

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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THE VICTORY
ELECTRIC CO-OP

electronews



The Victory Electric Co-op Assn., Inc.

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Tom Lowery
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FROM THE CEO

Kansas Legislative Committee Considers Taxing Your Electric Bill

It is no secret that the State of Kansas needs additional revenue. News stories about the state's revenue shortfalls are plentiful. The Kansas Department of Revenue recently announced that for the first quarter of the current fiscal year receipts were short of estimates by \$42 million. Tax revenue comes to the state in a variety of ways—sales taxes, income taxes, and property taxes—and if taxes are reduced from one source, taxes must be increased somewhere else.

In 2012, the Kansas Legislature removed taxes on non-wage business income earned by small business owners (e.g., limited liability companies, corporations, and sole proprietorships). The theory is that untaxed income earned from small businesses would be reinvested. The reinvestment would allow the business owner to either add employees or property, both of which would generate taxes from the expansion. Unfortunately, the theory has not been successful. Small business growth in Kansas has not generated increased payroll or property taxes to keep pace with the needs of the state.

The Governor has indicated his preference for “consumption taxes.” Consumption taxes are taxes you pay

when you purchase an item or service. The 2015 Kansas Legislature, to compensate for the revenue shortfall, passed legislation to increase the overall sales tax rates from 6.15 to 6.5 percent. Cigarette and tobacco taxes were also increased. Although some legislators were not supportive of this policy shift efforts to eliminate the small business income tax reductions passed in 2012 were not successful.

During the 2015 tax discussions, many legislators indicated a desire to eliminate various tax exemption in the state. Legislation to eliminate exemptions was not successful. An interim legislative committee was formed to determine the value of current tax exemptions and credits within the State's tax code and to recommend proposals to eliminate various tax exemptions.

The interim Special Committee on Taxation met recently to discuss sales taxes and exemptions. Energy sales currently have a retail sales tax exemption, but last spring a legislative committee considered a proposal to remove the exemption on residential energy sales. While utility representa-



Shane Laws

Continued on page 16-B ►

FROM THE
BOARD PRESIDENTVictory Seeks
Board NominationsKenny
WehkampDear Victory
Members,

It is time once again to start thinking about Victory Electric's annual membership meeting held in April 2016.

We are currently soliciting nominations for Victory Electric's board of trustees. Positions up for election are in District 4, currently held by **GARY GILLESPIE**, Copeland; District 7, currently held by **JIM OCHS**, Jetmore; District 9, currently held by **RICHARD LIGHTNER**, Garden City; and District 10, currently held by **PAT MORSE**, Dodge City.

To qualify, you must be a natural person (not a corporation, partnership or any other business entity); and your principal residence must be served by Victory Electric and located within our territory and within the district you wish to represent. Also, if a close relative of yours—within the third degree—is an employee or a trustee of Victory Electric, you are not eligible to run for a trustee position.

Duties of an elected trustee include: attending a monthly six-to-eight hour board meeting, board training opportunities, and some travel will be required.

If you would like to run for a position, or you know someone interested, please send a letter of interest with qualifications to Shane Laws or Kenny Wehkamp at Victory Electric, P.O. Box 1335, Dodge City, KS 67801.

Sincerely,

KENNY WEHKAMP, PRESIDENT

Tax Exemptions Continued

► Continued from page 16-A

tives were successful in fighting this change last spring, the special committee is expected to consider the proposal again, perhaps recommending to the 2016 Legislature that the tax exemption on residential energy sales be eliminated. If this exemption is removed, expect an increase your electric bill by 6.5 percent.

All tax exemptions are available for a reason. Our core economies—electricity, oil, gas, agriculture, and manufacturing—use special tax programs to keep costs as low as possible and remain competitive. The residential electricity exemption was originally approved because legislators know that energy is vital to the daily

lives of Kansans. Eliminating the exemption would increase utility costs at a time when our core economies are struggling, and energy rates are expected to rise.

On your behalf, the government relations staff at Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., our statewide organization, consistently work with legislators to explain how removing the sales tax exemption on residential energy sales would raise costs to all Kansans and potentially be harmful to rural Kansans.

As always, Lane-Scott Electric will continue to advocate for public policy that protects you from unnecessary rate increases.

Thanks, Shane

Ten \$1,000 Scholarships Available

The Victory Electric Cooperative Assn., Inc., is proud to announce our scholarship program for high school seniors and current college students. In the spring, Victory Electric will award ten \$1,000 scholarships to its members or their dependents. The Lightner Community Spirit Scholarship is designed to recognize students who have demonstrated academic success as well as showing a commitment to bettering their community.

