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 Visit us on YouTube



# Electronews

## CEO MESSAGE

### 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

## Rate Reduction for the Holidays



**Shane Laws**

The onset of a worldwide pandemic made 2020 a year for the record books and one not soon forgotten. Despite the numerous challenges dealt

by COVID-19, Victory Electric ended 2020 on a positive note. In addition to refunding \$2.1 million in capital credits to our members in December, Victory Electric also added a little brightness to the holiday season with an electric rate reduction in November and December.

The rate reduction on the member's electric bill was through the Energy Cost Adjustment (ECA). With a credit ECA of 1.3¢ per kWh in November and a 1.5¢ per kWh credit in December, members received a combined average savings of \$24 on the average residential electric bill of \$112.50.

While prices seem to be on

the rise for many other utilities, Victory Electric is extremely proud to pass on any rate savings to our members. We hope it is a welcome relief that offers members a light at the end of the tunnel, and ultimately helps keep our communities economically viable and strong.

#### Why an ECA Matters

Victory Electric's base energy prices are purposely set for long intervals, often years, in an effort to keep prices steady and protect our members from market volatility. In addition to wholesale power costs, the base energy charge includes components such as fixed infrastructure costs, overhead and maintenance, property taxes and interest expense.

**Continued on page 16F ▶**

Bill Date: 12/09/2020

CURRENT MONTH ENERGY CHARGE		AMOUNT
Energy Charge	803 KWH @ 0. 111778	89. 76
<b>Energy Cost Adj (ECA)</b>	<b>803 KWH @ -0. 01469</b>	<b>- 11. 80</b>
Service Availability Charge		15. 00
Ford County Tax 1. 15%		1.12
Spearville Franchise Fee 5. 0%		4. 65
<b>With a credit ECA of 1.3¢ per kWh in November and a 1.5¢ per kWh credit in December, members received a combined average savings of \$24 on the average residential electric bill of \$112.50.</b>		
<b>Current Month Energy Charge</b>		<b>98. 73</b>

# Working *on the* LINE

## Victory Sends Eight to Assist a Sister Kansas Cooperative

On Dec. 3, 2020, eight Victory Electric linemen loaded six cooperative vehicles and headed south of Victory Electric's typical service territory to aid another Kansas electric cooperative in restoring outages caused by rough winter weather. A bout of heavy snow and wind took down more than 60 poles near Coldwater, resulting in extended outages for members of CMS Electric Cooperative.

Pictured from left are Marlon Hernandez, Jake Gier, Austin Gooder, Kevin Freeman, Kade Henry, Jeremy Elling, Justin Straight and Kody Stockton.



# Save the Date!

VICTORY ELECTRIC'S ANNUAL MEETING

Tuesday, April 20, 2021  
Western State Bank Expo Center  
Dodge City, Kansas

FOR UPDATES, VISIT [VICTORYELECTRIC.NET](http://VICTORYELECTRIC.NET)  
OR FIND US ON FACEBOOK!



# 10 SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

## *Lightner Community Spirit Scholarship*

Apply Online • Due Feb. 19, 2021

### Apply Online for Lightner Community Spirit Scholarship

This spring, Victory Electric will award 10 \$1,000 scholarships to graduating high school seniors and current post-secondary or college students. The Lightner Community Spirit Scholarship program is designed to recognize students who have demonstrated academic success and have showed 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 is 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-community-spirit-scholarship](http://victoryelectric.net/lightner-community-spirit-scholarship), which contains the award information, applicant eligibility, scholarship

requirements, an application guide, and a link to begin the 10-step online application. 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 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 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 Communications Coordinator Allison Doll at 620-371-7738 or [askcommunications@victoryelectric.net](mailto:askcommunications@victoryelectric.net).

## Pay Your Bill the Easy Way with AutoPay

Don't sweat the small stuff. Simplify life and sign up for AutoPay!



Pay your electric bill with AutoPay. It's a secure, easy, and convenient way to pay with your debit/credit card or bank.



