

The 1950s - The Decade of Transition

The second annual membership meeting was held June 6, 1950, at Bowdle, SD. Many rural residents now had electricity delivered to their farms and homes and the transition period from the construction phase to the operational phase of the cooperative was about to begin.

After much research and deliberation, a site had been selected and purchased in Ipswich for the new headquarters building, and an engineering firm was hired to draw up the plans. On July 24, 1950, a ground breaking ceremony was held in Ipswich.

December 23, 1950, marked the end of the contract construction period with the completion of three major line construction contracts, and the FEM distribution system now consisted of 1,027 miles of new lines. From the date of organization, a period of five years and 13 days, 2,114 miles of line had been constructed to serve the rural people of Faulk, Edmunds, and McPherson counties.

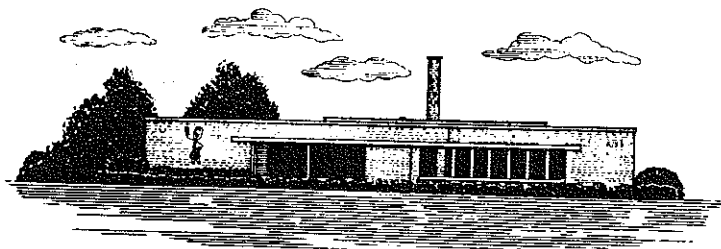
FEM Electric also had the distinction of serving the first electrically heated home in this part of South Dakota. After lengthy investigation, Ted and Frieda Martel of Long Lake installed electric heaters in their home in Long Lake in December of 1950.

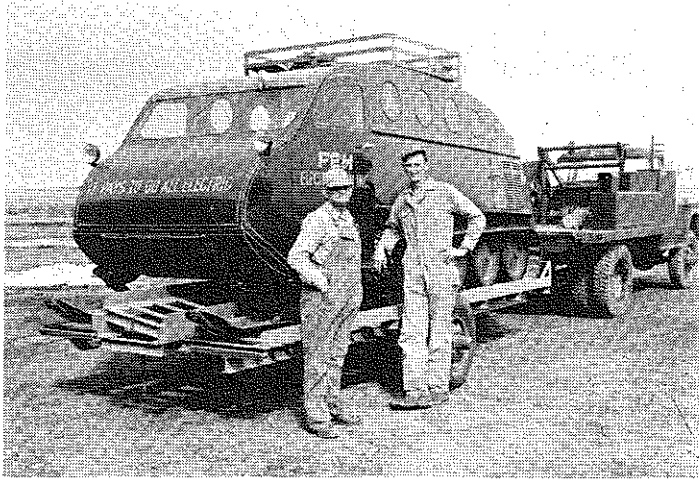
March 17, 1951, marks the dedication of the permanent headquarters building. Now that FEM was in the operational phase, many records were needed. Staking sheets, indicating all of the line hardware and its location, were made up for the plant accounts. More electric energy was being used by the members and larger payments were coming in each month.

Byron Jones, FEM Treasurer, presented the first prepayment to a representative of the Rural Electrification Administration at the annual meeting in Eureka on June 4, 1951. The \$50,000 advance payment established a cushion of credit against the payments due on our REA loans.

The first capital credits check was handed to Anton Malsom by FEM Manager A. W. Grage on June 10, 1959, at the annual membership meeting held at Bowdle. This distribution of patronage capital credits was for the years 1953 and 1954 with the issuance of \$26,000 in capital credits.

With the large size of our service territory, and the fact that it was difficult to get around on country roads with the small service trucks of the 1940s and 1950s, outpost stations were brought into the picture. The Eureka Warehouse was built in 1957 and served as a headquarters for FEM's outpost linemen and a storage facility for material.

