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Electronews

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FROM THE CEO

Youth Are Building a Brighter Tomorrow

Youth are the future of our cooperative — our future members, employees and trustees. They are also our future community builders, business owners, teachers and government leaders. Victory Electric understands how vital it is to help them develop leadership skills and educate them about their role as citizens.

Since the late 1950s, the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour (Youth Tour) has been doing just that by taking high school students from across the country to Washington, D.C. They join more than 1,000 other students in the nation's capital to learn about America's past by visiting historic monuments and touring some of the country's finest museums. Youth Tour delegates also

meet with their elected officials on Capitol Hill and learn about rural advocacy and how electric cooperatives make a difference in their communities.

Following a three-year hiatus because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Kansas Youth Tour delegation returned to D.C. this summer. Victory Electric selected **IZAIAH PEARCE**, an incoming senior at Bucklin High School, and **JACELYN HUELSKAMP**, an incoming senior at South Gray High School, for




Shane Laws

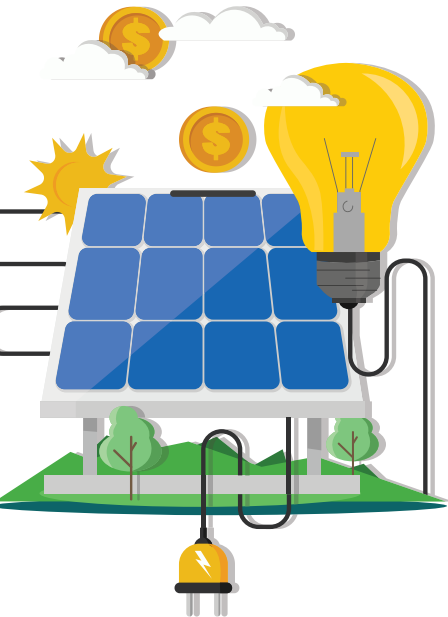
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ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Tip of the Month

Summer is a prime opportunity to enjoy the great outdoors. To reduce home energy use, avoid using your oven and use a grill instead. Not only will cooking outdoors eliminate the electricity used to power the stove, but it will also avoid raising the temperature inside your home, reducing the need for air conditioning or cooling. You can also avoid using the oven with tasty no-bake recipes. (Check out Page 20 in the magazine for no bake recipes this month.) **SOURCE: WWW.ENERGY.GOV**





VICTORY ANSWERS COMMON SOLAR QUESTIONS

As interest in rooftop residential solar systems increases, Victory Electric wants to partner with members who are interested in going solar, answer questions and provide reliable resources that will help them make informed decisions.

How Does a Rooftop Solar System Work?

Photovoltaic (PV) cells are the basic unit of a solar panel, and they convert sunlight to electricity. Sunlight hits solar panels and generates a direct current. The direct current flows to an inverter that converts it to alternating current, which then flows to the home's breaker box and is used to power appliances and electrical devices in the home. If the PV system generates more electricity than a home needs, the unused electricity is sent to the electric grid in a process known as net metering.

Where Do I Start?

- ▶ Do your research before you make any decisions. Start by talking to Victory Electric so we can explain the interconnection application process and net metering terms.
- ▶ Make your home as energy efficient as possible. Energy-efficient homes require less electricity in general and can save you money now and in the long term. If you decide to go solar, already having an energy-efficient home might enable you to buy a smaller PV system to meet your power needs.
- ▶ Have your roof inspected and make sure it is in good condition and can support solar panels, and complete any necessary roof repair or replacement before you install a PV system. A south-facing roof in an unshaded area is ideal for solar panel placement.

How Much Does Going Solar Cost?

The cost of installing a PV system varies depending on multiple factors, but it can be from \$10,000 to \$30,000 before rebates and tax credits. The solar payback period or return on investment also varies but may take up to 10 years or more. Federal and state tax credits are available if you own your solar system. If you lease solar panels, you generally are not eligible for tax credits, but other incentives may be available.

Will Solar Eliminate My Electric Bill?

The amount of energy residential rooftop systems can generate depends on the location, orientation, amount of shade and size of your system. In most cases, installing a solar system will not eliminate your electric bill. If your residential solar system is connected to the electric grid through Victory Electric or another electric utility, a monthly service availability charge still applies. This covers fixed costs associated with maintaining the electric grid and providing power to draw from when a member's electricity usage exceeds their solar system's power generation.

How Do I Avoid Scams?

If a salesman tries to pressure you into signing a contract or any other paperwork on the spot, that's a red flag. Unfortunately, some residential solar companies have been investigated and/or sued by state attorneys general because of consumer complaints about aggressive sales tactics, false promises and installation problems. Thoroughly research your solar options, compare quotes from several different companies, and verify the licensing and reputation of the contractors who will be doing the installation work. Check reviews and recommendations from other customers. Be wary of claims that solar panels are "free." Ask questions and make sure you understand warranties and terms before you sign any contracts.