Tired of writing checks every month? Want to remove another item off your monthly to-do list? Sign up for an automatic payment plan to have your electric bill automatically paid directly from your credit/debit card or checking/savings account. All Victory Electric members are eligible to join the program and the service is free.

- ▶ It's easy, convenient, fast and there is no need to wait in line.
- ▶ The biggest advantage to AutoPay is your payments are processed automatically and consistently paid on time, which helps you avoid late payments and past due bills.
- ▶ You save the hassle of writing a check every month, paying postage, and getting it mailed on time.
- ▶ If you choose our paperless option to receive fewer bills in the mail and produce less paperwork, your bills are emailed each month and accessible through SmartHub.

### What is AutoPay?

A no hassle solution for paying your monthly electric bill. AutoPay is a recurring payment program that pays your monthly electric bill directly from the financial institution and account or credit/debit card of your choice on the bill's due date.

### How Does it Work?

Per normal, you will receive your electric bill on a monthly basis. When enrolled in AutoPay, your statement will display "[ $\$$ ] TO BE DRAFTED ON [DATE]" in the amount due box. You can also opt for paperless billing and receive your bill electronically. You will receive an email or text message stating

the amount due and that your detailed bill is ready to view in SmartHub. With both methods, you will have time, typically a couple weeks, to contact us with any questions or concerns before the amount due is drafted from your account on the due date. Credit/debit card transactions are limited to \$2,500.

### How Do I Sign Up for AutoPay?

Members can easily set up AutoPay from the convenience of your home or office via SmartHub. For instructions on how to set up AutoPay in SmartHub or if needing a form because you prefer not to set up AutoPay bank draft through SmartHub, visit our website for instructions or to download the form.

### Can I Cancel AutoPay?

Absolutely! If you are not pleased with the AutoPay payment option, you can opt-out on SmartHub at any time. You can then pay by cash or check. If your credit/debit card expires, you get a new card, or you change bank accounts, it can easily be updated in SmartHub. If you need to temporarily suspend AutoPay, contact Victory Electric or visit SmartHub prior to the bill due date.

### Is it Secure?

Data breaches make headlines, but online banking and payment systems are no less secure than leaving a check in an envelope in an unguarded mailbox. In fact, your accounts may be better protected through the encryption techniques used to secure members' information. For more information on AutoPay, please visit our website at [victoryelectric.net](http://victoryelectric.net).



# STREETLIGHT OUT?

Victory Electric crews aren't able to patrol streets in the dark and nighttime hours. We rely on you and appreciate you helping us maintain the more than **4,170** streetlights in our service area.

Our new streetlight outage reporting tool makes it easier than ever to report streetlights that may be out, cycling on and off, have broken glass or exposed wires, or the pole is broken or leaning.

Visit **[victoryelectric.net/report-street-light-problem](http://victoryelectric.net/report-street-light-problem)** on your computer or mobile device and tell us:

- City where the streetlight is located
- The location of the streetlight
- What's wrong with the light
- Streetlight/pole number (if available)
- Your contact information

Keeping streetlights functioning properly is part of our commitment to providing you with safe, reliable power.

## Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at 800-877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call 866-632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: 202-690-7442; or (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

## Rate Reduction for the Holidays Continued on page 16A ▶

Because of the complexity and financial investment involved with changing base rates regularly, there can often be a time lag between changes in the wholesale rate and the retail energy price. The ECA allows the cooperative to respond to market fluctuations without implementing a rate change.

Each month through the ECA, electric bills are adjusted either up or down to account for abnormal "variable" power supply costs. These variables determine how much our power supplier incurs or saves in the process of generating power, to include fuel costs like coal and natural gas, power purchases, and the cost of transmission to deliver the power to Victory Electric's system.