"We are thrilled to announce this scholarship program, which reflects the importance of civic and community engagement," said Shane Laws, Victory Electric CEO. "As a not-for-profit cooperative, one of our guiding principles is 'Commitment to Community,' and I can't think of a better way than a scholarship program

to give back to the communities we serve and encourage youth to be involved in their own community."



The name of the scholarship honors the Lightner family of Plymell, Kansas. Richard Lightner has been on Victory Electric's board of trustees for 34 years and his father, George, served 31 years previous. Both strongly supported Victory Electric's community and youth programs.

To be eligible for the scholarship, applicants must be an active member in good standing with the cooperative, or a dependent of such member. Applicants must be a student or entering an accredited college or university (two or four year). Applications must be received no later than March 1, 2016.

For further information or to request the application form, please contact Jerri Imgarten at 620-371-7730.

Victory Youth Enjoy 9th Annual Pumpkin Festival



The Annual Pumpkin Painting and Carving Festival was attended by approximately 550 area youth.

The 9th Annual Pumpkin Painting and Carving Festival was held on October 24 at Victory Electric.

Sponsored by Victory Electric and Ladies Community Outreach, the event was free for the approximately 550 youth who participated.

“The kids really love coming out and using their creative abilities to create pumpkins that are artistic and uniquely their own,” said Jerri Imgarten, manager of marketing and communications at Victory Electric. “I enjoyed

helping with such a fun and festive event for the youth of the Dodge City and surrounding communities.”

Victory sponsors the event to provide a safe environment for kids to enjoy Halloween activities. It is also a way to give back to the community and supply a pumpkin to those kids in our community that may not otherwise get a pumpkin to paint or carve.

In addition to painting and carving, there were also Halloween and fall-themed games for the youth to enjoy.



Kambre Konrade concentrates on painting a pumpkin.



Dave Masden, Victory Electric crew chief, helps Dillion Stormont, on tractor, get back on track during a race.



Ethan Pogue shows off his creation.



Mickey and Minnie make an appearance at the Pumpkin Festival.



There were many colorful pumpkins. Kids even came in their halloween costumes to enjoy the event.

Merry Christmas



Shane Laws
CEO



Kenny Wehkamp
Board President



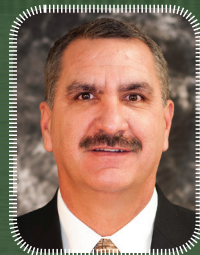
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Gary Gillespie
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Jim Imel
Trustee

Christmas!

Victory Electric; Shane Laws, CEO; the board of trustees; and employees wish all of our members a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! We will be closed on December 24 and 25 in observance of the Christmas holiday, and close again at 3 p.m. on December 31 and all day on January 1 for New Year's.

 Altec



Jim Imel
Trustee

Terri Larson
Trustee

Richard Lightner
Trustee

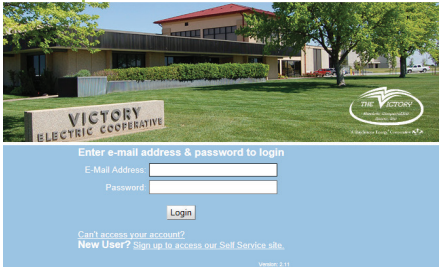
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Daryl Tieben
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Victory Electric Bill Payment Options



Pay your bill online at www.victoryelectric.net, at our office, by mail or at any of our pay stations.

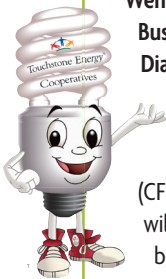
Victory Electric has several convenient options for you, the member, to pay your bill.

In addition to paying in our office or by mail, options include online bill pay at victoryelectric.net, drop boxes at Victory Electric and City of Dodge City.

CFL Charlie Says "Come Get Your Free CFL!"

This month's lucky winners are...

Wendy Barnett, Ryan Brady, Hector Bustamante, Quincy Donovan, Diana Gonzales, Ronald Hunter, and Mikal Roelfs. Come by Victory Electric's office to get your free compact fluorescent light bulb (CFL). Every month Victory Electric will be giving members free CFL light bulbs. Congratulations winners!



Irrigation Meeting Scheduled

Victory Electric will be hosting the Irrigation and Technology Seminar Friday, February 26, 2016.

