

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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## THE VICTORY ELECTRIC CO-OP

# electronews



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Supervisor of Operations

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### FROM THE CEO

## What's in it for "We"?



Shane Laws

One of the most attractive features of cooperatives is that we answer the popular question, "What's in it for me?" with "What's in it for we!"

Cooperatives are formed when the market fails to offer a good or service, with decent quality, at an affordable price. Victory Electric was formed in 1945 because, when investor-owned utilities realized there was not enough profit to be made in rural, they refused to offer electric service.

The founding members of Victory Electric went door to door to collect \$5 in order to raise a portion of the original investment the cooperative needed. Those "go-getters" realized the only way to get electricity for me was to get it for we, the whole community.

Cooperative ownership is in the hands of the people who use the cooperative's goods and the services (not investors), so not only do cooperatives start out answering the question of "What's in it for

we?" – they continue to answer that question for as long as they exist.

These days, we often hear about companies who abandon their local communities and move overseas in search of cheaper labor. This negatively impacts the community through job loss, decline in housing values and school closures. Because local residents own a majority of cooperatives, they are less likely to leave their community. In fact, it would be impossible for Victory Electric to leave southwest Kansas. The cooperative is a critical part of this community.

The way cooperatives continue to answer the question, "What's in it for we?" is critical to their survival. It is imperative that we keep you—our members—as the primary focus. Keeping rates as low as possible is one major part of that focus, but ensuring we provide real value as your trusted energy adviser is also extremely important to us.

By maintaining focus with your help and support, we will continue to be able to serve the "me" and the "we" in our community into the future for a long time.

*Thanks, Shane*

### Memorial Day Office Closing

Victory Electric's office will close Monday, May 30, 2016, in observance of Memorial Day.



# Victory's 71st Annual Meeting a Success



More than 750 people were served a steak dinner at the 71st Annual Meeting.

Every year, Victory Electric looks forward to hosting the annual meeting for our members, and this year was no exception. The annual meeting is a great time to get to know our members and to offer information on the activities of the cooperative.

Victory's annual meeting was April 12 at the Western State Bank Expo. Approximately 471 members were present, and more than 750 people were served a barbecue dinner.

In addition to the business meeting, members heard presentations from board president Kenny Wehkamp and the 2015 Youth Tour winners. The 2016 Youth Tour winners and the Lightner Community Spirit Scholarship winners were also introduced. Dozens of great prizes were awarded throughout the meeting.

The results of the election for four districts on the board of trustees were announced: **GARY GILLESPIE**, Copeland, District 5; **JIM OCHS**, Jetmore, District 7, **RICHARD LIGHTNER**, Garden City, District 9; and **PAT MORSE**, Dodge City, District 10; were re-elected in their respective districts.

We look forward to seeing you next year at the 72st Annual Meeting.

**Thank you to all who attended our annual meeting!**



Denzil McGill (left) and Dania Blatnick register 471 members at the annual meeting.



Employees (from left) Steve Jimmerson and Michael Stefan volunteered to serve food at the annual meeting.



1. The Victory Electric board answered questions from the members.
2. Board President Kenny Wehkamp addresses members.
3. Shane Laws, CEO, visits with a member
4. Linemen Justin Straight (left), Paul Schmidt and Kyndell Penick tak to members about the danger of making contact with a downed power line.
5. The Dodge City High School Madrigals entertain meeting attendees with choral talent.
6. Employees served steak dinners to more than 750 people.
7. Member Kyle Hager (left), attends the annual meeting with his great grandson, Braden Yancey, and fellow member Jerry Hager.

## Victory Electric Operations Supervisor Earns Certification



Ryan Miller

**RYAN MILLER**, Victory Electric supervisor of operations, recently completed the Management Internship Program (MIP). Miller finished the program in March.

