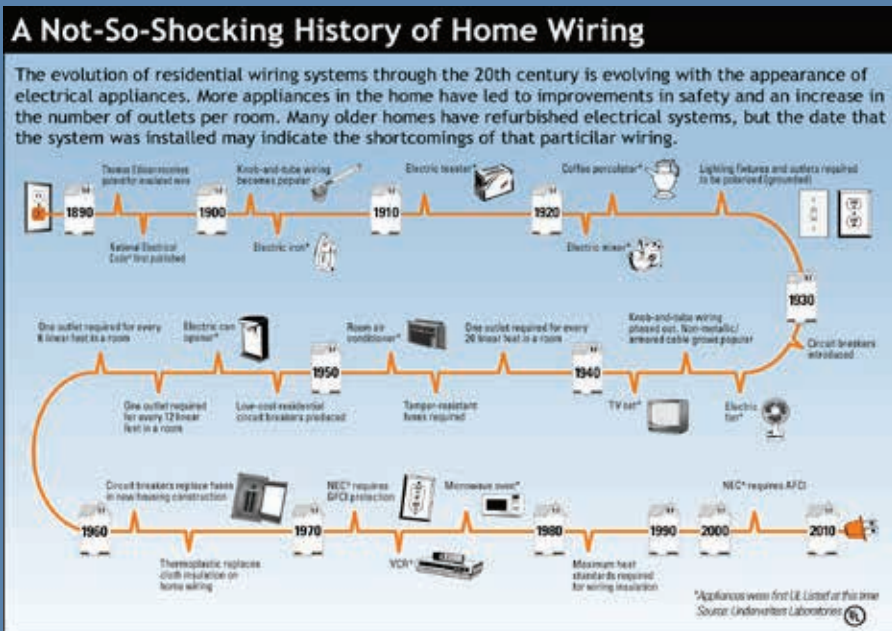
According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the average home in the United States is more than 37 years old. Many older homes were built with electrical systems and components which are no longer safe and may be considered as fire hazards. Fire and other electrical safety concerns may also arise due to aging, improper installation and alteration, or misuse. It is important to identify what type of wiring system is present in your home in order to properly identify and address potentially hazardous situations before they become critical.

The Electrical Safety Foundation International recommends that you have an electrical system inspection conducted if:

- Your home is 40 years old or older
- You purchase a previously owned home

- Your home has undergone a major renovation
- You have added major new appliances in the last 10 years

If you have questions about your electrical system, ask a licensed electrician to check the system.





## KEM Electric Cooperative Board meeting highlights

Jan. 28, 2014

- Approved the December board meeting minutes
- Heard department updates
- Heard reports on meetings attended
- Approved the special equipment summary for December
- Approved one estate retirement
- Heard Innovative Energy Alliance update
- Reviewed the mission statement
- Reviewed the storm emergency plan
- Signed the Basin Power Data Confidentiality Agreement
- Reviewed Policy No. 10-31 – Conflicts of Interest
- Reviewed and adopted the irrigation rate analysis
- Discussed the transmission outage

## THE MARATHON WATER HEATER

*will be the last water heater you'll ever buy!*



### FEATURES:

- Polybutene tank that is guaranteed not to leak, rust or corrode for as long as you own your home.
- One of the most efficient water heaters on the market.
- To save money, ask about placing your Marathon water heater on one of KEM Electric Cooperative's load-management programs.

**Call KEM Electric Cooperative**  
**701-254-4666**  
**800-472-2673**

## Be alert to scams



KEM Electric Cooperative wants to alert its members to a scam being directed at utility customers across the country. Customers have been targeted by scammers claiming to be a collections agent. The caller will impersonate the utility company, claiming the customer's utility bill is overdue and needs to be paid immediately. If refused, the scammer will threaten disconnection.

The National Information Solutions Cooperative, which develops and supports software and hardware for cooperatives from its headquarters in Mandan, has had a number of reports of this scam from its cooperative members across the country, and shares this list of generalizations that seem common

among these cases:

- Sometimes the scammers would have the account number and amount due. This information may have been obtained through some type of social engineering.
- Typically, a prepaid debit card number has been requested. In most cases, the scammer even provided a callback number in case a prepaid debit card was not immediately available.
- The caller ID number has been spoofed to look as if it is actually the utility company calling.
- Typically, commercial accounts have been targeted, as information may be easier to obtain.
- Several larger electric utilities have already been targeted.

KEM Electric Cooperative encourages all members to be aware of this scam. KEM Electric Cooperative does call those with delinquent accounts to make arrangements for payments, however those without delinquent accounts are not contacted. If you are unsure about the call, hang up and call KEM Electric Cooperative directly.

If you have any questions about this issue, feel free to contact the KEM Electric Cooperative. ■

## KEM ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC.

### DIRECTORS:

Dean Dewald, Chairman.....Dawson  
Victor Wald, Vice Chairman .....Napoleon  
Carter Vander Wal, Sec.-Treas. .... Pollock  
Carmen Essig, Director .....Lehr  
John Beck, Director.....Linton  
Dean Hummel, Director.....Hague  
Milton Brandner, Director .....Zeeland

### MANAGEMENT:

Don Franklund  
& Chris Baumgartner ..... Co-Managers  
Roberta Nagel .....Office Manager  
Bair Law Firm, Atty. .... Mandan  
HDR Engineers Inc.,  
Consulting Engr. ....Bismarck

**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: kem@kemelectric.com

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative