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# Electronews

## The Victory Electric Cooperative Assn., Inc.

### Board of Trustees

- Pat Morse – President
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- Shane Laws – CEO
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- 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

# Victory Electric Introduces New Bill Component



Shane Laws

Last month, Victory Electric's billing statement contained a new line item and bill message. The Extraordinary Event Recovery (EER) bill

component is

intended to recover the additional \$15 million in wholesale power costs incurred during February's extreme cold weather.

While Victory Electric cannot control cost impacts such as fuel prices, we are committed to implementing an equitable and manageable solution to mitigate any direct impacts to our members and ensure our rates remain affordable.

To lessen the financial burden on members, Victory Electric is extending payment of the EER over 24 months. The EER amount is based on your individual electric use between Feb. 15-19. Only members who used electricity on those specific dates will have an EER balance, and the impact will be less for any member who switched to self-generation, conserved energy, or had an outage as a result of the rotating power interruptions.

### Billing and Payment Information

- ▶ You can pay the EER balance in full at any time over the 24 months, but you **MUST** call or visit our office. Victory Electric must manually apply the extra payment toward your EER balance, and if we aren't notified, it will simply appear as a credit on the next month's bill.
- ▶ For EER balances less than \$24, the entire balance will appear on April's bill with no additional payment installments.
- ▶ If a member disconnects electric service, the entire EER balance will be included on the final bill. For transfers of electric service within Victory Electric's service area, the remaining EER balance and number of remaining payment installments transfers with the member.
- ▶ Accounts are eligible for disconnection for nonpayment of the EER.

### Budget Billing Accounts

Monthly budget billing amounts were not recalculated, BUT your budget amount will increase by the EER installment amount (rounded to the

Continued on page 16B ▶



## Victory Electric Introduces New Bill Component

Continued from page 16A ▶

next dollar). If a member pays the EER in full, the budget amount will revert to the original budget amount. If using AutoPay, be mindful the AutoPay amount deducted or charged will automatically increase.

### PowerMyWay Accounts

The only change for a PowerMyWay account is that the monthly EER installment amount will be deducted from the account balance each month on the day Victory Electric performs billing calculations. Unless a member pays the EER balance in full, it is advised to monitor your PowerMyWay account balance each month on bill calculation date (April 9, but it's normally between the 9th and 12th of each month) to ensure your balance isn't depleted. If your PowerMyWay account is too low and the EER depletes your balance, a

disconnect notice will be sent the next morning (April 10). If a payment is not applied to your PowerMyWay account the same morning the disconnect notice is sent, you risk disconnection that afternoon.

### Payment Assistance

If you are struggling to pay your electric bill, contact Victory Electric to determine your payment arrangement eligibility or assistance options. Visit our website for more information on payment assistance.

For more detailed information on the EER bill component, please visit Victory Electric's EER webpage. Members can also call a member services representative at 620-227-2139 or visit our office at 3230 N. 14th Ave., in Dodge City.

Thanks, Shane

# EXTRAORDINARY EVENT RECOVERY

Normally, the fluctuating cost of fuel for wholesale power generation — natural gas, wind, solar, coal, hydro or nuclear — is recovered through the Energy Cost Adjustment (ECA), which can be a charge or a credit depending on energy markets and the price of fuel.

CURRENT MONTH ENERGY CHARGE		AMOUNT	ACCOUNT SUMMARY		AMOUNT
Energy Charge	280KWH @ 0. 111778	31.30	Previous Balance		0.00
Energy Cost Adj	280KWH @ - 0. 01256	- 3.52	No Payment Received		0.00
Service Availability Charge		15. 00	Total Current Month Energy Charge		59.29
<b>Extraordinary Event Recovery</b>		<b>12.50</b>			
Ford County Tax 1. 15%		0.67			
Dodge City Tax 1. 0%		0.58			
Dodge City Franchise Fee 5. 0%		2.76			
			The February 2021 Extraordinary Event Recovery balance is \$287.50 with 23 installments remaining. To pay the balance in full, please call our office.		
			<b>Total Monthly Energy Charge</b>		<b>59.29</b>
			<b>Total Amount Due By 01/01/00 Before 5 PM</b>		<b>59.29</b>
			<b>Late Payment Charge After 01/01/00</b>		<b>1.18</b>
			<b>Total Amount Due After 01/01/00</b>		<b>60.47</b>
<b>Current Month Energy Charge</b>		<b>59.29</b>			

Victory Electric recognizes recovering the cost of increased wholesale power from February's extreme cold weather through a single-month ECA charge could create economic hardships. To lessen the financial burden on members, Victory Electric's proposed Extraordinary Event Recovery would extend payment of those additional costs over 24 months.

