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Electronews

The Victory Electric Cooperative Assn., Inc.

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CEO MESSAGE

Capital Credits Retirement to Distribute \$2.1 Million to Members



Shane Laws

Capital credits are just one of the many reasons it is great to be a member of an electric co-op. This month, Victory Electric is retiring capital credits and returning \$2.1 million to members, \$563,000 of which represents net margins issued to members who purchased electricity between 1995 and 1998. In addition, at the 2020 annual meeting, the members voted to give the board of trustees more flexibility in determining the timing and method of retiring capital credits. The board chose to exercise this flexibility to retire \$1,537,000 million received from the capital credit distributions of our three power suppliers, otherwise

known as generation and transmission (G&T) cooperatives, to Victory Electric members who purchased electricity in 1995, 1996, 2008 and 2012.

So, what is a capital credits retirement? Electric cooperatives are not like other utilities. We operate on a not-for-profit basis, which means we operate at cost. But even not-for-profit businesses can have money left over after all expenses are paid in a given year. The difference is, at the end of the year, we allocate that money (but not immediately retire) to each member's account according to the amount of electricity purchased. We collect only enough revenue to run and expand business without the need to generate profits for distant shareholders. Victory Electric works hard every day to keep rates as low as possible. But it's sure nice to know when there are extra margins at

Continued on page 16D ▶



CO-OP'S CARE CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT BENEFITS Avenue



Representatives from Victory Electric and the Co-ops Care Charity Golf Tournament presented a check for \$8,069.19 to the Dodge City Veterans Council/Avenue of Flags at their annual Veterans Day service on Wednesday, Nov. 11, at Maple Grove Cemetery. The funds donated were proceeds from the second annual Co-ops Care Charity Golf Tournament, co-hosted by Victory Electric and Wheatland Electric cooperatives in August.

"Giving back to the community is what cooperatives do," said Jerri Whitley, Victory Electric vice president of

communications. "We couldn't be more happy to be a part of supporting our local veterans and their families as well as to help build and support strong, happy and healthy communities for our members."

The Dodge City Veterans Council is made up of three veteran's organizations: the Dodge City Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American G.I. Forum, and the American Legion. The council promotes patriotism and pride; aids less-fortunate veterans and their dependents; promotes harmony among member organization; and observes designated national holidays to honor veterans.

The Dodge City Veterans Council also manages Avenue of Flags, which organizes and conducts annual events honoring veterans at Maple Grove Cemetery in Dodge City. In addition, the organization maintains the flagpoles at the cemetery, each of which is dedicated in memory of a veteran.

Avenue of Flags is raising funds to purchase and install additional flagpoles and flags for a newly planned cemetery road, to be named Bob Hughes Boulevard. The road, which recognizes Hughes' many years of volunteer service to the organization, will require many additional flagpoles and flags to grace the boulevard. Hughes was also a retired Victory Electric lineman. During his time at Victory Electric and after his retirement in 2009, Hughes served as the chairman of Avenue of Flags.

The donations will also help Avenue of Flags develop and purchase a computerized flagpole identification system and equipment aimed at helping visitors identify the specific location(s) of flagpoles and plaques dedicated to veterans;



Avenue of Flags is raising funds to purchase and install additional flagpoles and flags along a new road in Maple Grove Cemetery, to be named Bob Hughes Boulevard. Hughes was an organization volunteer and also a retired Victory Electric lineman.

of Flags



purchase and replace local area veteran's organizations' Honor Guard uniforms used when performing at veteran funerals; purchase a storage shed to house and protect council property; and assist with the maintenance of flags, flagpoles and council equipment.

"We want to thank Victory Electric for their generosity as well as the individuals, businesses and organizations who either sponsored, donated or participated in the charity golf tournament," said Allen Burkhart, president of Avenue of Flags. "It's clear this is a community that cares about our veterans and donations like these help us continue to honor our veteran heroes who graciously served our country."

The 18-hole, four-man scramble Co-ops Care charity Golf Tournament hosted 31 teams at Mariah Hills in Dodge City on Aug. 28, 2020. The event kicked-off with a welcome from the CEOs of Victory Electric and Wheatland Electric followed by a short ceremony presented by the Avenue of Flags Color Guard. Throughout the day, golfers had the opportunity to participate in many activities, contests and games, which were followed by awards and door prizes donated by tournament sponsors. In addition to the Dodge City Veterans Council/Avenue of Flags, proceeds from the



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charity golf tournament also benefited Wheatland Electric's Cram the Van food drive.