The MIP is an intensive, six-week program that focuses on a variety of contemporary management issues. It is a collaborative program with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). The program is comprised of three, two-week units that focus on advanced proficiency in critical areas of cooperative management. The two-week units are held at the University of Wisconsin in Madison.

"The program was a lot, but it was definitely worth it," Miller said.

The program provides an opportunity to emphasize practical applications with distinguished faculty to help with a group project and an individual project. The small

group project is completed on campus during the six-week period. The individual project is completed while the participants are home and is designed to apply the tools gained in the classroom at the cooperative.

Miller's project focused on line crew reassignments and how it helped increase efficiency of work flow and the financial savings of the cooperative.

"I learned a lot about the cooperative business model and how it works," Miller said. "This training will help me in the future as well as dealing with day-to-day situations that come with management. I'm glad I went through the program and gained the knowledge I did. The whole experience was worth it."

Individuals become certified by completing and presenting their individual project during the final two-week session. The MIP program aims to develop the best talent in the electric cooperative industry and prepare them for more management responsibilities.

Victory Electric congratulates Miller on his progress and his accomplishment.

## Communications Specialist Attends Training With 44 Others in Washington, D.C.

**KENNEDY ST. GEORGE**, Victory Electric communications specialist, was one of six Kansans to attend the New Cooperative Communicator Orientation (NCCO) in mid-April.

NCCO is held each year in Washington, D.C., for new co-op communicators and member relations personnel and experienced communicators who may be new

to cooperatives. The orientation provided resources and boosted the knowledge for the 44 attendees from nearly 20 states across the country.

"The trip was very educational," St. George said. "I was able to

meet new friends who I will continue to connect with in the future and was given resources to better communicate with the members of Victory Electric."



Kennedy St. George

While in Washington, D.C., the group learned about the cooperative values and business model, were given National Rural Electric Cooperative Association resources, toured Cooperative Finance Corporation and the national monuments, and much more.

"It was nice to know other co-ops face the same issues as Victory Electric," St. George said. "It is going to be very helpful and I'm thankful for the opportunity."



Kansas co-op employees participated in NRECA's New Coop Communicator Orientation. From left: Vicki Estes, KEC; Kennedy St. George, Victory; Jackie Moore, KEC; Shawn Powelson, Wheatland; Sarah Farlee, LJEC; and Alli Conine, Wheatland.



### Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Avoid placing lamps or TVs near your air-conditioning thermostat. The thermostat senses heat from these appliances, which can cause the air conditioner to run longer than necessary.

## Beware of Electrical Safety While Boating this Summer

Despite being categorized as leisure activities, swimming and boating can quickly become dangerous. While water safety behaviors such as wearing life jackets and maintaining safe boating speeds have become commonplace, a serious hazard remains that is often overlooked. This silent killer, classified as electric shock drowning, occurs in fresh water when a typically low level alternating current (AC) passes through the body, which causes muscular paralysis and eventually leads to drowning.

Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) president Brett Brenner said, "although there are reported incidents every year, there is a lack of awareness about the dangers of electric shock drowning." A 21-year-old Illinois man died in 2015 when touching a dock ladder at the Lake of the Ozarks in Missouri. Additionally, there were at least two fatalities in Kentucky in 2013, and a pair of deaths in both Missouri and Tennessee during the Fourth of July holiday in 2012. Each victims was under the age of 13. Further, electric shock drowning deaths are usually recorded as drowning because victims show no signs of burns, so many instances remain undocumented.

While a lack of awareness persists about the dangers of electric shock drowning, positive strides are being taken to combat the problem.

Protect yourself and your loved ones from the risk of electric shock drowning and common boat electrical hazards with these handy tips from ESFI.

- ▶ Don't allow yourself or anyone else to swim near docks. Avoid entering the water when launching or loading your boat.
- ▶ Always maintain a distance of at least 10 feet between your boat and nearby power lines.
- ▶ If you feel a tingle while swimming, the water may be electrified. Get out as soon as possible avoiding the use of metal objects such as ladders.
- ▶ Have your boat's electrical

system inspected and upgraded by a certified marine electrician who is familiar with National Fire Protection Association Codes: NFPA 303 and NFPA 70.