### DISCLAIMER:

This is an example of what you can expect to see on your electric bill in April. This example does not reflect actual charges.



# Victory Electric Scholarship Winners

Ten local students whose families are served by Victory Electric earned a \$1,000 Lightner Community Spirit Scholarship.

The scholarship program recognizes students who demonstrate academic success and show a commitment to bettering their community.

- ▶ **ISAI CEJA**, son of Juan Fransisco Ceja and Caryce Ceja Rivera, senior at Manhattan High School.
- ▶ **RIDGE ESTES**, son of Brad and Mishaun Estes, senior at Bucklin High School.
- ▶ **LAUREN GLEASON**, daughter of Jon and Heather Gleason, senior at Dodge City High School.
- ▶ **ELIZABETH GOETZ**, daughter of Joe and Brandy Goetz, senior at Cimarron High School.
- ▶ **GAVIN JONES**, son of Ryan and Lora Miller, senior at Dodge City High School.
- ▶ **COLE LEHMAN**, son of Roy Lehman and Deann Gillen-Lehman, senior at Ingalls High School.
- ▶ **CITLALI REAL**, daughter of Heriberto and Ruth Real, senior at Dodge City High School.
- ▶ **NATHAN RENNER**, son of Jeff and Nancy Renner, senior at Minneola High School.
- ▶ **LEAH STEIN**, daughter of Dr. Mike and Coleen Stein, Dodge City, junior at the University of Kansas.
- ▶ **KENNY ZIMMERMAN**, son of Doug and Lisa Zimmerman, senior at Spearville High School.

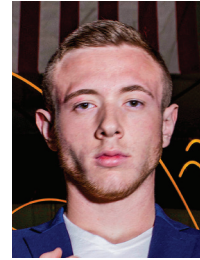
“We congratulate the 2021 scholarship winners and are proud to reward the students for their academic success and dedication to their community,” said Shane Laws, Victory Electric CEO. “As a not-for-profit cooperative, one of our guiding principles is ‘Commitment to Community,’ and I can’t think of a better way than a scholarship program to give back to the communities we serve and encourage youth to be involved in their individual communities.”

The name of the scholarship honors the Lightner family of Plymell, Kansas. Richard Lightner served on the Victory Electric board of trustees for 37 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 also be a current full-time student or entering an accredited trade school, college or university. For more information on eligibility or the application process, visit [victoryelectric.net](http://victoryelectric.net) or contact Victory Electric’s communications department at [askcommunications@victoryelectric.net](mailto:askcommunications@victoryelectric.net).



Isai Ceja



Ridge Estes



Lauren Gleason



Elizabeth Goetz



Gavin Jones



Cole Lehman



Citlali Real



Nathan Renner



Leah Stein



Kenny Zimmerman

## CoBank Sharing Success Grant Deadline Approaching

One of Victory Electric's most unique and exciting community programs is the CoBank Sharing Success grant program, which is capped at \$20,000 and open to local nonprofit organizations. Aimed at supporting local communities and people, the grant is made possible by Victory Electric's governing board of trustees, in partnership with CoBank — a national nonprofit cooperative bank providing loans, leases, export financing and other financial services to agribusinesses and rural power, water, electric and communications providers.

"Rural communities and cooperatives like Victory Electric are lucky to have the generous support of CoBank and we are thankful for the contributions that enable us to help make our communities a better place to live and work," said Jerri Whitley, Victory Electric vice president of communications. "In the last nine years, Victory Electric has awarded \$105,000 in Sharing Success grants to nonprofit organizations in our service area."

CoBank's \$4 million Sharing Success fund matches charitable contributions made by its cooperative members to local nonprofits in their individual

communities. The matching grant program is designed to celebrate the vital role that cooperatives play in individual communities across the country. CoBank states that collaborating with their customers to support worthy causes is a great way for CoBank to make a positive difference and fulfill its mission of service to rural America. Since its inception in 2012, the program has generated more than \$56 million in total charitable donations, primarily in rural areas across the country.

"Thanks to the generosity of Victory Electric's board of trustees and CoBank, the Sharing Success Grant enables us to give back to the communities we serve," said Shane Laws, CEO of Victory Electric. "We urge all eligible nonprofits to take advantage of Sharing Success and together we can make a meaningful impact in rural Kansas."

