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# Electronews

## The Victory Electric Cooperative Assn., Inc.

### Board of Trustees

- Pat Morse – President
- Daryl Tieben – Vice President
- Cedric Drewes – Secretary/Treasurer
- Gary Gillespie – Trustee
- Jim Imel – Trustee
- Terri Larson – Trustee
- John Leis – Trustee
- James Ochs – Trustee
- Randy Quint – Trustee
- Ken Schulte – Trustee
- Kenny Wehkamp – Trustee

### Staff

- Shane Laws – CEO
- Amy Grasser – Vice President of Corporate Services
- Mikey Goddard – Vice President of Safety
- Rob Henry – Vice President of Engineering
- Denzil McGill – Vice President of Information Technology
- Ryan Miller – Vice President of Operations
- Jerri Whitley – Vice President of Communications
- Angela Unruh – CFO

## CEO MESSAGE

# Committed to a Cooperative Culture for All



Shane Laws

Over the years, you've heard why and how Victory Electric is different — because we're a cooperative. Our business model sets us apart from other utilities

because we adhere to seven guiding cooperative principles that reflect core values of honesty, transparency, equity, inclusiveness and service to the greater good of the community.

Electric co-ops, including Victory Electric, have a unique and storied place in our country's history. We democratized the American dream by bringing electricity to rural areas when for-profit electric companies determined the effort too costly. Back then, cities were electrified, and rural areas were not,

creating the original rural-urban divide. Newly established electric lines helped power economic opportunity in rural areas. Today, that spirit of equity and inclusion is a vital part of a co-op's DNA.

### Equal Access for All

When Victory Electric was founded, each member contributed an equal share in order to gain access to electricity that benefited individual families as well as the larger local community. Each member had an equal vote in co-op matters. That sense of equity and inclusion is still how we operate today. Victory Electric was built by and belongs to the diverse communities and members we serve. Membership is open to everyone in our service territory, regardless of race, religion, age, disability, gender identity, language, political perspective or socioeconomic status.

**Continued on page 16B ▶**

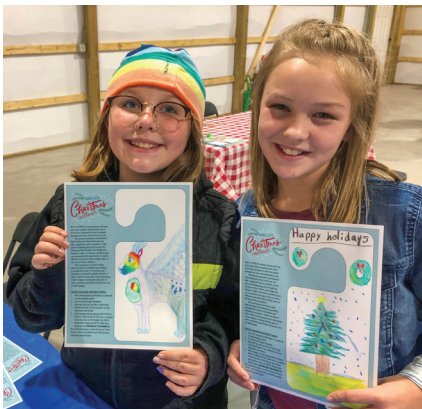


## Dodge City's Christmas Cheer Service Project a Success

Many holiday traditions took on a different look in 2020. Boisterous holiday dinner tables filled with family members were replaced with video call screens. Face-mask clad shoppers filled bustling stores. And more people than ever stayed home to watch the ball drop at midnight on New Year's Eve.

Though these traditions may not have looked like the ones we used to know, people did their best to adapt and maintain some normalcy to feel the warmth and magic of the holidays.

Unfortunately, nursing homes and long-term care facilities were hit hardest by the changing of traditions. Usually filled with visiting family members and groups singing Christmas carols



Amity Goddard (left) and Jade Henry decorate door hangers for local long-term care facilities.

throughout the hallways, many facilities implemented strict visitor restrictions designed to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Though protective measures were necessary to keep residents safe, the planning committee of the 2020 Parade of Lights created a new initiative, the Christmas Cheer Project, to add a little holiday joy for residents.

"It was the committee's sincere hope to make this year's Christmas memorable for all, including those struggling with the changes brought on by COVID-19," said Jerri Whitley, vice president of communications. "We recognize the physical separation and isolation from family and other loved ones have taken a significant toll on residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities. In the spirit of holiday giving and through the Christmas Cheer Project, we wanted to give our community the opportunity to make a difference and add a little holiday joy to the lives of those cherished residents."

The community was invited to spread holiday cheer by writing personal letters, notes or Christmas cards, decorating door hangers, or donating



From left: Jerri Whitley, Victory Electric vice president of communications, and Coral Lopez, Main Street coordinator, deliver door hangers, Christmas cards, letters and more to Debbie Allen, marketing and community liaison for Sunporch of Dodge City.

artwork and small Christmas décor items to help brighten the halls and rooms of the care facilities.