The irrigation meeting is open to the public and will cover important agricultural issues. More details to follow.

Vittles for Vets | Winners

Congratulations to our October winners, **LOREN OCHS** and **ASHLEY EWY**. The third and final drawing for two, \$100 bill credits will take place December 9.

Also, with every 10 items donated, you'll also receive a free voucher to any Dodge City Law Football Game.

Flax & Woods to Retire After Decades of Service at Victory

HAROLD FLAX, supervisor of system technology, and **LEROY WOODS**, crew chief at Victory Electric will retire at the end of the year.

Flax and Woods both started at Victory Electric in April 2007, when Victory Electric acquired a portion of the Aquila electric properties.

Flax started at Western Light as a programmer in charge of data conversion in December 1985. In 2007, when Victory acquired Aquila, Flax coordinated the conversion to automated meters.

"The project was the highlight of my career," Flax said. "Our whole system was automated by May 2014."

The transition to automated meters was a big project and couldn't have been done alone.

"Harold isn't one you can replace. A good guy and a huge asset. He has helped me expand my knowledge and helped me get to where I'm at today," said Heath Konecny, supervisor of metering technology.

Woods came to Western Power in March 1973 as an operator before joining the line crew a year and a half later. Woods has been on the line crew since and has served as a crew



Harold Flax



Leroy Woods

chief since 2000.

Upon retirement, Woods plans to "relax and do nothing," he said.

Tom Lowry, manager of operations, has worked with Woods for several years and said, "I've known Leroy for many years. He is a hard working man. We wish him the best of luck."

Both, Flax and Woods, transitioned many times as the original Western Light company was bought and sold, before finally becoming a part of Victory Electric in 2007.

All of us at Victory Electric thank Harold and LeRoy for their many years of service to Victory Electric and the local community. We wish them a happy and relaxing retirement.

Victory Gives Back to local Schools

Victory Electric donated pumpkins to Northwest and Spearville Elementary. Each student received a pumpkin they chose themselves to take home. This is one way Victory Electric likes to continue to give back to the communities we



Spearville Elementary holds their pumpkins with school principal and Michael Stefan, from Victory Electric.

serve. Victory Electric serves as a community partner with local schools and distributes pumpkins each year so students have the opportunity to have pumpkins for Halloween.

CO-OP CONNECTIONS SPOTLIGHT

Depot Theater Company Offers Ticket Discount



The Depot Theater, dedicated in 1898, now serves as the Depot Theater Company and is ready for an audience for the next production, showing the weekends from December 4 to the 19. Photo on the left was taken in 1898; right-hand photo taken in 2014.

For years, the **DEPOT THEATER COMPANY** has brought the community together for dinner and a show and they are now offering a discount with Victory Electric's co-op connections card.

Today, the Depot is the largest, still-standing train depot built for the Santa Fe railroad in Kansas. Now, it's home to the Depot Theater where more than 185 volunteers create up to six shows a season.

"There is nothing like this in Southwest Kansas," said Connie Penick, Depot Theater director of operations. "Giving a fine dining experience with a show is what we do. It's what we've been doing for years." This year marks the 33rd season.

"We're constantly moving," Penick said. "We have to if we're going to provide the best experience for our audience." Providing the best wouldn't be an option without the people and the community behind the Depot Theater.

Concern for community is one of the seven cooperative principles that guides Victory Electric and the Depot Theater is no different.

"All of our volunteers are local. Not just from Dodge City, but Wright, Ashland, Bucklin and every other surrounding small town. People know the value of this place. We wouldn't be where we are today without them," Penick said.

The volunteers are important for each part of production; the planning, the executing and the final shows. "Volunteers plan sets, build sets, serve as waiters and bartenders, and do anything else we need to make our shows great," Penick said.

The concern for community makes the Depot Theater Company a "one-of-a-kind experience with professional standards," Penick said.

The Depot Theater is bringing to life "Whoville"

December 12 and 19 with "Kids Christmas in Whoville" and their final production of the 2015 calendar year will be "Christmas Belles," directed by Sheri Tieben. Christmas Belles will run every Friday, Saturday and Sunday from December 4 to December 19.

"With a Co-op Connections Card, members will save \$3 on dinner ticket prices," said Ila Siders, Depot Theater CEO and director of fundraising. "We want to get people here, we want to show them what's available right here in their own town."

