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# Electronews

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## FROM THE CEO

# Working Together to Save Energy and Money

Victory Electric offers cooperative member-owners many tips and tools to help you make smart energy choices and save money. Whether you have used our digital Energy Advisor tool on our website or read energy efficiency tips on our Facebook page and in this magazine, you likely know several ways you can save energy in and around your home. But did you know that when you use electricity can be just as important as how much you use?

Energy use throughout the day varies based on consumer demand. Most of us use larger amounts of electricity in the morning while getting ready for work or helping the kids get ready for school. We also use more electricity in

the evenings while cooking dinner, washing clothes and dishes, watching television and powering up other electronics.

The times when we collectively use more electricity are often referred to as “peak hours” and typically occur from 7-10 a.m. and 3-7 p.m. Monday-Friday. As temperatures climb in late spring and summer, energy use is highest in the afternoon through evening hours. In winter, energy use tends to be highest in the early morning and late afternoon/evening.



Shane Laws

*Continued on page 12H ▶*

## AVOID MAIL DELAYS WITH SMARTHUB

Due to reports of first-class mail delays in Kansas, Victory Electric encourages those who pay bills by mail to allow for additional mail time so payments are received and posted by the due date. Also, please ensure Victory Electric has your current mailing address, including the P.O. Box, if applicable.

We also offer multiple ways to pay that don't rely on the U.S. Postal Service. To quickly and easily make a digital payment, visit SmartHub at [www.victoryelectric.smarthub.coop](http://www.victoryelectric.smarthub.coop) or download the app. Alternatively, you may pay through our secure phone system at 866-999-8494, or visit our office to pay in person from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday (except holidays). We also have drop boxes on the south side of the Victory Electric office at 3230 N. 14th Ave., and on the north side of the downtown City of Dodge City building at 806 N. Second Ave.



“Finding Anemo” team members from Bucklin Middle School assemble their turbine. An anemometer measures wind speed and direction.

# Students Harness **WIND ENERGY** at *KidWind Challenge*

Southwest Kansas students received hands-on experience in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) while learning about wind power at the Kansas Energy Program’s KidWind Challenge. Before the daylong educational event on Feb. 27 in Dodge City, 11 teams of students in grades 4-8 and grades 9-12 learned about wind energy. With the guidance of a coach, they applied their problem-solving and tinkering skills to design and build wind turbines using a standard KidWind generator and their choice of other materials.



The “Wind Warriors” team from Kepley Middle School in Ulysses and “The Rising Sun” from Ulysses High School took first place in their age divisions.

Students tested the efficiency and energy output of their turbines in a wind tunnel in the morning and were allowed to make tweaks or repair their turbines before another testing session in the afternoon. Teams also presented their designs to a panel of judges, took a knowledge quiz about wind energy and participated in an “instant challenge,” which was an activity announced the day of the competition that gave students another opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of wind energy.

The winners from the 4th-8th grade division were the “Wind Warriors” from Kepley Middle School in first place,

**With the guidance of a coach, they applied their problem-solving and tinkering skills to design and build wind turbines using a standard KidWind generator and their choice of other materials.**

“Men in Black” from Kepley Middle School in second place, and “American Winders” from Dighton Elementary School in third. “Turbine Twisters” from Kepley Middle School received the Judges Choice award in this division, and Most Improved honors went to “Coco’s Puffs” from Dodge City Middle School/Sacred Heart with a 139% improvement between their first and last performance tests.

