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Electronews

THE VICTORY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ASSN., INC.

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FROM THE CEO

We're in the Business of Building Community

Whether we prefer texts, instant messages, emails, phone or video calls, snaps or social media posts, we have never before had so many ways to instantly communicate and keep in touch with our friends and family members. Victory Electric takes advantage of digital tools like these to quickly share important information and educate members, too. Even though we live at a time when much of our communication with one another occurs virtually at the touch of a button, the value of personal interaction and meeting together in person should never be underestimated.

Victory Electric connects and builds relationships with community members

throughout the year, and the most important gathering we host is our annual meeting. **THIS YEAR'S ANNUAL MEETING WILL BE HELD APRIL 9 AT A NEW LOCATION — THE BOOT HILL CASINO AND RESORT CONFERENCE CENTER IN DODGE CITY.**

We hope to see you that evening, even if you have never attended an annual meeting before.

WHY SHOULD YOU ATTEND THE ANNUAL MEETING?

The purpose of the annual meeting is to elect trustees, share financial

Continued on page 12C ▶



Shane Laws



ANNUAL MEETING

NOTE

Keep an eye out for your April *Kansas Country Living* magazine! It will include:

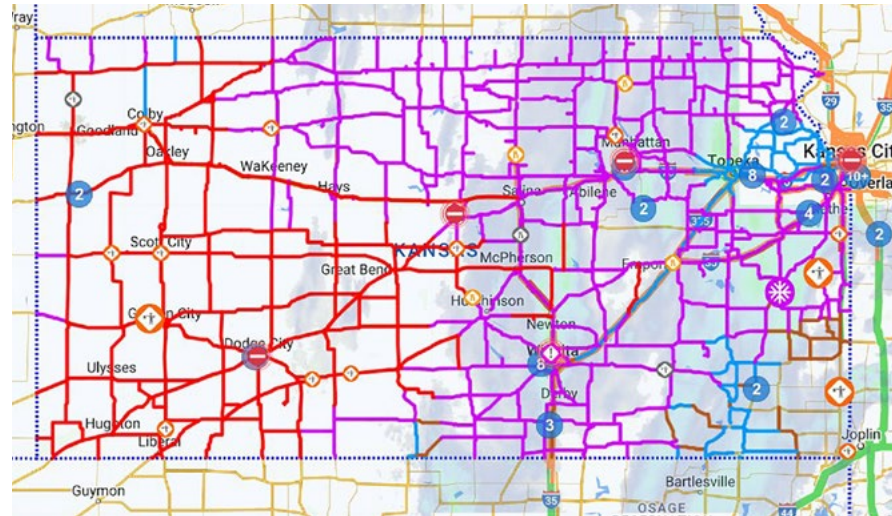
- The official notice for the annual meeting, to be held **April 9** at **Boot Hill Casino and Resort Conference Center**;
- Your registration card for the annual meeting; and
- Election ballots for members represented by trustees in District 1 (Daryl Tieben); District 3 (Ken Schulte); District 8 (Cedric Drewes); and District 10 (Terri Larson).

Victory Linemen Battle Blizzard Conditions

Winter Storm Finn blanketed western and central Kansas with heavy snow Jan. 8-9, while wind gusts of over 60 miles per hour caused blizzard conditions and numerous power outages. The system brought rain, sleet, graupel (small, soft hail or snow pellets) and even thunder snow as the temperature dropped and the system moved east to northeast across Victory Electric's service area.

By the evening of Jan. 8, the Kansas Department of Transportation had closed almost all highways in western Kansas because of the dangerous travel conditions. The blizzard also affected Victory Electric crews' ability to restore power because of limited to zero visibility, drifting snow, slick roads and vehicles stuck in roadways.

Linemen sheltered in place until visibility improved and it was safe for them to resolve the



This screenshot from the Kansas Department of Transportation's KanDrive website shows the winter driving conditions for the evening of Jan. 8. The red lines indicate closed roads, and the purple lines indicate roads that were completely covered with snow or ice.

many power outages caused by the storm. They had assistance from area farmers, who towed some Victory Electric trucks through deep drifts with tractors so they could access remote locations.