A dinner ticket discount is just one of several ways to save with the co-op connections card provided by Victory Electric. Tickets are normally priced \$55 for a dinner ticket and \$40 for a show only ticket. One card can be used per household at the Depot Theater Company.

For a listing of businesses participating in the co-op connections program, locally and nationally, visit victory-electric.net/content/co-op-connections-card.

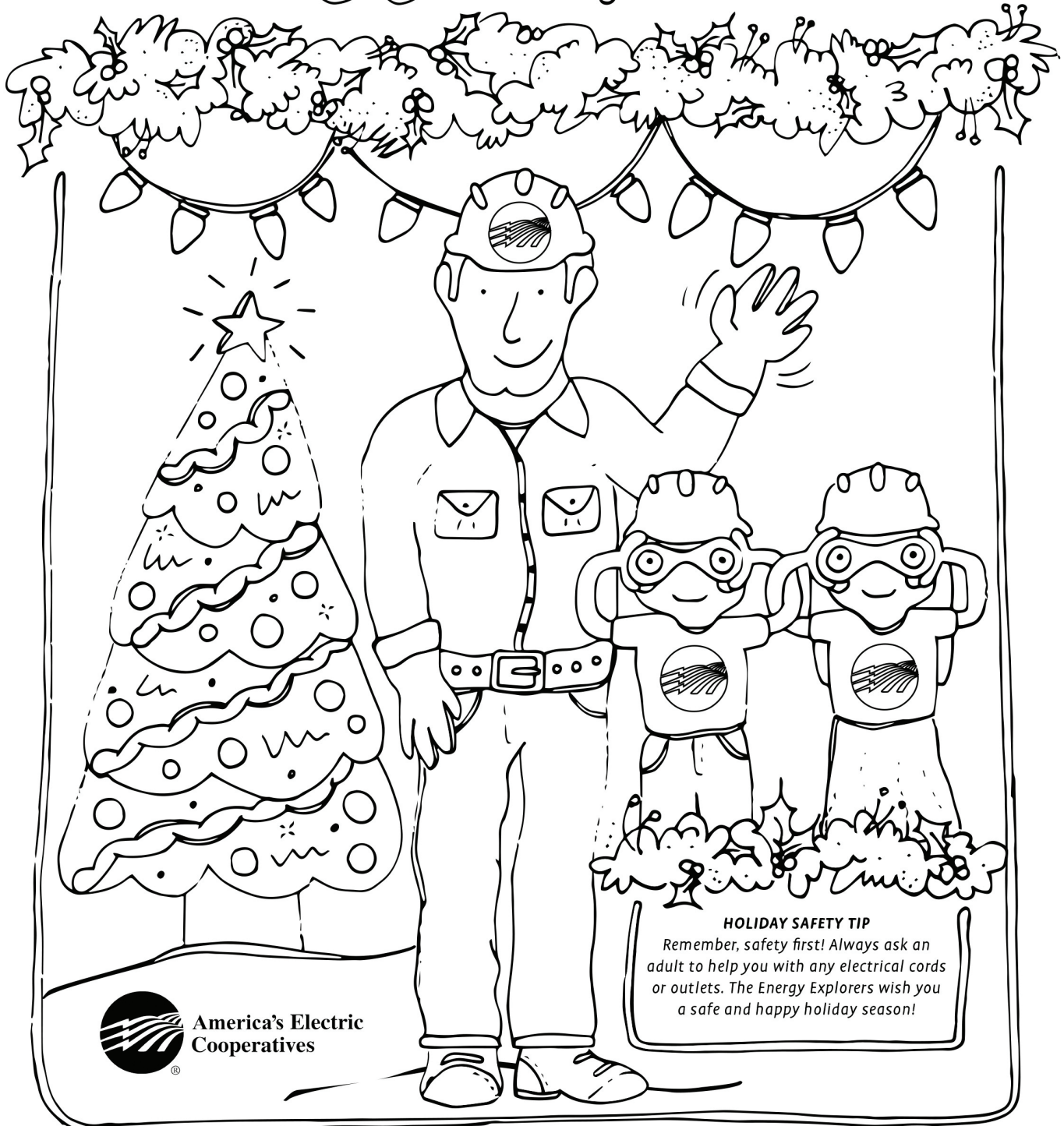


Ila Siders, director of financing, stands where dinner is served during the shows. Visit the Depot Theater for a show this season.

Happy Holidays

FROM THE

Energy Explorers



America's Electric
Cooperatives