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Electronews

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CEO MESSAGE

Co-ops Boost Awareness of Issues Facing Rural America



Shane Laws

As a member-owned electric cooperative, voting is already in our DNA. It's how we maintain an electric utility that is responsive to the consumers we serve. Coop-

eratives were founded as democratic organizations controlled by members who participate in setting policies and making decisions. It is a natural fit for electric co-ops to be engaged in ensuring our employees, trustees, and members are applying these important principles at their local ballot box as well during election season.

Through the Co-ops Vote program, Kansas policymakers and candidates

visited several rural electric cooperatives during the month of July, including Victory Electric, to help them better understand the consumer-member model that drives how our cooperatives serve communities across Kansas. Brad Ralph, attorney for the City of Dodge City and Kansas 119 district representative, and Dr. Bill Clifford, congressional candidate, joined a Co-ops Vote discussion at Victory Electric on July 29.

Voting plays a crucial part in our representative democracy. Federal, state and local elections offer an opportunity to exercise a civic responsibility — to select the best leaders for our communities. This year is going to be a big one, with the possibility for unprecedented voter turnout.

When voters miss the chance to vote,

Continued on page 16E ▶



Attendees of the Co-ops Vote event hosted at Victory Electric on July 29 take part in discussions surrounding issues affecting the electric cooperative industry while maintaining social distancing guidelines.

75th Annual Meeting Highlights



Victory Electric's annual meeting, held in April each year, generally draws more than 800 people for a meal and business meeting. Due to COVID-19 and state and county restrictions on mass gatherings at the time, the board of trustees voted to postpone April's annual meeting until it was safer to host the meeting.

After careful consideration, Victory Electric elected to reschedule the annual meeting to Aug. 13 at the Western State Bank Expo. Some traditional parts of the annual meeting, such as the meal, safety demonstration trailer, video presentations, and live door prize drawings were canceled in an effort to reduce the length of the meeting and to keep our members safe and healthy. Hosting the meeting in a scaled down format allowed Victory Electric to adhere to our bylaws and keep the board election timeline intact.

Approximately 105 members were present and 116 total people in attendance. Prior to the vote, Attorney Dave Snapp explained the proposed bylaw amendment. With the 2019 retirement of capital credits, the board realized the need for a bylaw change to clarify the language pertaining to capital credits. When considering a capital credit retirement, the board of trustees evaluates the financial condition and health of the cooperative to ensure a retirement will not impair the cooperative. The proposed bylaw changes would give the board of trustees (a) clarification on how to



1. For social distancing purposes, chairs were placed 6 feet apart.
2. Rob Henry, vice president of engineering, helped in the express registration line.
3. Golf carts were available to deliver members from their cars to the front door.
4. A member checks into the meeting.

handle a financial loss and the ability to prescribe the accounting procedures to address such loss, (b) the flexibility to make decisions regarding the retention or distribution of non-operating margins, and (c) the manner and method to which capital credits are retired. The bylaw change vote passed.

CEO Shane Laws gave a brief update and thanked Victory Electric employees for their work and cooperative members for their support and understanding of changes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The results of the board of trustees



election were announced and re-elected were: John Leis, District 2; Jim Imel, District 4; Kenny Wehkamp, District 6; and Randy Quint, District 10.

"On behalf of the board, I would like to thank our members for their understanding of the method of this year's annual meeting," said CEO Shane Laws. "Once the pandemic subsides, we look forward to seeing you in person at next year's annual meeting."

Several winners for door prizes were drawn from the registration cards on Friday following the annual meeting.

Join Us in Welcoming Taylor Hobbs to Victory Electric



Taylor Hobbs

TAYLOR HOBBS is joining Victory Electric as the new information technology analyst in the information technology department.