Victory Electric would like to thank Daylight Donuts and Miss Kitty's Café for providing food to our line crews! We also appreciate all the many kind words and messages of support we received throughout the storm and for members' patience as Victory crews worked in adverse conditions to safely resolve over 7,000 outages in our service area.

BACKGROUND: Because of heavy snow and wind gusts on Jan. 8 that caused whiteout conditions, Victory Electric crews sheltered in place as needed until visibility improved and they could safely continue working.

RIGHT: Many area roads were completely covered in snow Jan. 8-9.

FAR RIGHT: Victory Electric crews addressed more than 7,000 power outages throughout our service area during Winter Storm Finn.



We're in the Business of Building Community Continued from page 12A

information and make bylaw changes, if needed. The meeting offers cooperative members an opportunity to connect with trustees, the leadership team and other members of the community.

The annual meeting provides a platform for voicing your concerns, sharing ideas and discussing the issues important to you. Victory Electric will present a comprehensive, transparent review of our accomplishments, financial performance and community outreach initiatives in 2023. Attendees will also learn about what Victory has been doing to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy and to help build the communities we serve.

Don't miss out on the swag bags and the chance to win a great door prize! Members who submit their registration card and attend the meeting will also receive a \$20 bill credit. You will find your registration card on the back cover of your April *Kansas Country Living* magazine, which will be mailed at the end of March.

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TRUSTEE ELECTIONS

Did you know Victory Electric's Board of Trustees represents you on important energy issues and policy decisions? Trustees are local members of the districts they represent and make strategic decisions about equitable rate design and the future of the cooperative. From determining capital credit retirements to local infrastructure development, trustees have an important role to play in shaping our future — and they rely on co-op members like you to make your voice heard.

DARYL TIEBEN, District 1; **KEN SCHULTE**, District 3; **CEDRIC DREWES**, District 8; and **TERRI LARSON**, District 10; are up for reelection this year. Victory Electric members who live in one of their districts will receive ballots for the 2024 board of trustees election. Ballots will be included with the April *Kansas Country Living* magazine, so watch for it in the mail.

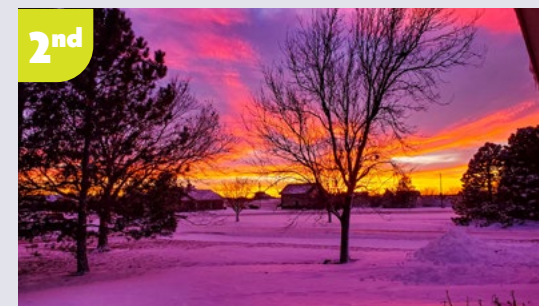
Come and see how your cooperative is working for you and helping to build the community. We hope to see you April 9!

THANKS, SHANE

WINTER STORM FINN PHOTO CONTEST

To make the cold days less dreary, Victory Electric hosted a winter storm photo contest on our Facebook page and asked followers to vote for their favorites. Based on the number of likes received, **CARLY BAILEY** placed first and won a Victory Electric swag bag. **MARCI HARRIS CHARLES** placed second and **MARILYN WHITE** placed third, with **ROZLYN PERKINS** receiving an honorable mention.

Thank you to everyone who submitted a photo for making our day brighter!



ANNUAL MEETING

April 9, 2024

JOIN US!

This year we will be holding our annual meeting in the **Boot Hill Casino & Resort Conference Center.**

NEW LOCATION

**4100 W. Comanche St.
Dodge City, KS**

2023

Also new this year: The April issue of *Kansas Country Living* magazine will include ballots for the 2024 Victory Board of Trustees election and your annual meeting registration card. Everything you need to cast your vote will be included on the cover of the magazine.

**Districts voting this year:
District 1, District 3, District 8 and District 10**



SAFE RELIABLE AFFORDABLE

Energy Costs and Your Victory Electric Bill

While inflation and high prices for many goods and services continue to affect consumers' wallets, Victory Electric knows cooperative members want to save money wherever they can. As a not-for-profit electric cooperative, Victory Electric strives to provide reliable electricity at fair rates and to control costs as much as possible.