- ▶ Only use shore or marine power cords, plugs, receptacles and extension cords that have been tested by Underwriters Laboratories (UL), Canadian Standards Association (CSA) or Intertek (ETL).
- ▶ Never use cords that are frayed or damaged or that have had the prongs removed or altered.
- ▶ Never stand or swim in water when turning off electrical devices or switches.
- ▶ Electric shock drowning can also occur in swimming pools, hot tubs, and spas. Have an electrician inspect and upgrade your pool, spa, or hot tub in accordance with applicable local codes and the National Electrical Code (NEC).

Don't let summer fun turn into tragedy. Victory Electric encourages you to know the importance of electrical safety near boats, docks and marinas.



## Supreme Court's Stay of Clean Power Plan is Good for Ratepayers

On Feb. 9, 2016, the U.S. Supreme Court announced a 5-4 decision to stay the implementation of the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan (CPP), which was designed to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from existing power plants under the Clean Air Act. From a legal perspective, a "stay" means EPA's work to implement the regulation cannot proceed until legal issues are resolved.

Sunflower Electric Power Corporation, Victory Electric's wholesale generation and transmission provider, joined 38 electric cooperatives—along with 27 states, three labor unions, and 32 national and state trade associations—in petitioning the Court for the stay. It is estimated that utility and business groups challenging the CPP represent about 80 percent of the U.S. economy, and asking for the stay was an important piece of each legal challenge.

In recent years, the EPA has implemented several regulations aimed at lowering emissions from electric generating units. Environmental activists opposed to coal-based electricity have applauded the administration's "war on coal" since burdensome regulations have the potential to shut down coal-based electric generators. The utility industry, however, maintains that the EPA overstepped its authority when issuing these regulations. In response, to protect ratepayers the utility industry opted to sue the EPA over the legality of the regulations.

### Importance of a Stay to Electric Ratepayers

Consider two recent regulations—the Cross State Air Pollution Rule (CSAPR) and Mercury and Air Toxics Standards Rule (MATS). As with many legal battles, the timeline for legal challenges to work through the court system can take several years from start to finish. In both cases, ratepayers were burdened with the costs of compliance for regulations later overturned by the court.

CSAPR, designed to reduce the impact of cross-border emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx) and sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), was finalized in July 2010 and was slated to become effective Jan. 1, 2012. After years of judicial wrangling, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld CSAPR in April 2014 and told EPA to start over on the implementation timeline. The new deadline for compliance, January 1, 2015, meant that Sunflower's original schedule to replace

equipment would have been sufficient to meet the requirements of the regulation.

MATS, aimed at limiting mercury and other hazardous air pollutant (HAP) emissions from electric generating units, took a similar course. EPA issued the final rule in early December 2011, and compliance requirements remained in place during years of litigation. In June 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that when

developing whether and how to regulate HAPs, the EPA should have considered compliance costs, which are estimated at \$9.6 billion annually for the electric industry. EPA administrator Gina McCarthy stated publically that she was not concerned about the Supreme Court's decision to overturn the rule because over time utilities had to comply with the rule anyway. Once again, utilities invested in equipment—such as the equipment costing approximately \$1.5 million installed at Holcomb Station for mercury control—or prematurely closed coal plants. EPA has since

sought to correct its error by completing the compliance cost assessment, but that determination will also be challenged. No one knows when this case will be finally decided, yet the impact of the rule has already been widely felt across the utility industry.

While a revised version of CSAPR has been implemented and while the fate of MATS is still not known, these examples illustrate the work and costs incurred prematurely while the legal challenges unfolded. The path taken in the CSAPR and MATS rulemakings underscore why it is crucial to have a stay in place while the courts decide the legality of the CPP. The CPP is a regulation that will, by Administrator McCarthy's admission, fundamentally change the way electricity is generated in this country and will further result in projected double-digit electricity price increases in as many as 40 states. An impact of this magnitude should be the result of the legislative process rather than an overreach of the EPA.