2021 will be the 10th year for Victory Electric to award a Sharing Success grant. The Bucklin Library received the grant in 2012 to help fund the construction of its new library building. In 2013, Mission of Mercy was awarded

the grant funding for its free dental clinic in Dodge City. The Stauth Memorial Museum in Montezuma applied the grant in 2014 toward the "Suits in Space" Smithsonian exhibit. In 2015, local shelter and food bank, the Manna House, was awarded the grant to repair and improve their facilities. The Depot Theater upgraded its theater sound system in 2016. In 2017, the Ford County Historical Society made repairs to preserve the history in the Home of Stone - Mueller Schmidt House. In 2018, the Ford County Sheriff's Office received funding for security upgrades. The Ingalls Recreation Commission funded repairs and upgrades to the Ingalls community swimming pool in 2019. Last year, Dodge City's Salvation Army and New Chance each received \$10,000 for a new headquarters capital campaign and computer system upgrades, respectively.

For more information or if an organization is interested in applying for the 2021 CoBank Sharing Success grant, the online application is available on our website and due no later than **5 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 12, 2021.**

## Kansas LIEAP Energy Assistance Program Application Open Until May 28

The Kansas Department of Children and Families (DCF), the state agency administering the Kansas Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP), announced the 2021 application period is extended until May 28 for those seeking assistance with energy bills.

"We urge anyone who may be having difficulty paying electric bills take advantage of this opportunity," said Jerri Whitley, vice president of communications at Victory Electric.

LIEAP is a federally funded program that provides an annual benefit to help qualifying households pay a portion of their home energy bills. Persons with disabilities, older adults, and families with children are the primary groups assisted. In 2020, about 51,000 households received an average benefit of \$715.

To qualify, applicants must be a resident of the state of Kansas, need financial assistance for home energy costs, and must be responsible for the direct payment of their energy bills. Income eligibility requirements are set at 150% of the federal poverty level. The level of benefit varies according to household income, number of people living in the home, type of residence, type of heating fuel and utility rates. Eligibility is based on an applicant's energy and heating bill. If an applicant has gas heating and needs assistance

### 2021 LIEAP Income Eligibility Guidelines

#### Maximum gross monthly income for persons living at the address:

1	\$1,383	8	\$4,780
2	\$1,868	9	\$5,265
3	\$2,353	10	\$5,751
4	\$2,839	11	\$6,236
5	\$3,324	12	\$6,721
6	\$3,809		+1 \$486 for each additional
7	\$4,295		person

covering electric costs, they need to request the benefit be split between the two utilities. Applicants must demonstrate a recent history of payments toward purchase of the primary heating energy.

Victory Electric accepts LIEAP funds but does NOT administer the LIEAP program. Call Garden City DCF at 620-272-5800 or visit DCF's Energy Assistance webpage at [dcf.ks.gov/services/ees/Pages/EnergyAssistance.aspx](http://dcf.ks.gov/services/ees/Pages/EnergyAssistance.aspx) for more information on the LIEAP program.

# Working on the LINE

The 3i Show is an annual agricultural trade show held in Dodge City that salutes industry, implements and irrigation. The show draws hundreds of people from across Kansas and the surrounding states to check out the latest in industry, education and innovation. Victory Electric partnered with fellow southwest Kansas electric cooperatives, Pioneer Electric and Wheatland Electric, to host electrical safety demonstrations all three days of the 3i Show.



It's never too soon for our youngest members to learn about electrical safety.



Live safety demonstrations were performed throughout each day of the 3i Show.



Safety coordinators from Southern Pioneer and Wheatland electric cooperatives explain the dangers of electricity to spectators while lineman Marlon Hernandez draws an arc.



Mikey Goddard, vice president of safety, discusses the importance of safety around high voltage power lines.



A young spectator watches the show.

## Kansas Introduces New Rent and Utility Assistance Program for Families Impacted by COVID-19

The Kansas Housing Resources Corporation launched the Kansas Emergency Rental Assistance (KERA) program on Mon., March 15. The KERA program provides rent, utility, and internet assistance to households experiencing financial hardship as a result of the COVID pandemic. Landlords and tenants apply via a joint online process. If the application is approved, the landlord or service provider receives funds directly from KERA and applies KERA funds to the applicant's account. Approved applicants are eligible for up to 12 months of assistance.