Hobbs was raised on a black Angus cattle ranching operation near Penokee, Kansas. After graduating from Trego Community High School in 2009, Hobbs went on to attend Northwest Kansas Technical College in Goodland,

Kansas, and Hutchinson Community College. He received his associate's degree to become a computer support specialist with an emphasis in networking from Hutchinson Community College in 2011.

Hobbs knew from an early age he wanted to pursue a degree in the computer technology field.

"I grew up relying on rural internet service. Once it went out they sent a technician to come and fix it," Hobbs said. "Watching him really made an impact on me. He was able to get the internet working again, which seemed magical. It made me want to be able to help others with something so important to our day-to-day lives."

As an information technology analyst, Hobbs will design and implement new information systems that promote organizational efficiency.

"I strive to help Victory Electric become more efficient by making the technology simple, useful, available, and a wonder that we ever lived without."

Before working at Victory Electric, Hobbs was an information systems support specialist for the Edwards County Medical Center in Kinsley, Kansas. Prior to working for the medical center, Hobbs helped operate his family's farm and ranch.

"I am excited to take on this new role and the new challenges that come with it. I strive to help Victory Electric become more efficient by making the technology simple, useful, available and a wonder that we ever lived without," Hobbs said.

Hobbs has been married to his wife, Jaimie, for two years, and they have an 8-month-old daughter named Lainey. In his spare time, he enjoys woodworking, playing with his daughter, playing board games with friends, and remodeling the house his family recently purchased.

Please join us in welcoming Taylor to Victory Electric!

APPLY ONLINE NOW!

Victory Electric is proud to sponsor four local high school juniors to participate in the 2021 youth programs. Each summer, two students represent Victory Electric at the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., and two students travel to the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, for unique leadership opportunities.

While in Washington, D.C., student representatives 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.

At leadership 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 will be chosen based on their résumés, two letters of recommendation, and an interview in front of a panel of judges.

"Victory Electric is proud to sponsor local students for youth tour," said Jerri Imgarten-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. **APPLICATIONS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE ON VICTORY ELECTRIC'S WEBSITE VICTORYELECTRIC.NET AND DUE OCT. 9.** For questions or more information on the program, please email askcommunications@victoryelectric.net or call Allison Doll at 620-227-2139.

2021
victory electric
YOUTH
TOUR

SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION | DUE OCT. 9

THE ART OF *Electricity*

One of the most memorable scenes in the classic American movie “Sweet Home Alabama” features the glassblowing shop Deep South Glass and the phenomenon of lightning striking a sandy beach to create intricate and delicate glass sculptures.

In the movie, Jake attracts lightning by using lightning rods stuck into the sand during a storm. A lightning bolt strikes, instantaneously melting the sand to form a twisted, branching piece of clear, shining glass.

Although there was no storm, no movie set, and no one was trying to attract lightning strikes, Victory Electric crews encountered a similar phenomenon when they came upon



photos by Daniel Pogue, staking technician

a downed power line that left behind a visible burn path littered with glass bubbles and fragments.

“The temperature of an electrical arc on the ground is more than 36,000 F, which is hotter than surface of the sun, and is powerful enough to melt concrete into glass,” said Mikey Goddard, vice president of safety.

The downed power line, discovered by crews in south Dodge City on June 8, likely went down due to persistent high winds, which continued to wear at the wire. When a wire is repeatedly bent at a particular location, the wire becomes fatigued, loses its elasticity, and eventually breaks. In this case, the wire broke at the tie, which is where the power line wire is attached to the insulator. The energized, burning line landed on a concrete street, which is consists of a sand and stone mixture. Traditionally, glass is made by heating sand to a minimum of 3,200 F, and the silicon dioxide present in the sand melts to form glass.

“While the visible burn path and glass bubble effect was neat to see, it also clearly demonstrates the terrifying power of electricity,” Goddard added. “Downed power lines can carry an electric current strong enough to cause serious injury or even death. As little as 1/10 of an amp can kill a person, and in this instance where the glass bubbles formed, the fault current was more than 600 amps.”