"Avenue of Flags is a great organization that supports and honors those who served our country and fought for our freedom," said Kyndell Penick. Victory Electric manager of key accounts. "We were thankful and honored to have great support from tournament sponsors and many others to help Avenue of Flags fulfill their mission of honoring veterans."

\$2.1 Million Capital Credits Retirement *Continued from page 16A* ▶

the end of the year, they go back to members and members receive cash back over time.

As a not-for-profit utility, Victory Electric is limited to two options for raising capital: borrowing or raising capital from its members. By combining capital credits funding obtained from members with borrowed money on which Victory Electric must pay interest, the cooperative is able to lower its cost of capital. Therefore, capital credits help Victory Electric remain in good financial standing and keep rates as low as possible for our members. The capital is used for improvements, such as substations, power lines and other electrical system facilities that serve our members. It also helps to build and sustain the cooperative in an industry experiencing massive changes and even more technological advances.

After each fiscal year, and once the determination has been made that the financial

“Members receiving \$50 or less will receive a bill credit on their December electric bill. Checks are expected to be mailed to members who are receiving more than \$50 in early to mid-December.”

condition of the cooperative is stable and adequate to meet operating costs and debt covenants, the board of trustees may elect to return excess capital by retiring capital credits to Victory Electric members. After evaluating the health of the cooperative in 2020, Victory Electric's board of trustees voted to retire \$2.1 million.

Members receiving \$50 or less will receive a bill credit on their December electric bill. Checks are expected to be mailed to members who are receiving more than \$50 in early to mid-December. If Victory Electric does not have a current address on file, a check will not be issued. Victory Electric members who may be leaving or have already left the cooperative service area are encouraged to provide Victory Electric with a current mailing address so capital credits can be returned as they are retired. If you think you may be a former member without a current address on file, please contact our office to arrange for your capital credits payment to be issued.

Only your local electric cooperative makes every customer an owner of the business. It is just another way we are looking out for our members.

THANKS, SHANE

MOVING?

DON'T FORGET YOUR MONEY!!

IF YOU LEAVE (OR ALREADY LEFT) VICTORY ELECTRIC'S SERVICE AREA, REMEMBER TO PROVIDE US WITH A CURRENT MAILING ADDRESS TO ENSURE YOU RECEIVE YOUR CAPITAL CREDITS AS THEY ARE RETIRED.

Victory Electric Selects Local High School Students for Leadership Trips

Victory Electric is proud to sponsor four local high school juniors to participate in the 2021 youth tour programs. Each summer, Victory Electric sends two students to Washington, D.C., and two students to Steamboat Springs, Colorado, for two unique leadership opportunities.



Logan Hubbell



Chance Unruh



Courtney Bailey



Autumn Klein

CHANCE UNRUH, Ingalls, and **LOGAN HUBBELL**, Spearville, will travel to Washington, D.C., in June to attend the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour.

While in Washington, D.C., Unruh and Hubbell will join more than 1,800 youth from across the nation. Participants will visit the monuments, have breakfast on Capitol Hill with the Kansas senators, and attend several other attractions.

AUTUMN KLEIN, Dodge City, and **COURTNEY BAILEY**, Ingalls, will attend Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, in July.

At camp, the Kansas students will join youth from Colorado, Oklahoma and Wyoming and have the opportunity to form a mock cooperative, gain

leadership skills, and learn about the cooperative industry with tours and activities.

The four winners were chosen based on their application, essays and an interview with a panel of judges.

“Victory Electric is proud to sponsor local students for youth tour,” said Jerri Whitley, Victory Electric vice president of communications. “As a cooperative, we value the seven cooperative principles and one of those principles is ‘concern for community.’ Investing in our youth is a great way for us to stay involved and provide students opportunities they may not have otherwise.”

The youth tour contest is held each fall for high school juniors. For more information on the program or how to apply, please visit our website.

Brungardt Hired as Groundsman



Chantz Brungardt

Victory Electric welcomed **CHANTZ BRUNGARDT** on Oct. 19.

Born and raised in Hays, Brungardt spent much of his early life visiting family in the Dodge City area. During his time at Hays High School, Brungardt also spent time in the area for athletic competitions against the Dodge City High School Red Demons.

After graduating high school in 2017, Brungardt attended Fort Hays State University for one year. He decided to change directions and pursue a career allowing more hands-on tasks and working outdoors.

“I started looking around and ended up talking to a family friend and he’s a lineman for Western Cooperative [Electric],” Brungardt said. “After he told me his daily routine and what he did, it sounded interesting, so I enrolled at Pratt

Community College and went to lineman school.”