### What Does Assistance Cover?

- ▶ Up to 12 months of current and past due household rent
- ▶ Up to three months of prospective rent at a time, even if the household does not have rental arrears
- ▶ Past due residential utility, home energy (electric, gas, water, sewer, and trash services), and internet expenses incurred since April 1, 2020

### Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must meet all of the following criteria:

- ▶ Tenant **MUST** rent their home, it must be the household's primary residence, located in Kansas, and tenant must have a written lease agreement or other suitable documentation. If the tenant doesn't have a signed lease, documentation includes proof of utility payments, attestation by the landlord, or records showing payments to the landlords.
- ▶ Tenant's 2020 household income does not exceed 80% of their area's median income.
- ▶ At least one member of the tenant household is experiencing documented financial hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Hardship may include loss of employment, reduction in household income, or significant COVID-related expenses (medical bills, personal protective equipment, childcare costs, equipment or internet costs to enable online work/schooling, etc.).
- ▶ At least one member of the tenant household must demonstrate a risk of homelessness or housing instability. Documentation must be dated after April 1, 2020, and can include a past due utility bill, a past due rent notice, or an eviction notice.

**For more information on KERA, program details, FAQs, and to access the online application, visit <https://kshousingcorp.org/emergency-rental-assistance>.**

- ▶ Valid proof of identification. Applicant must provide one of the following: current driver's license or state-issued photo ID, utility or cell phone bill, court filing notice, or mail from a federal, state, county, or city agency. Applicants must not have received assistance from other sources for the same costs and time period for which they are requesting KERA assistance. Applications will be checked against the LIEAP list of Kansans served. If applicants have received LIEAP benefits in 2021 they will be eligible for utility assistance only after LIEAP benefits have been applied to their bill.

### Application Process

1. Landlord completes online certification.
2. Tenant submits online application.
3. Landlord and tenant are notified when application is processed.
4. If approved, landlord and/or service provider(s) receive funds directly from KHRC.
5. Landlord and/or service provider(s) applies assistance to tenant account.

For more information on KERA, program details, FAQs, and to access the online application, visit [kshousingcorp.org/emergency-rental-assistance](https://kshousingcorp.org/emergency-rental-assistance). Both tenant and landlord must apply online. Only one application per household. If the applicant meets the eligibility criteria, the KHRC will make payments on the tenant's behalf directly to the landlord or service provider. **THE APPLICATION DEADLINE IS AUG. 1, 2021.**



*Happy Mother's Day*

May 9, 2021

# Ross Hired as New Executive Assistant



Carolina Ross

“When you find the right opportunity in life, all of your prior random experiences will suddenly fit together and make sense,” a quote from *Dear Girls* by Ali Wong. This sentiment could also be applied to Victory Electric’s newest employee, **CAROLINA ROSS**.

Ross joined the Victory Electric team in late March as the cooperative’s executive assistant. This role is crucial to the operations of the cooperative and requires a unique skill set outside the scope of a regular administrative assistant. Rae Jean Amy filled the role for the last 20 years, and when Amy announced her June retirement, some wondered if Victory Electric could find a replacement able to wear as many hats.

When Ross discovered the job posting, she noticed many of her “prior random experiences” fit together. This presented Ross with a unique employment opportunity and provided Victory Electric with an ideal candidate to fill the role.

One of the particular skills used in nearly every aspect of the executive assistant role is an understanding of the legal processes and requirements of the federal, state and local governments, as well as the cooperative’s rules, regulations and bylaws. Over the last two decades, Amy coordinated events, programs, meetings, managed the preparation of the cooperative’s permanent records, maintained and prepared legal files and documents, organized and gathered calendars, supplies and information, and acted as a liaison to the board of trustees. Recognizing how legal processes and regulations affect these and the other tasks required in the position is as important to the role as the ability to coordinate and organize effectively. A quick glance at Ross’s résumé reveals both her education and experience will pave the way for her success in her new role.

Born and raised in Dodge City, Ross graduated from Dodge City High School in 1995. Ross studied philosophy at Kansas State University. During her time at K-State, Ross would often visit her sister who served as a prosecutor in Topeka. These visits sparked an interest in attending law school. After completing her undergraduate degree in 2000, Ross attended California Western School of Law in San Diego.

Upon finishing law school, Ross became a member of the State Bar of California and began practicing with the Law Office of Cheryl Daily in San Diego. She then practiced with Slovinsky & Slovinsky Family Law in Chula Vista, California, until 2011 when she opened her own law firm.

During this time, she married Jake Ross, who operates a medical transportation company. The two worked hard to grow their respective businesses. In 2014, the couple expanded their family adding a son, Jaxson.

As Ross’ family grew, she slowly took on fewer clients at

her law practice. Following the birth of their daughter, Cali, in 2017, Ross stopped practicing law after 13 years to focus on their family. This decision, coupled with a favor to a friend, led to her next “random experience” preparing her for the job at Victory Electric.