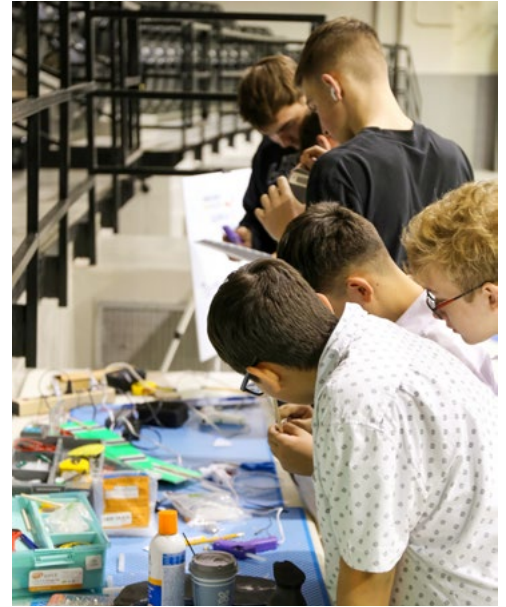
The winners in the 9th-12th grade division were “The Rising Sun” from Ulysses High School in first place, “Big Blue Sky” from Dighton High School in second place, and Spearville Middle/High School in third. Judges Choice went to “Big Blue Sky” from Dighton, as did Most Improved honors with an 11.2% improvement between tests.

Victory Electric employees Jeff Hubbell, manager of engineering, and Adriana Tipton and Shauna Rumbaugh, communications coordinators, helped judge the competitors during the event.

“I love seeing kids using what they’re taught to solve real-world problems,” Hubbell said. “These kids are working as a team to deal with technical problems they encountered during the design, construction and testing of the turbines. They quickly learned that making very subtle changes can make a large impact on performance.”

Kansas KidWind competitions were also held in Hutchinson, Manhattan, Burlington, Colby and Overland Park, and the top two teams in each age division from the regional events had the opportunity to compete in the state competition in Salina.

The Kansas Corporation Commission and Kansas State University Engineering Extension organized the challenge, which was made possible by a grant from the U.S. Department of Energy and other sponsors and partners. To learn more, visit [www.kcc.ks.gov/energy-education/kidwind](http://www.kcc.ks.gov/energy-education/kidwind).



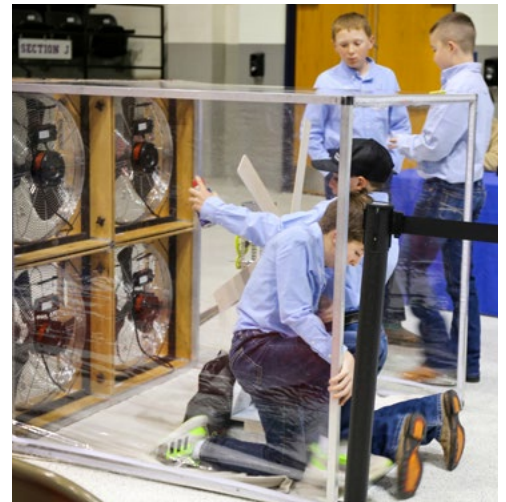
**KidWind contestants use some of the tools and supplies available at the turbine repair station.**



**A contestant from Dodge City Middle School tinkers with her team’s wind turbine, which features colorful blades designed by each member of “The Storm.”**



**Dodge City Middle School/Sacred Heart students from the “CoCo’s Puffs” team try on sunglasses provided by Invenergy, a KidWind sponsor.**



**Students from Dighton Middle School’s “American Winders” team make adjustments to their wind turbine during performance testing in the wind tunnel.**

# ANNUAL MEETING

— — — — RECAP — — — —

Victory Electric wants to thank everyone who attended the 79th Annual Meeting!

Watch for the story in June issue of *Kansas Country Living*.



SCAN TO ACCESS RECORDING

DOOR PRIZE WINNERS **17**

**29** EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERS

**204** ATTENDEES

MEETING LENGTH **44 MINUTES**

## Stay Safe: Electrical Safety Tips for Working Indoors

Employers usually offer orientation and training for new employees, but sometimes electrical safety is overlooked. Beyond burning popcorn in the microwave and annoying all your coworkers with the stench, Victory Electric and Safe Electricity remind you of the following on-the-job electrical safety tips, which also apply at home:

### IN GENERAL

Do not complete electrical work if you are not qualified. Employees asked to change light fixtures, repair wiring, install outlets or do other types of electrical work have been injured and killed on the job. It is best to leave electrical work to a professional electrician.