Four local elementary schools — Northwest, Sacred Heart, Ross and Miller — aided our efforts by collectively donating 600 decorated door hangers and letters.

Originally, the project was meant to be part of the 2020 Parade of Lights. "Even though we were not able to host the parade this year, the committee felt it was important to carry on with the project," said Coral Lopez, coordinator of Main Street Dodge City. "We wanted to show our appreciation and support for the part of our community who were withdrawn from their families and their holiday traditions."

## Committed to a Cooperative Culture for All Continued from page 16A ▶

By virtue of paying your electric bill each month, you're a member of the co-op, and every member has an equal voice and vote when it comes to cooperative governance. This ties back to our guiding principles of equitable economic participation and democratic control of the cooperative.

We encourage all members to vote in Victory Electric's trustee elections every April, and we invite all members to participate in cooperative meetings or talk to your district's elected trustee to weigh in on discussions that set co-op policies and priorities.

We know members of our community have different needs and perspectives, and we welcome diverse views on all issues under consideration by the cooperative. The more viewpoints we hear, the better we are able to reflect the needs of all corners of our community.

### Inclusion

While our top priority is providing safe, reliable and affordable energy, we also want to be a catalyst for good in our community. Because we are your local electric cooperative, revenues stay right here in our community. In turn, we invest in our diverse community base through scholarship programs, charitable giving, educational programs and more. We strive to make long-term decisions that improve and enrich the communities we serve.

While today's world is radically different than it was when Victory Electric was founded, our co-op values have stood the test of time and remain just as relevant today. We recognize that today's co-op members expect more, and my pledge to you is to promote a co-op culture of inclusion, diversity and equity for all.

*Thanks, Shane*

# Sharing Success Grants Awarded to Local Organizations

Victory Electric is pleased to announce New Chance, Inc. and the Salvation Army of Dodge City as the recipients of the 2020 Victory Electric/CoBank Sharing Success grant.

**NEW CHANCE** is a local alcohol and drug rehabilitation center that strives to make a difference through both residential and outpatient services. New Chance intends to use the grant for technology and security upgrades to enhance and extend their services.

“We would not have been able to do this so quickly if we had to wait until funds came available through normal business operations,” said Doug Austen, director of administrative services. “With newly updated computers, counselors can better serve clients by more easily accessing electronic health records and providing telehealth services.”

The second recipient of the grant is the **SALVATION ARMY OF DODGE CITY**, which is an international charitable organization with local branches to help meet individualized community needs. The Salvation Army has been serving Dodge City since 1890 by helping to meet community member’s basic needs and promote spiritual, educational, recreational and social development.

A 2017 study determined the current Salvation Army Community Center was inadequate to provide the ever-increasing services needed in southwest Kansas. Since then, the Salvation Army has been in negotiations to purchase the former *High Plains Journal* building in Dodge City.

“This grant puts us one step closer to purchasing the new building,” said Roberto Davila, Salvation Army captain. “The new building will greatly impact the community by allowing us to expand our programs and resources.”

The annual Sharing Success grant is capped at \$20,000, and made possible by Victory Electric’s board of trustees, in partnership with CoBank — a cooperative bank that provides financial services to agribusinesses and rural power, water and communications providers. CoBank matches charitable contributions made by its co-op members to local nonprofits in their individual communities.



The Salvation Army of Dodge City will use grant funds toward a new building. Above (from left): Pat Morse, Victory Electric board trustee; Rob Henry, Victory Electric vice president of engineering; Jerri Whitley, Victory Electric vice president of communications; Kyndell Penick, Victory Electric manager of key accounts; Roberto Davila, Salvation Army captain; and Elia Davila, Salvation Army captain.

Since its inception in 2012, Sharing Success has generated more than \$50 million in total charitable donations.

“Thanks to our board of trustees and CoBank, the Sharing Success grant enables Victory Electric to give back to the communities we serve,” said Shane Laws, Victory Electric CEO.