The Energy Cost Adjustment (ECA) is a pass-through variable charge or credit used to recover variable energy costs. The ECA changes from month to month based on wholesale pricing and the market rate for energy. The ECA allows the cooperative to respond to market fluctuations by adjusting bills either up or down to account for variable power supply costs. These variables determine how much money our power supplier incurs or saves in the process of generating power, including fuel costs like coal and natural gas, power purchases and the cost of transmission to deliver the power to Victory Electric's system. Note that Victory does not profit from increases in the price of wholesale energy.

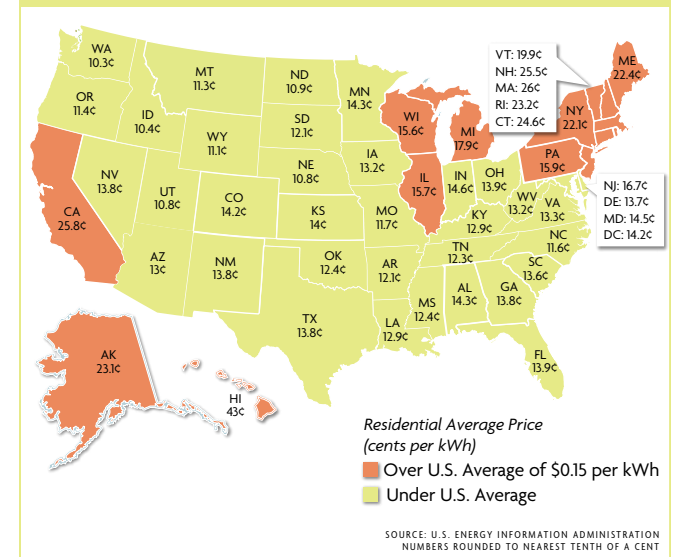
When the cost of wholesale power decreases, the ECA also allows Victory Electric to pass the savings on to our members as a bill credit. This happened throughout 2023. Victory Electric members received a credit for the ECA every month last year.

Natural gas prices in 2023 were the lowest since mid-2020 and were about 62% lower than the average price in 2022, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. Overall temperatures were also milder in 2023 than in 2022.

In 2022, the average annual price of natural gas surged to its highest level since 2008. Russia, a chief exporter of natural gas, invaded Ukraine that year, causing fears about natural gas shortages and increased demand for gas supplies outside of Russia. Record heat drove up electric usage, and extreme to exceptional drought in many parts of the U.S. further increased demand for energy. In 2021, Winter Storm Uri sent natural gas prices soaring, and supply chain issues and economic strain still lingered from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Factors like these affect energy costs and are outside of Victory Electric's control. While energy markets, weather, natural gas supplies, prices and government energy policies are constantly fluctuating, Victory Electric continues to focus on the factors that are under our control as we provide safe, reliable and affordable power. We all have some control over the amount of energy we use, and we will continue to share ways to help you save energy and save money.

Average Prices for Residential Electricity
2022 figures, in cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh)
U.S. Average: \$0.15 per kWh

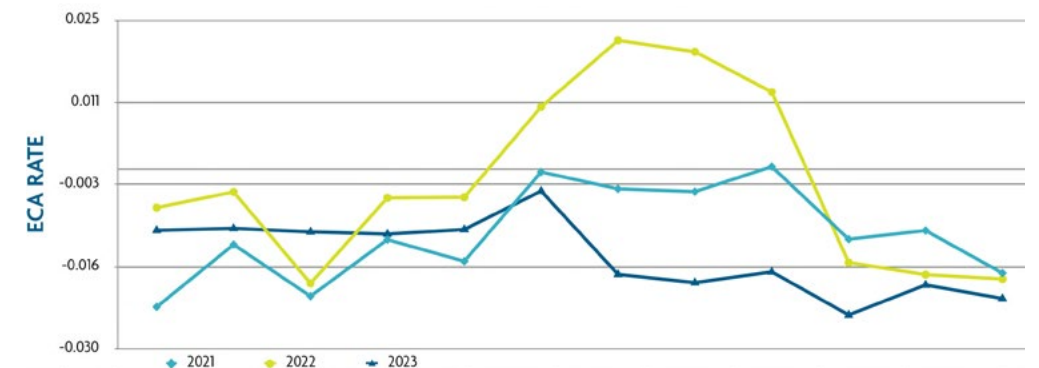


Victory Electric's energy rates (charges for poles, transformers and metering — also referred to as wire charges) have remained the same since 2017. The energy charge on a member's bill is the cost for the total amount of energy used in a billing period.