If you come across a low or fallen power line, adhere to the following safety tips.

- ▶ It is critical to treat all downed power lines as energized and dangerous, even if they look “dead.” Lines do not have to be arcing or sparking to be live. You cannot tell if a power line is energized just by looking at it.
- ▶ When you see power lines on the ground, stay at least 30 feet away from it and anything touching the line, call emergency dispatch or Victory Electric, and if possible,

No matter how pretty, electricity is powerful enough to cause serious injury or even death.

- ▶ Treat all downed power lines as though they are energized and dangerous, even if the line looks “dead.”
- ▶ Stay at least 30 feet from the downed power line
- ▶ Call Victory Electric and warn others until crews arrive
- ▶ Just because a power line has an insulated covering, it doesn’t mean it’s safe to touch. It is NOT like an extension cord that you can safely grab and move.

stay on site until crews arrive to warn others from unknowingly encountering a dangerous situation.

▶ The proper way to move away from the power line is to shuffle away with small steps, keeping your feet together and on the ground at all times. This will minimize the potential for a strong electric shock.

▶ If you encounter any glass formations, be extremely cautious.

The glass, and the surrounding surface area, will be extremely hot to the touch and can take hours to cool. In addition to burns, a person also risks wounds or embedded slivers from the sharp, fragile glass fragments.

▶ Do not let appearances deceive you. Just because a power line wire has an insulated covering doesn't mean it's safe to touch or handle. The insulation is designed to help prevent flickering and outages caused by tree limbs, squirrels and other critters, but it is NOT like an extension cord where you can safely grab and move it.

While it's true the power and heat from a bolt of lightning can melt sand to form glass sculptures, the portrayal of how it happens in "Sweet Home Alabama" was a figment of Hollywood's imagination. Glass formed by lightning striking



The downed power line was powerful enough to create glass from concrete and create holes and divots in the concrete under the bubbles.

sand is called a fulgurite, and it looks very different from the glass sculptures resembling tree branches in the movie. According to Utah Geological Survey, fulgurites are usually 1 to 2 inches in diameter and up to 30 inches in length. A fulgurite exterior is a hard, crumbly, gray or brown texture and coated in partially melted grains of sand. The inside is a translucent, clear or whitish glass tube.

Other than a handful of successful trials by teams of scientists from the University of Florida who used highly advanced technology, expensive materials and extended periods of time, there is no record of any person successfully triggering lightning strikes to make fulgurites, specifically with a lightning rod on a beach.

Co-op's Boost Awareness Continued from page 16A ▶

they also lose the opportunity to communicate their concern to our leaders about the issues that matter to us, where we work, live and raise families.

Reliable electricity, rural infrastructure and access to rural broadband are just a few of the issues we all care about. These issues will only become priorities if we continue to express our concerns to our elected officials. Registering to vote and showing up to the polls on Election Day are the most effective ways to send this message.

When we go to the polls with the cooperative principle of "concern for community" in mind, we instantly improve our political system. It's a system designed to produce a government "of the people, by the people and for the people." People like you and me.

We have the opportunity to continue the dialogue with a variety of candidates this year, and now is the perfect time to ask, "what will you do to ensure we continue to have affordable and reliable electricity in our community?" This is a perfect time to confirm your voter registration is valid and encourage any new voters to get registered. 2020 — It's a great time to go vote!

For information on how to register and vote in our state, visit the Co-ops Vote website: vote.coop. You can also find information about elected officials and read more about issues important to our community.



Congressional candidate, Dr. Bill Clifford (left), was one of the participants at the event.

Co-ops Vote is a non-partisan program developed by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national service organization that represents the nation's more than 900 private, not-for-profit, consumer-owned electric cooperatives. By participating in Co-ops Vote, you will join with 42 million members across the nation, to ensure electric co-ops are a powerful voice on national issues that have a local impact.