Where Can I Learn More?

These are only a few questions to consider before making the decision to go solar. Visit www.victoryelectric.net/solar or www.touchstoneenergy.com/technology for fact sheets about solar, questions to ask contractors and steps to take before installing a solar system. The DOE also offers the "Homeowner's Guide to Going Solar" at www.energy.gov/eere/solar/homeowners-guide-going-solar in English and Spanish. Contact our solar experts at 620-227-2139 or askkeyaccounts@victoryelectric.net for more information.

Solar Interconnection Process

Victory Electric has a standard Distributed Generation Interconnection Agreement (DGIA) that sets consistent, equitable rules for the operation of member-owned generation, including a solar photovoltaic system. A cooperative member must agree to construct the solar system in accordance with national and state safety codes as well as the cooperative's standards for protecting its electrical distribution system from damage and its personnel from injury.

Application Process

- ▶ Work with your solar installer to submit the member-owned generation application.
- ▶ Victory Electric will issue an invoice to the member for a \$200 application fee, which covers a portion of the labor required to review and inspect the proposed system.
- ▶ Victory Electric's engineering team will review the plans for the solar system design and approve or deny them. If the engineering team requests a design update, a new design must be submitted and approved before construction begins.

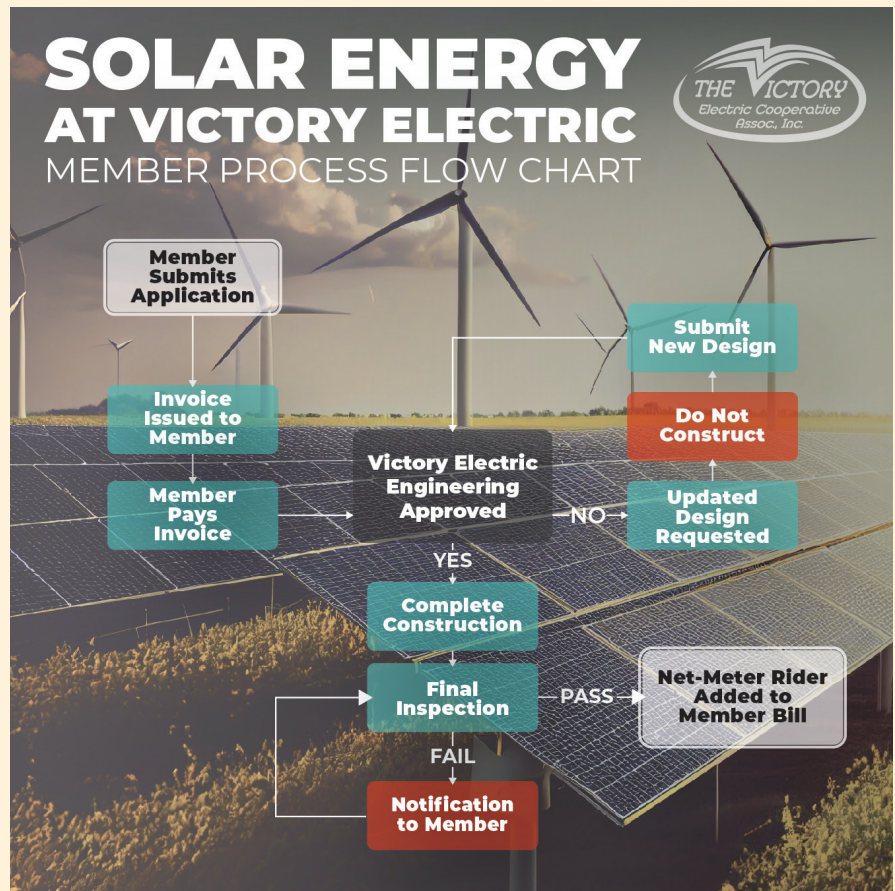
maximum kilowatt (kW) restrictions — 15 kW for residential, 100 kW for commercial and 150 kW for schools.

- ▶ The maximum kW exceeds the member's all-time peak demand.
- ▶ The proposed equipment doesn't meet certain safety certifications.
- ▶ The proposed plans don't show the required disconnect equipment.
- ▶ The proposed plans include a production meter.

- ▶ The solar installer will complete the solar system construction and installation.
- ▶ Victory Electric and the local building inspector, if applicable, will conduct a final inspection of the installation. If the inspection passes, a net-metering rider will be added to the member's bill. If the inspection fails, Victory Electric will notify the member and explain what needs to be addressed before another inspection can be conducted.

Why Would an Application for a Solar System Be Denied?