In order to maintain reliable electricity at the lowest possible cost, you can be certain that Victory Electric and Sunflower staff will continue to advocate on your behalf in an attempt to keep regulations from unnecessarily increasing electric rates.

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## Seguridad Eléctrica Mientras Pasea en Barco este Verano



A pesar de estar clasificados como actividades de tiempo libre, la natación y la navegación rápidamente puede llegar a ser peligroso. Mientras que los comportamientos de seguridad en el agua, tales como el uso de chalecos salvavidas y mantener velocidades de navegación segura ha convertido en algo común, sigue siendo un serio peligro que a menudo se pasa por alto.

Este asesino silencioso, clasificado como ahogamiento descarga eléctrica, se produce en agua dulce cuando una corriente típicamente bajo nivel alterna (AC) pasa a través del cuerpo, lo que causa parálisis muscular y finalmente conduce a ahogamiento de seguridad eléctrica mientras esté navegando este verano.

Presidente de Seguridad Eléctrica Fundación Internacional (Comisión de Seguridad Eléctrica) Brett Brenner dijo, "aunque se han reportado incidentes cada año, hay una falta de conciencia sobre los peligros de ahogamiento descarga eléctrica." A 21 años de edad, un hombre de Illinois murió en 2015 al tocar una atraca escalera en el lago de los Ozarks en Missouri. Además, hubo al menos dos muertes en Kentucky en 2013, y un par de muertes tanto en Missouri y Tennessee durante la fiesta del Cuatro de Julio en 2012. Cada una de las víctimas fue menor de 13. Además, las muertes por ahogamiento descargas eléctricas suelen registrarse

como ahogamiento porque las víctimas no muestran signos de quemaduras, por lo que muchos casos permanecen sin documentar.

Si bien la falta de conciencia persiste sobre los peligros de ahogamiento descarga eléctrica, se están tomando pasos positivos para combatir el problema.

Protegerse y proteger a sus seres queridos contra el riesgo de ahogamiento descarga eléctrica y del barco común peligros eléctricos con estos prácticos consejos de ESFI:

- ▶ No se permita o cualquier otra persona para nadar cerca de los muelles.
- ▶ Evitar entrar en el agua en el lanzamiento o cargar su barco.
- ▶ Si se siente un cosquilleo mientras que la natación, el agua puede estar electrificada.
- ▶ Salir tan pronto como sea posible evitar el uso de objetos metálicos.
- ▶ Sólo utilice en tierra o energía marina cables, enchufes, receptáculos y cables de extensión que han sido probados por Underwriters Laboratories (UL), Canadian Standards Association (CSA) o Intertek (ETL).
- ▶ Nunca use los cables que están desgastados o dañados o que han tenido los dientes suprimida.
- ▶ Nunca se pare o nadar en el agua cuando se apaga dispositivos o interruptores eléctricos.
- ▶ Ahogamiento eléctrica de choque también puede ocurrir en piscinas, bañeras de hidromasaje y spas.
- ▶ Haga que un electricista inspeccione y actualice su piscina, spa, bañera de hidromasaje o de conformidad con las normas aplicables y el Código Eléctrico Nacional (NEC).

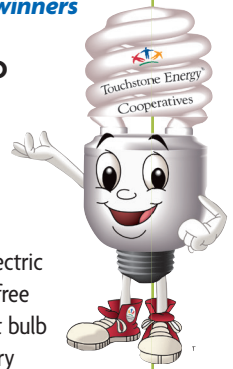
No deje que la diversión del verano se convierten en tragedia. Victoria Electric le anima a conocer la importancia de la seguridad eléctrica cerca de los barcos, muelles y puertos deportivos.