Based on rate data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration, Victory Electric continues to provide some of the lowest electric rates in Kansas. Victory's average residential price, 13.44 cents per kWh, is the third lowest among the Kansas-based electric cooperatives. It is also lower than the Kansas average rate for cooperatives (14.8 cents/kWh) and the Kansas average rate for all Kansas electric utilities (13.99 cents/kWh).

To learn more, visit www.victoryelectric.net/your-bill-explained.

VICTORY ECA RATES YEARS 2021-2023



Victory Congratulates Youth Trip Winners

Victory Electric is pleased to announce the 2024 winners of leadership development trips for youth: **JOSIE ROBINSON**, a junior at Dodge City High School; **TANA MCDONALD** and **JORDAN STIMPERT**, both juniors at Bucklin High School; and **LENZI KOEHN**, a junior at South Gray High School.

Victory Electric believes in developing the potential of today's youth to become tomorrow's leaders. To provide opportunities for building these skills, each year Victory Electric invites juniors from its cooperative service area to apply for all-expenses-paid trips to the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., and the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp (CYLC) in Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

Robinson and McDonald will attend the Youth Tour June 13-21, and Stimpert and Koehn will attend CYLC July 12-18. The four winners will also receive a \$500 scholarship following their high school graduation. This year, Victory Electric asked candidates to create a short video sharing energy-efficiency tips and explaining why saving energy is important. A panel of judges selected the winners after evaluating the candidates' applications, résumés, videos and in-person interviews.

"We're proud of the students who applied, and we enjoyed seeing the creativity shown in their energy-efficiency videos.

The annual youth trips reflect Victory's commitment to community and youth development, and we know this year's winners will represent the cooperative well in their travels this summer," said Victory Electric Vice President of Communications Chanda Schulte.

Youth Tour attendees will meet with state and national legislators in the nation's capital and build connections with thousands of high school students from across the country. The educational experience includes tours of Smithsonian museums, visits to the White House and other historic sites and monuments.

CYLC participants will learn about the electric cooperative industry through hands-on sessions, raft on the Colorado River and tour a power plant. Nearly 100 students from electric cooperative communities in Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma and Wyoming are expected to attend the leadership camp this summer.

The contest is held each fall for area high school juniors, and 14 students applied for the 2024 contest. For more information about youth programs or Victory Electric's Lightner Community Spirit Scholarship program, visit www.victoryelectric.net.

CoBank Sharing Success Grant Opens March 15

One of Victory Electric's most notable and exciting community programs is CoBank Sharing Success, a matching grant opportunity open to local non-profit organizations for up to \$20,000. Aimed at supporting local communities and people, the grant is made possible by Victory Electric's governing board of trustees in partnership with CoBank — a national nonprofit cooperative bank owned by the rural American cooperatives it services. 2024 will be the 13th year for Victory Electric to award a Sharing Success grant.

"Thanks to the generosity of Victory Electric's board of trustees and CoBank, the Sharing Success grant enables us to give back to the communities we serve," said Shane Laws, CEO of Victory Electric. "We urge all eligible nonprofits to take advantage of Sharing Success, and together we can make a meaningful impact in rural Kansas. Over the last decade, Victory Electric has awarded

\$145,000 in Sharing Success grants, and we are excited to offer the program again this year."

APPLICATIONS ARE AVAILABLE AT WWW.VICTORYELECTRIC.NET AND ARE DUE MAY 17, 2024.

CoBank's Sharing Success fund matches charitable contributions made by its cooperative members to local nonprofits in their communities. The matching grant program is designed to celebrate the vital role that cooperatives play in communities across the country. CoBank states that collaborating with customers to support worthy causes they care about is a great way to make a positive difference and fulfill its mission of service to rural America. Since its inception in 2012, the program has generated more than \$86 million in total charitable donations, primarily in rural areas across the country.