- ▶ The system is too large and exceeds the



POWERING *the Roundup*

The Dodge City Roundup Arena has been the home of the “Greatest Show on Dirt” — the Dodge City Roundup Rodeo — since 1977. The aging electrical infrastructure around the historic Roundup Arena has degraded over time and requires upgrading. Victory Electric has committed to donating time and materials to update the arena’s electric infrastructure by moving some primary overhead lines and installing underground lines. Victory’s Powering the Roundup project will assist in securing a safe environment for cowboys

and cowgirls, rodeo fans and Roundup Arena workers for years to come.

As a rural electric cooperative, Victory Electric is guided by core cooperative principles and values, one of which is concern for community. Serving the community by investing in local development initiatives helps improve the quality of life for members in the territories we service and all southwest Kansans. Promoting Dodge City’s Western heritage draws visitors and brings economic benefits to our community.



Victory Electric installed underground lines at Dodge City’s Roundup Rodeo Arena in May and June.

20
23

63RD ANNUAL

DODGE CITY DAYS

KICKIN' UP LUCK



JULY 27TH - AUGUST 6TH

This year we honor the early settlers coming into Dodge City that had grit and a little bit of luck. So, help us celebrate "Kickin' Up Luck" in Ol' Dodge City for the 63rd year of the Dodge City Days Festival!



DOWNLOAD THE DODGE CITY DAYS APP

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WWW.DODGECITYDAYS.ORG



Victory Electric Welcomes Interns



Ashton Trent (left) and Cameron Stacey are interning with Victory this summer.

Victory Electric recently welcomed **ASHTON TRENT** and **CAMERON STACEY**, our interns who will be getting hands-on experience in the operations department this summer. Trent is from Dodge City, and Stacey is from Great Bend. Both have studied electric power technology at Pratt Community College and are applying what they've learned as they receive on-the-job lineman training in the electric cooperative.



A New Way to Pay

1 GET



Get barcode from SmartHub or your bill.

2 FIND



Find participating locations near you.

3 SCAN



Scan barcode at the register to pay your bill.



Victory Electric offers multiple ways for members to pay their bill — by mail, by phone or online. A new option, VanillaDirect Pay, now offers members the convenience of paying their bill with cash at participating local retailers: **Dollar General, Family Dollar, Walgreens and Walmart**. A fee of \$1.50 per transaction applies.

To find your VanillaDirect Pay barcode:

1. Open your SmartHub account and log in.
2. Click **Bill & Pay**.
3. Click **Pay By Cash**.
4. Click **View Barcode**.

Simply show the cashier* your barcode and pay your bill amount plus the \$1.50 fee, and you can check another item off your to-do list! VanillaDirect Pay barcodes will also be printed on your monthly bill beginning in July.

**At Walmart, please go to the service desk to use VanillaDirect Pay.*

Youth Are Building a Brighter Tomorrow

Continued from page 12A ▶

the all-expenses-paid trip after the students submitted an application, résumé and video and completed an interview. Both are leaders in their schools, and they excel in athletics, extracurricular activities and community service. Participating in Youth Tour from June 15-22 enabled them to build on their existing leadership and citizenship skills, and we are excited to see what they will accomplish while serving their schools and communities in the future.

The Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp (CYLC) at a mountain resort near Steamboat Springs, Colorado, also gives youth the opportunity to develop leadership skills, build community and make memories. High school students from Kansas, Colorado, Oklahoma and Wyoming will attend Leadership Camp July 14-20 — including **KARLA GARCIA SEPULVEDA**, an incoming senior at Dodge City High School, and **KALE NAGEL**, an incoming senior at Bucklin High School. CYLC participants will learn about the electric cooperative industry by forming their own model cooperative, raft on the Colorado River, tour a power plant and enjoy the mountain scenery, all while cultivating connections with other youth.

Developing meaningful, in-person relationships is especially important for Generation Z. Born between 1997 and 2012, members of Gen Z (also called zoomers) have always lived in a world with online connectivity and internet access availability. These digital natives tend to be creative and tech-savvy, and they embrace hands-on, collaborative learning. Unfortunately, spending so much time online can also lead to isolation and loneliness. Whether they're taking a cruise along the Potomac River or hiking in the Rocky Mountains together, the young people attending Youth Tour and CYLC this summer are forming friendships and having valuable, face-to-face social interactions with their peers and adult leaders.

Victory Electric also invests in future leaders by offering 10 Lightner Community Spirit Scholarships each year. The \$1,000 scholarships are awarded to high school seniors and college students who have demonstrated academic success and commitment to bettering their communities.

Encourage your children, grandchildren, friends and neighbors to apply for these valuable leadership opportunities. Applications for the 2024 Youth Tour and CYLC will open this fall, and scholarship applications will open early next year. Learn more at www.victoryelectric.net/youth-tour-cooperative-leadership-camp.

THANKS, SHANE

SUMMERTIME SAFETY TIPS

1

BEAT THE HEAT

Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated, avoid heavy work or exercise outside in high temperatures, and wear loose, lightweight clothing and a hat.