### INDOORS

- ▶ Many offices have landlines. Do not talk on a landline phone during a thunderstorm. Many people think this is a myth but it is not — a bolt of lightning that strikes a telephone line can come through the wires and enter a headset. That jolt can burst your eardrum or even cause cardiac arrest.
- ▶ Use high-quality extension cords with appropriate gauge and length endorsed by a reputable laboratory.

- ▶ Do not run extension cords under carpet. Out of sight, out of mind, and the cords could get damaged under the carpet or get overheated, causing a fire.
- ▶ Extension cords should only be used as a temporary solution. If your workplace needs more outlets, your employer should have a professional electrician install them.
- ▶ Electrical cords can be a tripping hazard; your employer should supply heavy-duty cord covers.
- ▶ Do not overload the electrical system at your work by plugging too many items in or plugging in items that draw too much power.
- ▶ Speaking of drawing too much power, ask before using a space heater at work.
- ▶ Do not use damaged cords, plugs, outlets or outdated electrical equipment.
- ▶ Do not yank on an electrical cord to unplug something; grasp the plug instead.
- ▶ Next time, we'll look at electrical safety outdoors and around water.
- ▶ If you have questions about electrical safety at work, contact Victory Electric at 620-227-2139. For more information about electrical safety, visit [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org).

# Grant Winners Improve Local Communities

Applications for the 2024 CoBank Sharing Success Grant are now open through May 17. Local nonprofits may apply at [www.victoryelectric.net/cobank-sharing-success-grant](http://www.victoryelectric.net/cobank-sharing-success-grant) to receive up to \$20,000. Please share this opportunity with nonprofits that may benefit from a grant in our community!

Learn more about the work that previous Sharing Success winners have done in Victory Electric's service area:

**THE PERFECT FIT FOUNDATION OF SWK (2023)** operates the Perfect Fit Therapy Clinic. The behavioral health facility provides Applied Behavioral Analysis therapy to children with autism, increases acceptance of individuals with special needs and provides services necessary for them to live fulfilling lives. Perfect Fit is using the grant to construct an outdoor playground with inclusive equipment for the children the clinic serves.

**THE FORD COUNTY FAIR ASSOCIATION (2022)** supports and maintains the Ford County Fairgrounds throughout the year for community use, including the annual Ford County Fair. Grant funds helped the association complete much-needed repairs and updates to the floor of the fair building.

**THE COPELAND AMERICAN LEGION (2022)** is a veteran-based national organization that serves veterans, their families and communities. The Copeland American Legion Post No. 369 is the local post for Gray County. They used grant funds to make improvements to the Legion building, including the installation of new windows and moving the A/C unit from the roof to the ground.

**THE CRISIS CENTER OF DODGE CITY (2021)** used Sharing Success grant funds to complete bathroom renovations, purchase waterproof mattress covers and linens, and install playground equipment. Grant funds brought new life to the safe shelter, which has served 34 families with eight children.

**THE SALVATION ARMY OF DODGE CITY (2020)** received grant funding toward the purchase of a new headquarters at the former *High Plains Journal* building on Wyatt Earp Boulevard. The Salvation Army has operated in Dodge City since 1890 and plans to expand its thrift store and other services.

**NEW CHANCE, INC. (2020)** is a drug rehabilitation program in Dodge City focused on providing residential and outpatient substance abuse treatment services. New desktop computers enabled the organization to synchronize software and enhance online electronic health records.

**THE INGALLS RECREATION COMMISSION (2019)** replaced a cracked, leaking liner in the city pool with a new

fiberglass liner. The city also upgraded awnings at the pool to provide additional shade.

**THE FORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE (2018)** received grant funding to make security enhancements.

**THE FORD COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY (2017)** made improvements to the Home of Stone Museum (Mueller-Schmidt House) in Dodge City. The museum also used grant funds to purchase a new water heater, protect the original carpeting on the stairway, and upgrade electrical and plumbing in the home.