Brungardt’s time in line school, as well as two summers of interning with Western Cooperative Electric, developed his skills and passion for the industry. Upon completing the program, that passion kept Brungardt going as he faced challenges pursuing a career in line work during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I enjoyed it and was passionate about it I guess you could say, and that’s why I decided to stick with it and wait a year and a half,” Brungardt said. “Victory gave me a chance and I appreciate it. I am excited about starting the next chapter in my life, and just being able to stay somewhere and make a living.”

Brungardt’s interest in the outdoors extends beyond his job as a lineman. In his free time, he enjoys hunting, fishing and training his dog.

Victory Electric is excited to have him in Dodge City and to join our team.

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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.

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Victory Electric Seeks Board of Trustees Nominations

Members, elected trustees and employees — power a cooperative. The overall management and business oversight of a cooperative is tasked to those elected to serve on the cooperative board of trustees. Like you, they are cooperative members but with a special perspective. They live throughout the Victory Electric service area, and they are local citizens with the best interests of members, the community and the cooperative always in mind.

The board of trustees' primary function is planning and policy oversight, establishing the long-term objectives of the cooperative and providing resources to meet those objectives. Board members work closely with the CEO and senior staff to review progress, ensure accountability, make strategic decisions and stay current on an increasingly complex business.

The cooperative territory is divided into districts, all of which are represented by a trustee. Trustees are elected at the annual meeting for three-year terms of office. A commitment to the cooperative board is also one to the community. Each trustee is responsible for representing the cooperative in the public eye. They attend outreach events, serve on additional committees, attend training and listen to those in their district.

They are the liaisons between the greater membership and cooperative management and employees.

Election and Service

Victory Electric's annual membership meeting is scheduled for April 20, 2021, and we are currently soliciting nominations for Victory Electric's board of trustees. Positions up for election are:

- ▶ **DISTRICT 1**, currently held by **DARYL TIEBEN**, Dodge City
- ▶ **DISTRICT 3**, currently held by **KEN SCHULTE**, Spearville
- ▶ **DISTRICT 8**, currently held by **CEDRIC DREWES**, Dodge City
- ▶ **DISTRICT 10**, currently held by **TERRI LARSON**, 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. 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.

If you would like to run for a trustee position, or you know someone interested, please send a letter of interest with qualifications to Shane Laws at Victory Electric, P.O. Box 1335, Dodge City, KS 67801 by Dec. 31, 2020.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Energy bills can increase during winter for a variety of reasons, like house guests, more time spent at home, and shorter days and longer nights. Small actions like turning down your thermostat, replacing old bulbs with LEDs and washing clothes in cold water can help you save. **Source: energystar.gov**



Make Safety a Travel Essential this Season

The winter holiday season is a busy time of year for many of us. Along with putting out decorations and baking cookies, we often spend more time in our cars than usual shopping for presents, traveling to family gatherings or attending holiday events. However, all that time in the car can also mean facing extreme weather conditions that can make safe driving difficult.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, winter weather conditions such as snow, sleet and slush cause more than 550,000 traffic accidents each year, leading to approximately 138,000 injuries and 1,700 fatalities.

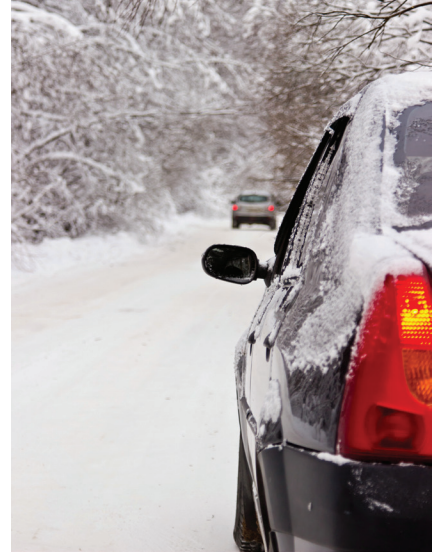
Along with risk of injury, possible damage to your vehicle, and plain inconvenience, collisions may also involve downed power lines or other electrical hazards. Unfortunately, when this happens, it adds another very significant danger to the mix that can cause severe shock, burns or electrocution. Knowing what to do in this situation can save lives.

If you are in an accident involving a downed power line:

- ▶ Call 911 and tell the dispatcher a downed power line or other electrical equipment is involved in a collision. Power company personnel will be dispatched to the scene to de-energize the power.
- ▶ Put your window down and alert others not to approach the scene. They could be shocked or electrocuted if they walk or run over the energized area or touch anything that is energized.
- ▶ Never attempt to drive over a power line or through water, snow or other debris that could be hiding one. There is no way to tell if a power line is energized. Even if it is not sparking or buzzing it may still be energized.
- ▶ Do not exit the vehicle UNLESS the vehicle is on fire or you see smoke. The vehicle acts as an insulator that keeps

you safe from stray electricity.