Thanks, Shane

Practice Farm Safety; Har

We don't have to remind those who work the land and raise livestock that they have a potentially dangerous occupation. September is national farm health and safety month, in honor of that, here are some reminders about electrical dangers on the farm or ranch.

Overhead Power Lines

If you make contact with a power line, guy wire, power pole, electrical box or any other electrical equipment, do not get out of your cab or truck. Stay put and call 911 to dispatch the local utility to de-energize the power. If you must get out due to smoke or fire, make a solid jump out without touching any part of the tractor or vehicle, and hop away as far as you can, keeping both feet together as you hop. Another option

(after you make a clean exit) is to shuffle or waddle away while keeping your feet together and on the ground.

Once You are Out, Never Try to Re-Enter the Cab or Truck.

Remember: If your machinery or vehicle comes in contact with a power line or other utility equipment, do not get out of the cab. Stray power could energize your equipment and the ground. Call

For everyone you love,
COME HOME SAFE TONIGHT

Remember: look up

Almost half of all power line contacts involve large equipment. Take time to note the location of all power lines and be aware of your surroundings, such as overhead wires. Remember to look up.

Keep a safe distance

If you see a downed power line, stay back at least 35 feet. If you contact a line in a vehicle, do not get out. Call Victory Electric immediately at 620-227-2139 or call 911.



IF YOU HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO EXIT THE CAB, DO SO SAFELY

CHECK and make sure no wires are in your way.



STAND in the doorway, cross your arms and put your feet together.



JUMP as far as possible away from the vehicle and land with both feet together.



DO NOT touch the vehicle.



KEEP your arms crossed, feet together and **HOP** at least 35 feet to safety. If you feel any tingling, hop farther away.



A Buckeye Group Cooperative

vest the Benefits

911 and wait for us to arrive and cut the power so you can safely exit your tractor or vehicle.

Determine Proper Clearance

Contact us to measure power line heights; do NOT do this yourself. Once you know the heights, you can determine appropriate equipment, implement and extension clearances. Always maintain at least 20 feet between the power line and the tallest height of the equipment that will be transported. Keep in mind that due to wear, age and even weather conditions, power lines can change height. Please contact us with any concerns. It's good to know power line clearance, but always have a spotter.

Call Us Before Moving or Adding a Grain Bin

The National Electrical Safety Code addresses grain bins and their proximity to power lines with very specific requirements. The requirements are in place to help keep farmers safe: to decrease the chances of farming equipment and machinery coming in contact with power lines. If you are planning to build a new grain bin or remodel around an area that already has one, contact Victory Electric. We can help with specific code requirements. The taller a grain bin, the farther it must be placed from a power line.

Always Dig Safely

Whether you are installing new fence posts or using large tillage tools, call 811 before you dig to have underground utilities marked. Even if you think you know where buried gas, power and other lines are, don't rely on your memory. Have all utilities marked so you know for sure. Utility locators dispatched by 811 do not mark private lines.

Use Standby Generators With Care

If you have a standby generator to provide essential power during an outage, be sure to correctly use the transfer switch. Once you properly engage the switch, it stops your farm's generated power from entering utility lines, aka backfeeding, which can electrocute lineworkers who are working to restore power.

General Farm Safety

- ▶ Check and maintain equipment, especially electric cables and hydraulic hoses that have cracks or show other signs of wear.
- ▶ Always have someone nearby when entering grain bins or other high-risk areas.
- ▶ Check all buildings and grounds for fire hazards and hazardous materials.
- ▶ Assess how any chemicals are stored and make sure children and animals can't access them.
- ▶ Make a list of chemicals for firefighters in case a fire breaks out on your farm or ranch.
- ▶ Establish a safety boundary around gas and fuel tanks.
- ▶ Don't skimp on safety: wear eye and ear protection, gloves, and face masks and respirators when appropriate.
- ▶ Shield all PTO-powered machinery and keep others away.
- ▶ Outfit tractors and trucks with fire extinguishers.
- ▶ Never exit a tractor or truck without placing it in park or engaging the emergency brakes.
- ▶ Discuss safety concerns with children and explain safe operating procedures. You can never start too young, and they watch what you do.