**THE DEPOT THEATER (2016)** in Dodge City used grant funding to upgrade technical equipment. The dinner theater is connected to the historic Santa Fe Depot and Harvey Hotel, which was built in 1898 by the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway.

**THE MANNA HOUSE (2015)** is a local emergency shelter and food bank in Dodge City. Grant funds were used to repair and improve their facilities, including new fencing, railings and a heating/cooling system.

**THE STAUTH MEMORIAL MUSEUM (2014)** in Montezuma used the grant to bring a traveling exhibit, "Suited for Space," to the museum. The exhibit showcased the engineering of spacesuits as well as the determination of those who ventured into space and those behind the scenes who helped get them there.

**KANSAS MISSION OF MERCY (2013)** was awarded grant funding for its dental clinic held in Dodge City in 2014. Extractions, fillings, cleanings and other dental services were provided free of charge to almost 1,200 patients from all across the region.

**THE BUCKLIN LIBRARY (2012)** used the grant to help fund the construction of a new library building.

• LOCAL **NONPROFITS** MAY APPLY TO RECEIVE UP TO **\$20,000!**

• APPLICATIONS OPEN **MARCH 15-MAY 17**

• APPLY AT **VICTORYELECTRIC.NET** ▶▶▶▶▶



**SCAN TO APPLY**

**COBANK SHARING SUCCESS GRANT**

# Make Safety a Priority All Year

When it comes to electrical safety, take time to understand important do's and don'ts. May is Electrical Safety Month, but we should make safety a priority all year.

Begin by taking a few moments to double check your home for any potential fire hazards as well as any damaged electronic appliances. Also make sure that all electrical devices are away from water and that you have enough electrical outlets so that you don't overload them.

## FOLLOW THESE DO'S AND DON'TS FROM WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG:

- ▶ **DON'T OVERLOAD CIRCUITS.** Circuits can only cope with a limited amount of electricity. Overloading happens when you draw more electricity than a circuit can safely handle by having too many devices running on one electrical outlet, which may cause overheating, damage to the devices or even fire.
- ▶ **DO USE EXTENSION CORDS PROPERLY.** Never plug an extension cord into another extension cord. If you "daisy chain" them together, it could lead to overheating, creating a potential fire hazard. Don't exceed the wattage of the cord, as doing so creates a risk of overloading the cord and creating a fire hazard. Extension cords should not be used

as permanent solutions. If you need additional outlets, contact a licensed electrician to help.

- ▶ **DON'T DIY ELECTRICAL PROJECTS.** Most electrical repairs and installations are not suitable for DIY projects, so it's worth the expense to hire a professional to avoid serious injury or wiring problems. Also contact a qualified electrician if your home is more than 40 years old and you need to install multiple large appliances that consume large amounts of electricity.
- ▶ **DO TEST GFCIS AND ALARMS REGULARLY.** Every year, more than 358,000 home fires occur in the U.S. Conduct regular tests to ensure your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms are working properly. It only takes a second to test them, and it could save a life. Also be sure GFCI devices are installed in bathrooms, kitchens and other areas where a water source is present, and test them every month as well. Try setting a monthly reminder on your mobile phone to help make checking GFCIs and alarms a habit.
- ▶ **DON'T USE FAULTY CORDS OR PLUGS.** Power cords can become damaged or frayed from age, heavy use or excessive current flow through the wiring. If cords become frayed or cut, replace them, as they could cause a shock when handled. Do not use broken plugs, and never remove the grounding pin from a three-pronged plug.

# Youth Tour Delegate Wins Full-Ride Scholarship

Victory Electric congratulates Bucklin High School senior **IZAIAH PEARCE** for winning a full-ride Rudd Scholarship for his grit,

determination and work ethic! He represented Victory Electric as one of the 27 Kansas delegates to the 2023 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., last June.