- ▶ If you MUST exit the vehicle, cross your arms across your chest, put your feet together, and make a clean jump from the vehicle. Then hop with feet together as far as you can — at least 50 feet away. Once a power line is in contact with a car or truck, the ground or other objects, it energizes the area. The electrical current spreads to the vehicle and ground, and it ripples out. Each “ring” of the ripple represents a different voltage. Stepping from one voltage to the next can cause your body to become a path for electricity and electrocute you.
- ▶ If a power line is inside the vehicle due to damage or an open window, stay in the vehicle. DO NOT touch or try to move the wire. DO NOT attempt to use other objects to move it.
- ▶ If your vehicle collides with a pad-mounted transformer, which houses electrical equipment connected to underground power lines, the same safety precautions apply. Keep your family safe while on the road this holiday season.



HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

Give the Gift of Safety



PORTABLE GROUND FAULT CIRCUIT INTERRUPTER (GFCI)

Designed for locations where there is not a permanent GFCI installed, these devices detect an abnormal flow of electricity and shut off the power, preventing shock and electrocution.



OUTDOOR REMOTE CONTROL OUTLET SWITCH

Leaving outdoor lights on overnight can be costly and pose a potential hazard. An alternative to smart lights, this remote control switch allows you to turn outdoor lights and other gadgets on or off remotely.



TAMPER RESISTANT OUTLETS (TROS)

Great for families with small children, TROs are wall receptacles that have shutters that stay closed unless a plug with two prongs is inserted into the outlet. Because they help keep children safe, the National Electrical Code requires TROs in new homes and apartments.



HEAVY DUTY EXTENSION CORD

Power devices safely. Too often the tools or equipment necessary for larger projects are powered by extension cords that are inadequate for the environment or heavier electrical load.

Learn more at SafeElectricity.org

Linemen Aid in Oklahoma Recovery Efforts



The first group of linemen to travel to Oklahoma stayed for about a week before being relieved by the next crew of lineworkers. Pictured (from left) are Ted McAtee, Clayton Stein, Kody Stockton, Tanner Gemaehlich, Kirk Konrade, Justin Straight, Colton Lee and Jesus Ruiz.

“Co-ops helping co-ops. That’s how things work in rural America.” Brandy C. Silk commented on Northfork Electric Cooperative’s Facebook post announcing the arrival of Victory Electric crews.

Following an early-season ice storm on Oct. 25, more than 76,000 co-op members in Oklahoma were left without power. A mix of snow, sleet, freezing rain and gusty winds battered the state and took down power lines and trees, mainly in the state’s western and central regions.

Victory Electric sent crews to assist in restoration efforts at Northfork Electric Cooperative in Sayre, Oklahoma, and CKenergy Electric Cooperative in Binger, Oklahoma. Other crews from 16 co-ops based in Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas and Oklahoma, also sent crews to the area as part of the national cooperative mutual assistance program.

“This is part of what we do as a cooperative,” said Ryan Miller, Victory Electric vice president of operations. “Victory Electric has been in the same situation where we needed assistance, and others answered the call. We are more than willing to return the favor when we can.”

The crews included Austin Gooder, Chantz

Brungardt, Chris Konrade, Clayton Stein, Colton Lee, Jacob Ledford, Jeff Martinez, Jeremy Elling, Jesus Ruiz, Justin Straight, Kade Henry, Kevin Freeman, Kirk Konrade, Kody Stockton, Marlon Hernandez, Pat Deaver, Tanner Gemaehlich and Ted McAtee.

Members of CKenergy, Jerry and Mary Jahn of Cyril, Oklahoma, sent Victory Electric a message of appreciation. “Please share our thanks with your guys who came in like the cavalry and saved the day ... well it was the fourteenth day but we were happy to have electricity in our pumpkin patch!”

Officials at Oklahoma’s Electric Cooperatives said at least 13 distribution co-ops were impacted by the storm, suffering damages estimated to be in the multimillion-dollar range.

“Ice storms create havoc in our industry, and no one expected a storm of this magnitude this early in the fall season,” said Oklahoma Electric Cooperative’s General Manager Chris Meyers. “We appreciate all linemen who left the comfort of their homes to assist the hardest-hit electric cooperatives in adverse conditions. Their commitment to helping others truly underscores the strength of the cooperative spirit.”