



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Electro NEWS

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Manager's Message... We have the Power to Serve You Best

This article is the fourth in a series exploring the seven cooperative principles and how they affect you and your community.

As you might know, The Victory Electric Cooperative is not alone in its mission of bringing reliable supplies of electricity to rural residents.

There are 29 electric distribution cooperatives like Victory Electric Cooperative that serve in Kansas and more than 850 nationwide. Despite our obvious similarities, each business is different--first and foremost because the areas we serve are unique.

Each cooperative has its own individual history and serves a distinctive mix of residential, industrial, commercial and agricultural members. And, each makes its own business decisions independently. That's what Cooperative Principle No. 4, **Autonomy and Independence**, is all about. It's one of seven principles all cooperative forms of business are based upon.



Terry Janson

Electric cooperatives are subject to less regulation by federal and state governments because of the healthy way in which our members regulate us. Our independence from distant, outside regulators is also based

on our historical commitment to the communities we serve.

To be autonomous and independent is crucial for our cooperative to be able to best serve the needs of you, the members. That's because what might be a sound decision for one cooperative, say, with a relatively small number of members spread out in an extremely rural area, might not work for another that has a larger number of members, some living in a more urban setting.

Local service and attention to your unique needs are why having local control is best for the cooperative.

Although Victory Electric sails its own ship, so to speak, we are not sailing alone. Our cooperative

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Imgarten joins Victory Electric as Communications Specialist



The Victory Electric Cooperative announces the hiring of Jerri Imgarten as Communications Specialist.

A recent graduate of Oklahoma State University, Imgarten earned a Bachelor's of Science degree in Agricultural Communications and Agricultural Economics. She was raised on a cattle and cash crop farm in north central Oklahoma, where she developed her passion and dedication for agriculture and rural communities.

"I am excited to become a part of The Victory Electric Cooperative team," Imgarten said. "I grew up in a similar rural community and look forward to getting to know the Dodge City area and community."

Over the last year, she completed a communications internship with Kansas Electric Cooperatives and *Kansas Country Living* magazine in Topeka. Most recently, she worked as a Public Relations Coordinator for Ad-Farm, an agricultural advertising agency in Kansas City, Mo.

Victory Attends NRECA Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C.



Attending from Victory (left to right) Carl Hubbell, Trustee; Jane Hubbell; Gwen Schulte; Ken Schulte, Trustee; Christine Janson; Terry Janson, General Manager; Jerri Imgarten, Communications Specialist; Josh Schmidt, Manager of Member Services; Brandi Schmidt (Not pictured, Pat Morse, Trustee).

Recently The Victory Electric Cooperative took the opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C., to lobby to state and national officials and inform them of the issues and concerns facing Victory Electric and our members.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) hosted the association's Annual Legislative Conference and lobbying effort in Washington, D.C., on May 4-7, 2008. More than 3,000 members representing local and state electric co-ops from 47 states gathered for the conference.

America's electric cooperatives are making significant investments in clean, renewable energy sources, such as landfill gas, hydro-power, wind, biomass and waste heat.

"We are also investing in energy efficiency," said Terry Jansen, General Manager. "But renewable energy and conservation alone cannot provide enough power to meet the country's growing demand."

Some regions are facing a power crunch and could see power shortages as soon as 2011. What

is Congress' plan to ensure the nation's electric industry can meet demand?

This question, among others is of key concern to electric cooperatives. Representatives from more than 900 cooperative electric utilities nationwide and the 40 million consumers they serve visited Capitol Hill to discuss energy issues with members of Congress.

Briefings offered by NRECA legislative and policy staff will focus on proposed climate change legislation, high shipping costs resulting from rail monopolies, funding for the US Dept. of Agriculture's Rural Utility Service and funding for clean coal technology.



Ken Schulte and Josh Schmidt attend NRECA workshops to prepare for their lobbying efforts to Kansas Senators and Representatives.

Retired Victory Electric Employee, Ike Kirkland, Passes

Ike Kirkland, 80, passed away Thursday, March 13, 2008, at Trinity Manor Nursing Home in Dodge City. A longtime employee, Kirkland started at Victory Electric in October 1948 as a lineman. Through the years, he worked his way up to Line Superintendent.

Kirkland was a man of many talents and served Victory in several capacities. Not only did he serve as Line Superintendent, but he also served as the cooperative's engineer and dispatcher. He had a knack for knowing all of the customers in Victory's territory and where they lived, serving as a navigator and map for other Victory employees. He was always willing to help and served as a teacher and mentor to many, until his retirement January 31, 1993.

Kirkland was born on December 25, 1927, in Flippin, Ark., the son of Homer and Ada (Coots) Kirkland. He grew up in Wetumka, Okla. On July 31, 1948, he married Norma Luella Cirkel at the Band Shell in Wright Park in Dodge City. She preceded him in death on February 13, 1998. They lived all their married life in Dodge City. He enjoyed fishing, archery and hunting. Memberships include the Prairie Archery Club, Southwest Singles, and the Moose Lodge, all of Dodge City.

Survivors include three sons, Marion Kirkland and wife, Lois, of Sierra Vista, Ariz; Phillip Kirkland of St. John; and Vaughn Kirkland and wife, Erin, of Topeka; a daughter, Paula Killian Schreiber and husband, Larry, of Dodge City; one brother, Marvin Kirkland and wife, Gladys, of Okmulgee,



Ike Kirkland

Okla.; one sister, Marie Bertrang of Tulsa, Okla.; five grandsons, Mike Kirkland of Johnson City, Tenn.; Mark Kirkland of Jacksonville, Fla.; Addison Kirkland of Topeka; Justin and Jeremy Killian both of Dodge City; and five great grandchildren.

The Victory Electric Cooperative appreciates the years of service and dedication of Kirkland and he will be greatly missed.

We have the Power to Serve You Best, *Continued from Page 20-A*

belongs to the statewide association, Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. (KEC), and our national group, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, and Touchstone Energy®, a national alliance of more than 640 electric cooperatives nationwide.

These umbrella groups provide support and products such as KEC's *Kansas Country Living* magazine and its Loss Control, Safety and Compliance program, which provides safety courses to our employees. Touchstone Energy gives us access to online energy audits and marketing campaigns. KEC and NRECA provide advice on what lawmakers in Topeka and

Washington, D.C., are doing that could affect cooperatives.

However, none of these groups tells us what we must do. The decisions about how to bring you electricity at the best possible cost are left to our employees and to our Board of Trustees, which is elected by you, the members.

When Victory Electric enters into agreements with electricity suppliers, those contracts don't give them the right to tell our cooperative whom to serve or what rates to charge. That's left up to the cooperative.

On occasion, we might need a large amount of capital to pay for expansion. We can borrow it from

a number of sources, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service or the Cooperative Finance Corporation, a bank that is itself a cooperative. Of course, while we enter into any such agreement with a great deal of deliberation, the deal would not give the lending entity any power over our operations.

The leaders of our cooperative, who are also members, know this area and its needs well. Our independence and autonomy to make our own decisions allow us to serve you in the most efficient way possible. And that's the way it should be.

Til' next time, TJ

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