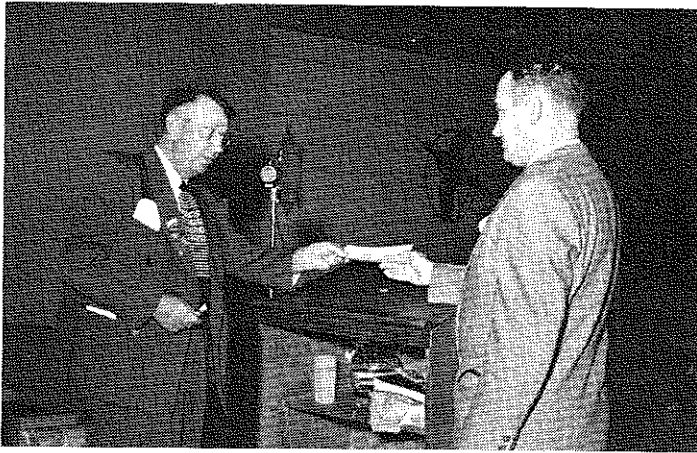




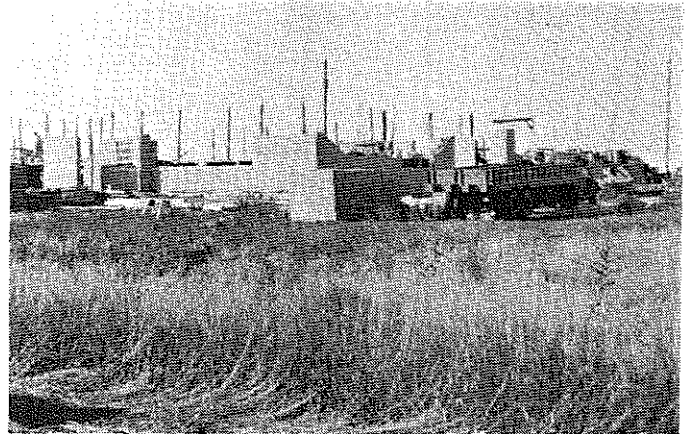
Merle Rose and Adam Krebs stand next to the "Bombar" a large snowmobile which can carry eight men. The Bombar was purchased in November of 1950 and was used by FEM until 1989 when it was sold for more than its original purchase price.



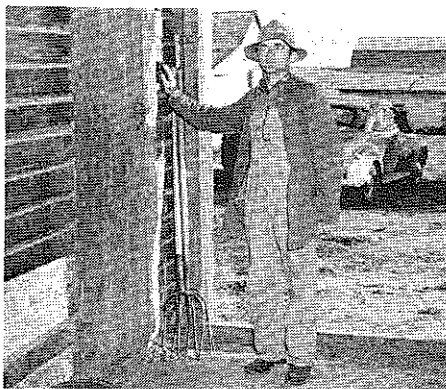
Ted Martel is shown enjoying the electric heat unit installed in his home in December of 1950. The costs of heating electrically were established in the FEM area by this first installation.



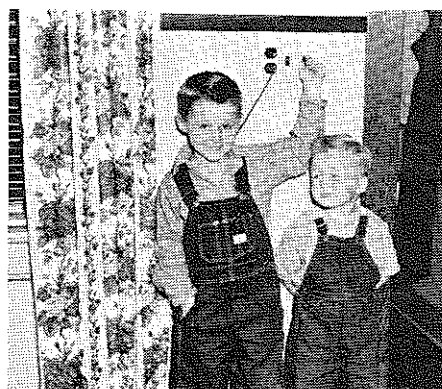
FEM Treasurer Byron Jones is shown presenting the first "prepayment" to an REA representative at the Eureka annual meeting held June 4, 1951.



The FEM Electric headquarters building in Ipswich during construction the fall of 1950. The formal dedication ceremony was held March 17, 1951.



The energizing of a work order to the Elmer Feiock farm near Leola, South Dakota on August 31, 1951, brought the number of FEM consumers to 2,000.



Wall outlets and light switches replaced ceiling fixtures and chains. Children have enjoyed "flipping the switch" ever since.



The Miss FEM contests held in Roscoe were very popular with their evening gown and swim suit competitions. Miss FEM of 1955, Bev Holsing, is shown here.