When the cost of wholesale power decreases significantly like it did in November and December, the ECA

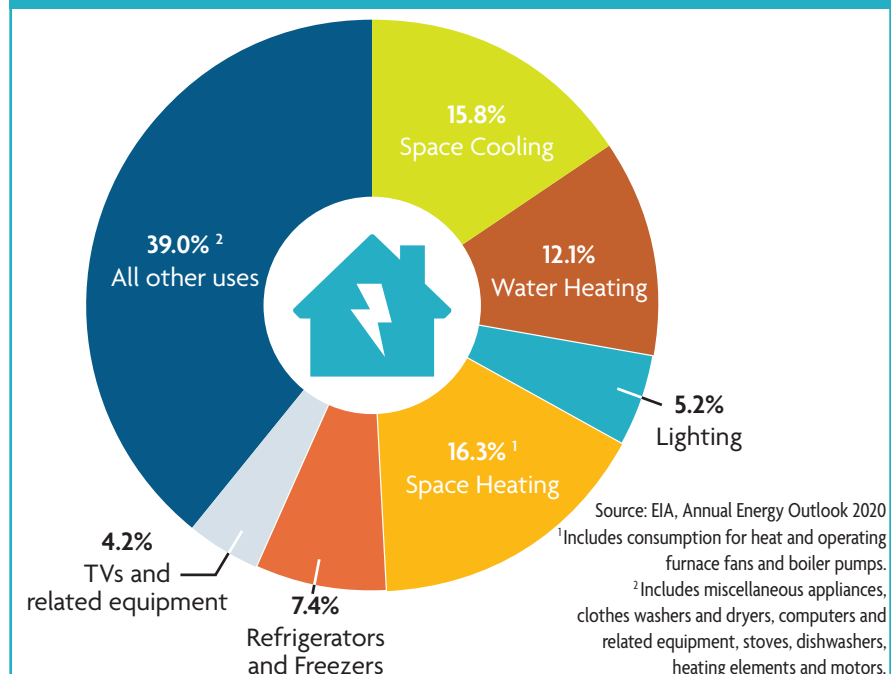
gives Victory Electric an avenue and the capability of immediately passing the savings on to our members. The ECA is a pass-through bill adjustment to our power suppliers, and Victory Electric's margins are not increased or decreased by the ECA.

Based on rate data gathered from the U.S. Energy Information Administration, Victory Electric continues to provide some of the lowest electric rates in the state of Kansas. While energy markets, weather, natural gas supplies and prices and government regulations constantly fluctuate and influence energy prices, our dedication to finding ways of decreasing the cost of power for our members reinforces Victory Electric's commitment to providing safe, reliable power at an affordable price.

*Thanks, Shane*

## How Americans Use Electricity

The latest data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration shows the combined use of clothes washers and dryers, computers, dishwashers, small appliances and other electrical equipment (noted as "all other uses" below) accounts for nearly 40% of electricity consumption in American homes.



## Prepare for Winter Storms to Stay Safe and Warm

When winter temperatures drop and storms hit, it can be a challenge to stay safe and warm. Snow and ice are an inevitable part of the winter season. They can lead to downed power lines and outages. During a power outage, our crews will continue to work as safely and quickly as possible to restore your power.

Victory Electric cares about your safety and we want you to be prepared. The following tips can keep you safe and warm if you find yourself in the dark after a winter storm:

- ▶ When an outage occurs, it usually means power lines are down. It is best not to travel during winter storms, but if you must, bring a survival kit along, and do not travel alone. If you encounter downed lines, always assume they are live. Stay as far away from the downed lines as possible, and report the situation to Victory Electric at 620-227-2139. Avoid contact with overhead lines during cleanup and other activities.
- ▶ In the event of an outage, an alternate heating source — such as a fireplace, propane space heater, or wood stove — may be used with extreme caution.
- ▶ Plan to stay in the area of your home where the alternate heat source is located.
- ▶ Fuel and wood-burning heating sources should be vented. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's directions.
- ▶ Make sure carbon monoxide detectors and smoke detectors are in proper working order.
- ▶ Do not use a gas-powered oven for heating. A gas oven may go out or burn inefficiently, potentially leading to carbon monoxide poisoning.
- ▶ Do not use a gas or charcoal grill inside the home. Do not use charcoal briquettes in the fireplace.
- ▶ If you use a portable generator to power a heating source, be sure the generator is located outside your house for proper ventilation. Do not use a generator in an attached garage.