## CFL Charlie Says "Come Get Your Free CFL!"

*This month's lucky winners are...*

**JAMES ABLE, SIXTO GARCIA, GLENN KELTNER, CEZAR ORTIZ, ALMA ROJAS, and ALICE ZURBUCHEN.**

Come by Victory Electric Cooperative to get your free compact fluorescent light bulb (CFL). Every month, Victory Electric gives members free CFL light bulbs. Congratulations winners!



## Happy Mother's Day

Mother's Day is Sunday, May, 8. Happy Mother's Day to all moms!

## Join Victory Online!

Visit us at [www.victoryelectric.net](http://www.victoryelectric.net) to pay your bill and find the latest news.

Find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/VictoryElectric](https://www.facebook.com/VictoryElectric) for updates. Follow us on Twitter at [TheVictoryElec](https://twitter.com/TheVictoryElec) for energy efficiency tips.

## Victory Celebrates Lineman Appreciation Day 2016



From left, linemen Eric Speer, Kyndell Penick and Justin Straight celebrate Lineman Appreciation Day.

National Lineman Appreciation Day was celebrated on Monday, April 11, at Victory Electric with breakfast and letters and drawings from their families.

With the focus of family, linemen received letters from home.

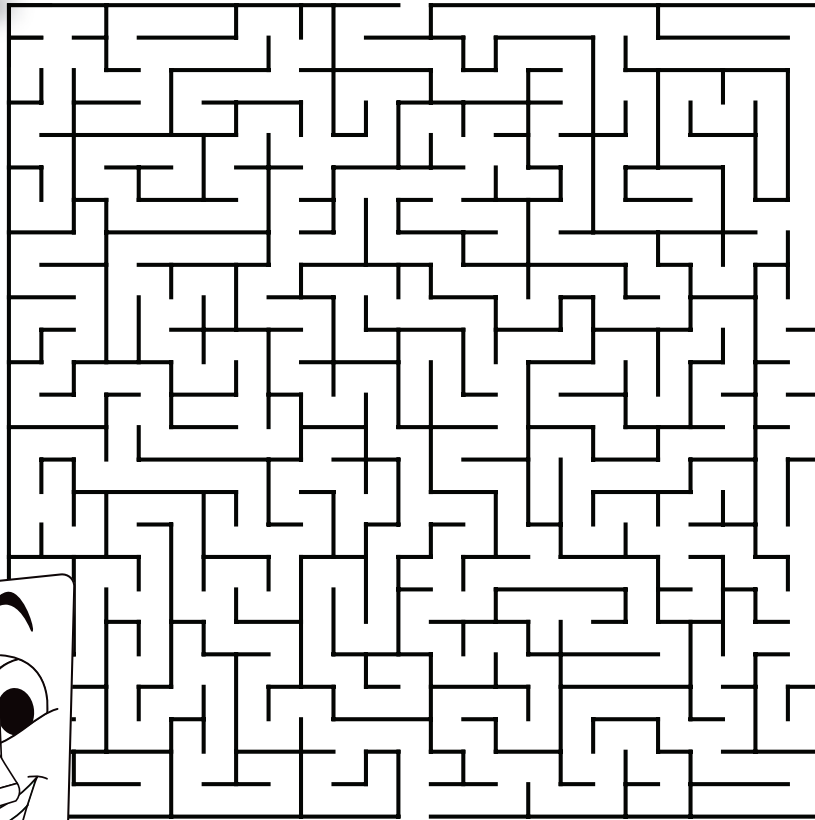
Victory Electric thanks our linemen for their dedication to you—our members.



# CFL Charlie's Summer Maze

Hi kids! CFL Charlie here. One of my favorite things about summer is playing outside! I make sure that the lights are off inside the house before I go out. Can you help me check if the lightswitch is turned off? We have to go through the maze first. Let's go!

Start! Good Luck!



Finish! Awesome! Great job!



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