2

KEEP KIDS AND PETS SAFE

Never leave children or pets inside vehicles. Even on mild or cloudy days, the temperature inside a vehicle can climb to life-threatening levels quickly.

3

SHARE THE ROAD

Expect tractors and combines to travel and stop more slowly and make wider turns. Give farm equipment plenty of space, and be vigilant when passing slow-moving vehicles.

4

TAKE CARE WHEN DRIVING

When operating farm equipment, be mindful of your vehicle's height and watch out for power lines, low bridges and other obstacles.

5

AVOID A SHOCK

Know where all electrical switches and circuit breakers are for pool equipment and how to turn them off in an emergency.

VICTORYELECTRIC.NET

Solar Myths

Electric Cooperatives Do Not Support Renewable Energy

FALSE. Electric co-ops have supported home power installations for many years. Victory Electric has an interconnection agreement and a net-metering tariff that outlines the requirements to ensure that the interconnection is safe and any extra power generated by your system is credited toward the power purchased in the same month.

Your Electric Bill Will Be Reduced to Zero with Solar Panels

FALSE. There is a lot of variation between when solar power generates and when homes use energy. Due to this variation, solar-powered homes connected to the co-op still rely on the grid for about half of their power needs. Your co-op requires all members connected to the lines to pay for the energy they use to supplement the solar production. Members also pay fees for ongoing maintenance and operation of the system, as well as other fees that vary depending on your location. Credit for extra generation cannot exceed the amount of energy purchased during the month.

You Will Receive Credit for Your Over-Produced Power

FALSE. With net metering the member will “net” their production of energy against their usage of energy from the grid. If they use more energy from the grid than their system produces, they will pay the difference in an energy charge.

If the member produces more energy than they use from the grid, the net for the month would be zero. The member would still have a minimum service availability charge. The over production of kilowatt-hours does not bank and carry over to the next month. At the beginning of every month, the account is cleared and starts over. Therefore, there is no credit being paid back and no credit being banked by the member.

You Don't Need to Contact Your Electric Co-op Until You're Ready to Interconnect Your Solar System

FALSE. Electric co-ops are not-for-profit electricity providers in your community and will always support what is in the best interest of their members. Involving the co-op early in the process will allow for a contractor-homeowner-cooperative partnership that will help ensure the best possible outcome for our members. Victory Electric can explain the interconnection process, assist with the application, discuss net metering payment terms, provide annual electric consumption data and coordinate the required interconnection work needed from the co-op.

Solar Contractors/Salesmen Are Your Best Source of Information on Solar Power

PERHAPS. No one knows solar installations better than the contractor. Likewise, no one knows electricity (billing, net metering, interconnection, etc.) better than your electric provider. Each electric provider handles interconnection agreements in their own way, so if you are considering solar for your home, the best solution is to establish a contractor-homeowner-cooperative partnership early in the process so there are no surprises.

SHARE IN THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF SOLAR POWER WITHOUT THE COST OF INSTALLING ROOFTOP PANELS

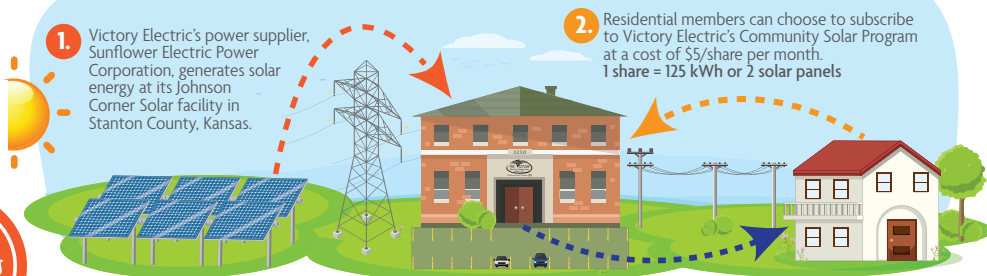
- ☀ AN AFFORDABLE ALTERNATIVE TO OWNING AND MAINTAINING A SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEM
- ☀ NO ROOF DAMAGE
- ☀ NO LARGE, UPFRONT INVESTMENT
- ☀ SIMPLE SIGN-UP AND BILLING
- ☀ AVAILABLE TO OWNERS AND RENTERS
- ☀ EASY WAY TO SUPPORT RENEWABLE ENERGY

We're removing barriers to solar energy

COMING SOON!

Solar Made Easy!

Victory Electric Cooperative Assn., Inc. **COMMUNITY SOLAR**



*** Shares are limited to no more than the average of your previous 12-month electric use. If your 12-month average = 1,000 kWh, then a max of 8 shares is allowed.

CONTACT US TO LEARN MORE:



VICTORYELECTRIC.NET



620.227.2139 OR 800.279.7915