In the last nine years, Victory Electric has awarded \$105,000 in Sharing Success grants. The Bucklin Library received the grant in 2012 to help fund the construction of its new library. In 2013, Mission of Mercy was awarded the grant for its free dental clinic in Dodge City. The Stauth Memorial Museum in Montezuma applied the 2014 grant toward a “Suits in Space” Smithsonian exhibit. In 2015, local shelter and food bank, the Manna House, received the grant to repair and improve their facilities. The Depot Theater used the grant to upgrade its theater sound system in 2016. In 2017, the Ford County Historical Society made repairs to preserve the history of the Home of Stone - Mueller Schmidt House. In 2018, the grant helped Ford County Sheriff’s Office make security upgrades. The Ingalls Recreation Commission funded repairs and upgrades to the Ingalls swimming pool in 2019.



Doug Austen (left), New Chance, Inc. director of administrative services, accepts a grant check from Jerri Whitley (center), Victory Electric vice president of communications, and Pat Morse, Victory Electric board trustee. New Chance Inc. will use the grant for technology and security upgrades.

## APPLY FOR 2021 SHARING SUCCESS GRANT

One of Victory Electric’s most unique and exciting community programs is the Sharing Success grant program for local nonprofit organizations.

“Rural communities and cooperatives like Victory Electric are lucky to have the generous support of CoBank,” said Jerri Whitley, Victory Electric vice president of communications. “CoBank’s contribution of a matching grant

enables us to help make our communities a better place to live and work.”

Any organization interested in applying for the 2021 CoBank Sharing Success grant must be a federally recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit. The online application is available on our website at [victoryelectric.net/cobank-sharing-success-grant](http://victoryelectric.net/cobank-sharing-success-grant) and due by **5 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 12, 2021.**



**SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

*Lightner Community Spirit Scholarship*

**10**

Apply Online • Due Feb. 19, 2021

This spring, Victory Electric will award 10 students with \$1,000 scholarships. Graduating high school seniors, current post-secondary or college students may **APPLY BY FEB. 19, 2021**. The Lightner Community Spirit Scholarship program is designed to recognize students who have demonstrated academic success and have shown a commitment to bettering their community.

### Scholarship Requirements and Applicant Eligibility

All applicants for the scholarship shall be considered on the application criteria without regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, or existence of a physical handicap.

- ▶ Scholarships are available to graduating high school seniors and current college students.
- ▶ Applicants must be a current student at or be entering an accredited college, university or trade school.
- ▶ Scholarships are for one year. An applicant may apply as often as desired but are only eligible to receive a Victory Electric scholarship once.
- ▶ Must be an active Victory Electric member in good standing for at least 12 consecutive months or a dependent of such member.
- ▶ Must have and maintain at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA on a 4.0 scale.

### How to Apply

The Lightner Community Spirit Scholarship program now has an online application process. To apply, applicants should visit [victoryelectric.net/lightner-](http://victoryelectric.net/lightner-)

community-spirit-scholarship, which contains scholarship information, applicant eligibility, scholarship requirements, a scholarship application guide, and a link to begin the 10-step online application process. Applicants should carefully review the application requirements and gather all necessary materials before beginning the application process. Required items include:

- ▶ Applicant and parent contact information
- ▶ Victory Electric membership information
- ▶ Résumé
- ▶ Copy of official transcript mailed to Victory Electric in a sealed envelope with the envelope flap signed by a school official, or a digital transcript emailed to [askcommunications@victoryelectric.net](mailto:askcommunications@victoryelectric.net) from a school official.
- ▶ Biographical statement
- ▶ A 450-600 word essay
- ▶ A digital, high-resolution headshot photo of the applicant with the provided photographer's photo release form completed
- ▶ The deadline to submit the scholarship application is no later than **5 P.M. ON FRIDAY, FEB. 19, 2021**.

Since the program began in 2016, Victory Electric has awarded \$1,000 scholarships to 50 deserving students. The name of the scholarship honors the Lightner family of Plymell, Kansas. Richard Lightner served on Victory Electric's board of trustees for 36 years, and his father, George,

served 31 years previous. Both were strong proponents of Victory Electric's community and youth programs.

For questions or more information on the scholarship application process, please contact Victory Electric Communications Coordinator Allison Doll at 620-371-7738 or [askcommunications@victoryelectric.net](mailto:askcommunications@victoryelectric.net).

**Save  
the Date!**

**VICTORY ELECTRIC'S  
ANNUAL MEETING**

**Tuesday, April 20  
Western State  
Bank Expo Center  
Dodge City, KS**

**FOR UPDATES, VISIT  
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