### Victory Electric is ready for what Mother Nature has in store, and we want you to be ready, too.

Follow the manufacturer's directions for operating the generator.

- ▶ Take special care not to overload a generator. If it is necessary to use an extension cord, use appropriately sized extension cords to carry the electric load. Make sure the cords have a grounded, three-pronged plug and are in good condition. Never use a plug that is frayed or pinched.
- ▶ Never run cords under rugs or carpets.
- ▶ Never connect generators to power lines. The reverse flow of electricity can electrocute an unsuspecting utility worker.

Winter weather can be unpredictable and dangerous, and planning ahead can often be the difference between life and death. Victory Electric is ready for what Mother Nature has in store, and we want you to be ready, too.

## Disaster Supply Kit

Winter storms can cause ice on the lines leading to a power outage. Due to conditions, you may be without power for any amount of time. Listed below are a few examples of items you may think about including in your supply kit:

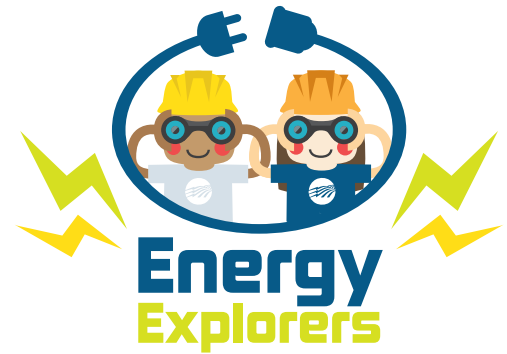
- ▶ A supply of water, one gallon per person per day and plenty of non perishable food.
- ▶ Warm clothing, personal hygiene, sleeping bag/blanket, pillow and shoes.
- ▶ First-aid kit with sterile gloves, antibiotics, ointment, tweezers, prescription medication, bandages, etc.
- ▶ Tools like fire extinguisher, utility knife, pliers, work gloves, scissors, duct tape.
- ▶ Basic supplies such as flashlight, battery powered radio, extra batteries, cash/coins, small shovel, candles/matches, charged cell phone and pet supplies.
- ▶ Sanitation items such as toilet paper, garbage bags, chlorine bleach, moist towelettes and hand sanitizer.



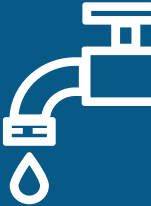



A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

## 2021 ENERGY EFFICIENCY CALENDAR

There are so many ways you can save energy! Saving energy helps reduce your family's monthly bills — and it helps our environment. Change your energy use habits by following the monthly tips below. Keep this calendar on your refrigerator to remind family members to be energy efficient throughout the year.



JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL
<p>Take short showers instead of baths.</p> 	<p>Instead of turning up the heat, put on an extra layer of clothing or stay cozy under a blanket.</p>	<p>Turn off lights when you leave a room.</p> 	<p>Ask an adult to help you plant a tree to shade your home in the summer.</p>
MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST
<p>Decorate your backyard or porch with solar-powered lights.</p>	<p>Turn off ceiling fans when you leave the room.</p> 	<p>Dry heavy linens outside on a clothesline instead of using the dryer.</p>	<p>Ask an adult to help you schedule a reminder to change the HVAC filter every 60-90 days.</p>
SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
<p>Turn off running water while brushing your teeth.</p> 	<p>Unplug energy vampires, like chargers, gaming consoles and cable/satellite boxes.</p>	<p>Remind family members to use cold water when washing clothes.</p> 	<p>Decorate your home with energy-saving LED holiday lights.</p>