Pearce plans to major in architectural engineering at Kansas State University. The renewable, four-year Rudd Scholarship covers any remaining costs for tuition and fees, books, supplies, and room and board after all other financial aid, grants and scholarships have been applied. Rudd Scholars also receive professional development, networking opportunities, mentoring and training sessions to support them throughout their higher education.

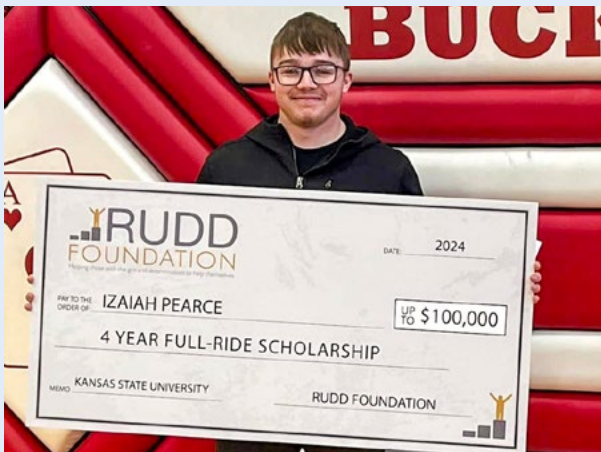
"The Rudd Foundation has provided me with the opportunity of a lifetime," Pearce said. "Going

to college debt free is something that I didn't think was possible. I will forever be grateful for this scholarship and will do my best every day to make sure this opportunity isn't wasted."

He noted that the application process was extensive. He submitted an essay about his life and goals, an essay about how he overcame a struggle in his life, details about his community involvement and letters of recommendation. Out of 700 students who completed the application, the scholarship committee interviewed 70 finalists and selected 45 scholarship winners.

"I was shocked to be selected for the interview and even more stunned, yet honored, when they surprised me at school with the check," Pearce said.

Victory Electric is proud to support youth leadership development in Bucklin and the rest of the communities we serve, and we're excited to help celebrate students' continued successes. Congratulations, Izaiah!



The Rudd Foundation surprised Bucklin High School senior Izaiah Pearce with a full-ride scholarship. Pearce represented Victory Electric at the 2023 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.

# Evans Receives CCD Certification

**MEGAN EVANS**, who represents District 5 on the Victory Electric Board of Trustees, recently completed the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) program.

The CCD certification program consists of five courses — director duties and liabilities, understanding the electric business, board operations and process, strategic planning, and financial decision-making — that focus on basic governance knowledge and the essential skills required of cooperative directors. The CCD prepares directors to fulfill their fiduciary duty as elected officials serving on behalf of their membership. Upon completion of all five CCD courses, NRECA awards the CCD certificate.

“Getting my first certificate was something I wanted to accomplish early on,” Evans said. “I knew the classes would offer a wealth of knowledge, but what I didn’t know was that interacting

and meeting other directors from across the United States would also offer a lot of benefits in knowing how our co-op operates in comparison to others.”

NRECA’s Director Education Program is designed to help electric cooperative directors at every stage of their service understand their roles and responsibilities, stay up-to-date on key issues and trends in the industry and prepare them to meet the challenges facing electric cooperatives now and in the future.

Evans is now eligible to pursue the Board Leadership Certificate, which focuses on developing greater depth in specific industry and governance topics. Receiving additional education and credentials demonstrates trustees’ commitment to advancing their knowledge and performing their fiduciary duty to the best of their ability.

“I came back from these courses



**Victory Electric CEO Shane Laws (left) presents a Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) certificate to District 5 Trustee Megan Evans.**

with a better understanding of the day-to-day operations and also a whole list of questions for management on where they foresee Victory Electric and the electric industry as a whole going into the future,” Evans said. “This industry is changing so fast that trying to get acclimated and caught up to speed at the same time has been a balancing act!”