Any organization interested in applying for the 2024 CoBank Sharing Success

grant must be a federally recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit. The application will be available on our website at WWW.VICTORYELECTRIC.NET/CONTENT/COBANK-SHARING-SUCCESS-GRANT BEGINNING MARCH 15 AND IS DUE TO VICTORY ELECTRIC'S OFFICE NO LATER THAN 5 P.M. ON MAY 17.



PREVIOUS SHARING SUCCESS GRANT WINNERS

- | | |
|--|---|
| 2012 The Bucklin Library | 2018 Ford County Sheriff's Office |
| 2013 Mission of Mercy Dental Clinic | 2019 Ingalls Recreation |
| 2014 Stauth Memorial Museum | 2020 Dodge City Salvation Army and New Chance, Inc. |
| 2015 Manna House | 2021 Crisis Center of Dodge City |
| 2016 Depot Theater | 2022 Ford County Fair Association and The Copeland American Legion |
| 2017 Ford County Historical Society | 2023 Perfect Fit Foundation of SWK |



LEARN NEW WAYS TO SAVE
WITH OUR NEW ENERGY ADVISOR.



NOMINATING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

The meeting of the nominating committee of The Victory Electric Cooperative Association Inc. was held Thursday, Feb. 1, 2024, at the office of the cooperative on N. 14th Avenue in Dodge City, Kansas.

The following members of the nominating committee were present in person: Dale Stein and Levi Benjamin, representing District 3; Ron Schneweis and Shane Bangerter, representing District 8; and Ken Winter and Lisa Mazza, representing District 10.

The following members of the nominating committee participated via telephone: Alan Schneweis and Dillon Keller, representing District 1.

Also present were David Snapp, attorney for Victory Electric; Shane Laws, CEO; Pat Morse, board president; Shauna Rumbaugh, communications coordinator; and Carolina Ross, executive assistant.

Snapp went over qualifications and eligibility requirements for election as a trustee, as set forth in the bylaws of the cooperative, to determine whether each potential nominee was eligible for election based upon the information available.

Mazza was elected as chairperson of the nominating committee and inspector of elections. Mazza called the meeting to order at 1:16 p.m. and asked for nominations from Districts 1, 3, 8 and 10.

Thereupon, motions duly made, seconded, and adopted, the following persons were nominated to stand election as candidates for trustee of the cooperative for a three-year term:

- ▶ **DISTRICT 1: DARYL TIEBEN**
- ▶ **DISTRICT 3: KEN SCHULTE**
- ▶ **DISTRICT 8: CEDRIC DREWES**
- ▶ **DISTRICT 10: TERRI LARSON**

There being no further business to come before the meeting of the nominating committee, the meeting was adjourned at 1:19 p.m.

Victory Welcomes New Meterman



Wayne Tasaka

Victory Electric recently welcomed **WAYNE TASAKA** as the cooperative's newest meter reader. The Kapa'a, Hawaii, native has lived in Kansas since 1994.

His favorite memories of growing up on the island of Kauai include the ocean and the food.

Before joining Victory Electric's engineering team in January, Tasaka worked for Koch Fertilizer in Dodge City as a plant operator for 10 years. He previously worked for the City of Dodge City as an irrigation specialist for 12 years.

"I worked other places but always had an inkling about electricity," Tasaka said. "My cousin is a lineman, and talking to him made me interested in it."

As a third-class meterman, Tasaka said he looks forward to understanding more about Victory Electric processes and learning as much as he can.

"I will enjoy having the opportunity to work here," he said.

Vice President of Engineering Rob Henry said he is happy to have Tasaka on the team. "We are excited to have Wayne and feel he is a great fit for our team in the metering department," he said.

Tasaka has been married to wife, Melissa, for 15 years, and they have three children: Taylor, Kiana and Kayne.

Tasaka enjoys golfing, hanging out with friends and "enjoying good company" in his free time. He also likes roping and rodeo and helps operate the gates at the Dodge City Roundup Rodeo in the summer.

"During the rodeo, I usually open the bucking chutes and let the horses and bulls out," he said.

Welcome to Victory, Wayne!

PENICK PRESENTS AT NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Victory Electric Vice President of Key Accounts and Safety **KYNDELL PENICK** gave a presentation about engaging with key accounts members at the recent NEXT Conference in Indian Wells, California.