FARM SAFETY EQUIPMENT REACH

Make sure everyone is trained in safe practices around electricity. Use these safety tips for you, your employees, seasonal workers, family members, and anyone else accessing your farm.

- ▶ Know the dimensions of any far-reaching equipment, such as chemical sprayers, tillage equipment, other extensions or augers.
- ▶ Machinery extension dimensions include the length when extended horizontally and upright for transport.
- ▶ Always use the lowest (shortest) setting for extensions when moving loads.
- ▶ These power line safety principles also apply to arms, booms, truck beds, ladders and other items or mechanisms that extend or are far-reaching.

If your equipment hits a power line, pole or guy wire, do not leave the cab. Immediately call 911, warn others to stay away and wait for the utility crew to cut the power.



REAFACTS

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75TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

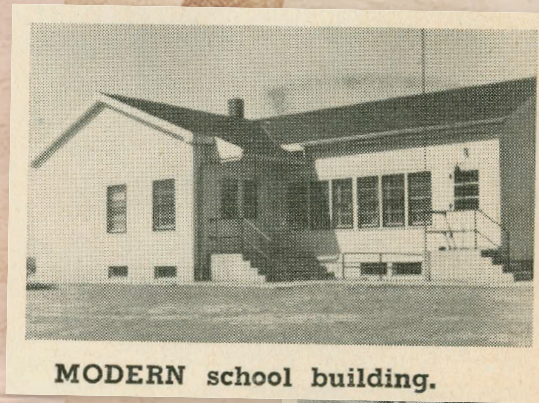
FROM REA FACTS, VOL. 5, NO. 8 AUGUST 1952

Electricity Modernizes the Rural School

The members of district 66, known as the "Schoen" school in Hodgeman County are enjoying their modern all electric school. The building was erected two years ago to replace the old building, which was destroyed by fire. It is used not only for school, but also for 4-H activities, elections and other community gatherings.

This building has a large classroom, cloak room, toilets, a large basement with kitchen, dining room, and furnace room. There are two exits to basement and upstairs.

Rural electric power makes it possible to have a water system with an electric pump, water heater, thus affording hot and cold water. There is an electrically controlled furnace.



MODERN school building.

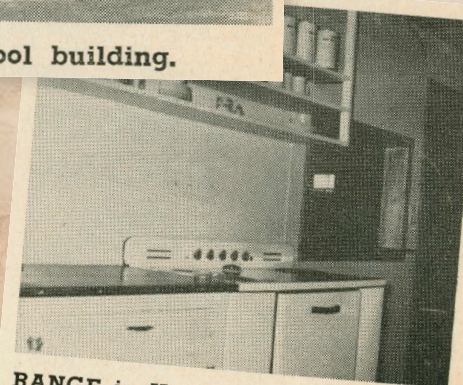
Indirect lighting furnished by concentric ring louvers and plenty of windows add much to the attractiveness of the study hall and furnish the needed 30 to 40

foot candles of light upon all desks. An electric clock and a piano add much to the school's furnishings.

The students enjoy using the electric range and take turns carrying out the duties of preparing hot lunches. Commodities are furnished and supplemented by a hot dish from the children.

Two yard lights make it safe to carry on playground activities at night.

The present school board members are: Maurice E. Webb, director, George Harms, treasurer and Sam Boger, clerk.



RANGE in Hot Lunch Room.



ATTRACTIVE school room, Schoen School. Miss Clawsen is ready for story hour. She has been reemployed for the coming school term. Those in picture are: Donna and Gordon Harms, Nina, Ronald and Sharon Mayfield, Carry Wilson, Terry Boger, Norman and Betty Drach, Carol and Loren Nightingale. Note handiwork of the pupils.