One particularly interesting duty Amy fulfilled was preparing meals for cooperative meetings and functions. On any given day, Amy could coordinate breakfast for the 11 members of the board of trustees or lunch for all 71 Victory Electric employees. Though not traditionally a responsibility in jobs of this nature, Ross’ experience with meal preparation was welcome.

For years, Ross practiced meal preparation for herself and her family as a way to save money and eat healthily. Making a plan for the week, preparing and cooking meals was just part of her routine, and she enjoyed doing it.

“A friend of mine became pregnant and asked if I could prepare some meals for her husband. Soon, one of his co-workers asked if I could start prepping for him, which led to some of his friends, and people from the fitness industry,” Ross said. “By word-of-mouth, this side business began to snowball.”

Before she knew it her favor for a friend became Marquee Meals to Go. The business operated out of a commercial kitchen with a staff of six people, preparing between 250-400 meals per week. Ross continued to manage the meal preparation company until 2019 when she and her husband moved to Dodge City. Her organizational and management skills, combined with legal knowledge and background made Ross a great fit for Victory Electric’s position. In addition, a serendipitously timed move and her unique previous business venture experience made all the pieces “make sense.”

Ross looks forward to learning about a new industry, after spending so much of her life working in law.

“It’s a whole new area, my focus has always been the law,” Ross said. “I am excited to come venture into a new industry and understand a process that is so vital to everybody’s life. You need energy; it’s a building block of a community.”

Victory Electric is equally enthusiastic about the addition of Ross to the cooperative.

“We would be hard-pressed to find someone more uniquely qualified for this position than Carolina,” said Shane Laws Victory Electric CEO. “She will be a great asset to our employees and board members. The qualities she displays and her experience bring a lot to the cooperative, and I am excited to see her step into the role.”

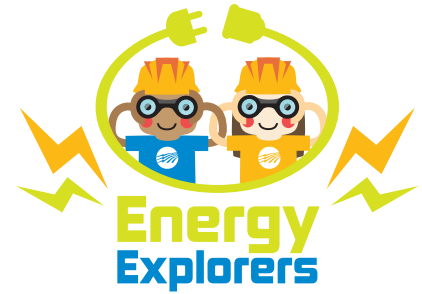
Prior to accepting the position with Victory Electric, Ross worked as a paralegal for the Ford County Attorney’s Office. In her free time, Ross enjoys spending time with her family, reading books and watching crime shows.

Victory Electric welcomes Carolina to the cooperative! We are excited to have you as part of the team!

# ELECTRICAL SAFETY MONTH WORD SEARCH

May is Electrical Safety Month!

Read the safety tips below, then find and circle all the **bolded** words in the puzzle.



E	J	E	Q	L	V	T	S	O	K	F	A	B	T	T
L	S	R	Y	S	D	E	D	D	E	H	N	Y	X	J
E	D	A	M	A	G	E	D	B	I	J	L	G	E	V
C	N	V	J	L	H	W	M	E	B	U	R	I	T	O
T	S	C	N	K	R	W	C	D	M	S	Q	A	N	A
R	B	M	Z	D	G	D	S	R	R	N	R	I	Q	I
I	J	Z	O	F	Y	D	F	O	C	O	D	O	L	F
C	S	C	Y	K	R	Z	D	O	V	N	U	V	I	D
A	Z	U	T	O	E	F	Q	M	T	T	B	R	B	Q
L	K	Y	C	K	X	A	P	N	L	A	E	J	B	W
K	I	M	W	A	Q	A	L	E	Z	R	N	L	Y	E
E	Z	K	T	A	L	M	T	A	I	G	P	X	I	D
D	R	A	Z	A	H	S	Y	S	R	F	J	J	I	J
E	F	E	B	A	S	P	K	L	V	M	Z	H	L	M
E	L	E	C	T	R	O	N	I	C	S	S	N	W	T

## WORD BANK

- ▶ Do not use any electrical **cords** that feel warm to the touch or are **damaged** in any way.
- ▶ Remind parents or adults in your home to test **smoke alarms** every month. Alarms should be installed in every **bedroom**, outside each sleeping area and on every level of your home.
- ▶ Do not overload electrical **outlets**. Overloading creates a potential fire **hazard**.
- ▶ Keep all **liquids** away from **electronics**, including TVs, computers and gaming consoles.
- ▶ Do not run **electrical** cords under rugs or carpet. This creates a **fire risk**.