## INTERNATIONAL *Women's DAY*



On International Women’s Day, March 8, Victory Electric celebrated women who have vital roles in powering our communities. The 15 women employed at Victory Electric have roles in accounting and payroll, member services and human resources, and communications, and four are members of the senior leadership team.



## Working Together to Save Energy and Money *Continued from page 12A*

Peak demand is the electric utility industry's equivalent of rush-hour traffic and refers to the time of day when there is the most demand for electricity and the most pressure put on the electric grid. Because the market price for energy can spike during periods of heavy demand as well, the power needed to meet that demand costs Victory Electric and our member-owners more. When we collectively save energy during peak hours, we all benefit.

Looking for ways to improve energy efficiency at home and shifting some of your energy use to hours when demand is lower can help you and Victory Electric reduce demand, saving energy and money. Adjusting energy use to non-peak times also helps the system avoid service interruptions caused

by high demand during extreme temperatures in the summer and winter.

Here are several easy ways you can shift energy use to off-peak hours:

- ▶ Adjust your thermostat; during summer months, raise the thermostat a few degrees during peak hours.
- ▶ Use ceiling fans, as they will provide a cooling effect to people in the room.
- ▶ Wash full loads of laundry in cold water during off-peak hours. Your washing machine model may also have a delay setting that allows you to schedule a load to start running at a later, off-peak time such as overnight or mid-morning.
- ▶ Start the dishwasher right before you go to bed, or air-dry dishes by opening the dishwasher instead of using the heated drying cycle.
- ▶ Turn off lights and electronics when not in use. This is a great daily habit to adopt during peak and off-peak hours.

There are many ways to save energy and money by making a few minor adjustments to your daily routine. Victory Electric member-owners can easily monitor how effective these small adjustments are by logging into your SmartHub account at [www.victoryelectric.smarthub.coop](http://www.victoryelectric.smarthub.coop) or the SmartHub app. Click on "Usage" to view your energy usage on a monthly, daily or interval (hourly) basis and compare your usage during different billing periods.

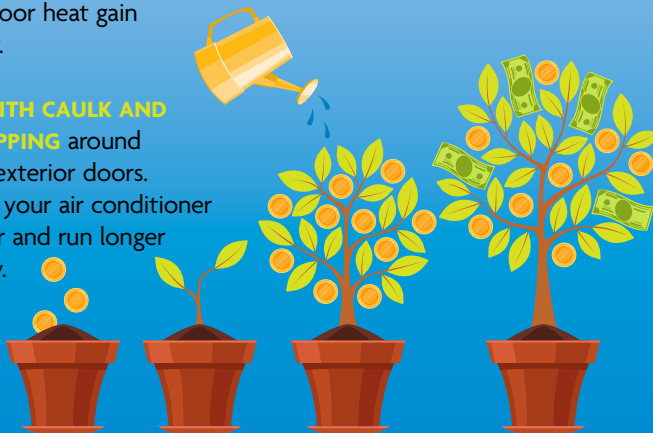
At Victory Electric, we understand that electricity is more than a commodity — it's a necessity. We will continue working hard to power your life, reliably and affordably, and we appreciate your efforts to help us save energy and keep energy costs down.

THANKS, SHANE

### 5 WAYS TO SAVE THIS SUMMER

When summer temperatures rise, so do our energy bills. Here are a few ways you can reduce energy use and grow your summer savings.

1. **RAISE YOUR THERMOSTAT.**  
The smaller the difference between the indoor and outdoor temperatures, the more you'll save.
2. **INSTALL WINDOW COVERINGS**  
like blinds or light-blocking curtains to prevent indoor heat gain during the day.
3. **SEAL LEAKS WITH CAULK AND WEATHERSTRIPPING** around windows and exterior doors. Air leaks force your air conditioner to work harder and run longer than necessary.
4. **RUN CEILING FANS** for additional cooling but turn them off when you leave the room.
5. **LOWER YOUR WATER HEATER** thermostat to 120 degrees to reduce standby heat loss.



SOURCE:  
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY



*Memorial Day*  
*Monday, May 27*