

THE VICTORY ELECTRIC CO-OP

electronews



The Victory Electric Co-op Assn., Inc.

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FROM THE CEO

You're in Good Company with Co-ops

Neighbors helping neighbors to create a better world

A fair question people often ask is, "What's in it for me?" This makes sense, as we all need to act in our own self-interest every now and then. The cool thing about co-ops is that we answer the question, "What's in it for me?" with, "This is what's in it for we."

When the market refuses to offer a good or service, or does so at such a high price, cooperatives step in to fill the void. Cooperatives identify members of the community who have the same self-interests and bring them together to make a co-op decision.

Seventy-one years ago, when Victory Electric got started, the folks in our community shared at least one self-interest—they wanted electricity. In fact, many Americans who lived in rural parts of the country needed electricity, which is why electric cooperatives were formed. Individuals acted in their own self-interest, but that self-interest led to the community and economic development of the rural areas in which they lived. Today, rural electric co-ops serve over 42 million people in 47 states.

It is good to know your friends and neighbor are also your co-owners of Victory Electric. People coming together to meet a particular need is at the heart of every kind of co-op. Local credit unions bring financial

services to people that banks do not want to serve. In urban areas and college communities, housing co-ops offer people a safe, reliable and affordable place to live. Many agricultural co-ops started as a way to get their products to market, whether it was oranges (Sunkist), dairy (Land O'Lakes), grapes (Welch's), or any of the hundreds of other food products that co-ops bring to our table every day.

Many people who owned small businesses realized they too had a common self-interest: Stay in business. So they formed purchasing co-ops like Ace Hardware and True Value so they could compete with big-box stores like Home Depot.

Today, it is estimated that more than 40 percent of all residents in the U.S. are members of at least one cooperative. Worldwide, well over a billion people are counted as cooperative members.

So every time you turn on (or off) the lights, it can serve as a reminder that as a co-op member, you are in good company with your local neighbors—and with people all around the world.



Shane Laws

Thanks, Shane

FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT
Victory Seeks Board Nominations



John Leis

Dear Victory Electric Members,

It is time once again to start thinking about Victory Electric's annual membership meeting held on April 11, 2017.

We are currently soliciting nominations for Victory Electric's board of trustees. Posi-

tions up for election are in District 2, currently held by **JOHN LEIS**, Minneola; District 4, currently held by **JIM IMEL**, Bucklin; District 6, currently held by **KENNY WEH-KAMP**, Cimarron; and District 10, currently held by **RANDY QUINT**, 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. Also, 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.

Duties of an elected trustee include: attending a monthly six-to eight-hour board meeting, board training opportunities, and some travel will be required.

If you would like to run for a position, or you know someone interested, please send a letter of interest with qualifications to Shane Laws or Kenny Wehkamp at Victory Electric, P.O. Box 1335, Dodge City, KS 67801 by January 10, 2017.

Sincerely,

JOHN LEIS, PRESIDENT

Ten \$1,000 Scholarships Available

The Victory Electric Cooperative is excited to once again offer scholarships for high school seniors and current college students. In the spring, Victory Electric will award 10 students each a \$1,000 scholarship to its members or their dependents.

The Lightner Community Spirit Scholarship is designed to recognize students who have demonstrated academic success, as well as show a commitment to bettering their community.

"We are thrilled to again offer this scholarship program, which reflects the importance of civic and community engagement," 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 own community."

The name of the scholarship honors the Lightner family of Plymell. Richard Lightner has been on Victory Electric's board of trustees for 34 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 be a student or entering an accredited college or university (two- or four-year). Applications must be received no later than **March 1, 2017**.

Applications can be found on the website or at our office. For more information, please contact Jerri Imgarten at 620-371-7730.



Working on the LINE



Each year, Victory Electric helps the local Veterans of Foreign Wars in Dodge City change their flags. Lineman **JEREMY ELLING** changes the flag for the veterans.

Victory Youth Enjoy 10th Annual Pumpkin Festival



The Annual Pumpkin Painting and Carving Festival was attended by more than 550 area youth and their families.

The 10th Annual Pumpkin Painting and Carving Festival was held on Oct. 29 at Victory Electric.

Sponsored by Victory Electric and Ladies Community Outreach, the event was free for the 550 youth who participated in the event.

"The kids really love coming out and using their creative abilities to create pumpkins that are artistic and uniquely their own," said Jerri Imgarten, manager of marketing and communications at Victory Electric. "I enjoyed

helping with such a fun and festive event for the youth of the Dodge City and surrounding communities."

Victory sponsors the event to provide a safe environment for kids to enjoy Halloween activities. It is also a way to give back to the community and supply a pumpkin to those kids in our community that may not otherwise get a pumpkin to paint or carve.

In addition to painting and carving, there were also Halloween and fall-themed games for the youth to enjoy.



Addy Schmidt concentrates on painting a pumpkin.



Shane Laws, Victory Electric CEO, helps a child prepare for her train ride.



Duck races are enjoyed by kids after painting their pumpkins.



Victory Electric lineman **Marlon Hernandez** drives the pumpkin train for the youth at the festival.



Brad Ackerman, Victory Electric employee, and daughter, **Bella**, paint a pumpkin.



The festival is fun for the whole family.

Merry Christmas!



Victory Electric; Shane Laws, CEO; the board of trustees; and employees wish all of our members a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! We will be closed on Dec. 23 and 26 in observance of the Christmas holiday, and close again on Jan. 2 for New Year's.



Shane Laws
CEO



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Kenny Wehkamp
Board President

Victory Electric Bill Payment Options



Pay your bill online at www.victoryelectric.net, at our office, by mail or at any of our pay stations.

Victory Electric has several convenient options for you, the member, to pay your bill.

In addition to paying in our office or by mail, options include online bill pay at victoryelectric.net, via phone at 866-999-8494, auto bank deduction, drop boxes at Victory Electric and City of Dodge City.

CFL Charlie Says "Come Get Your Free CFL!"

This month's lucky winners are... **DIANA DAHNA, PETE GOMEZ, DONALD**



ROSSENER, PAUL SHERER, and JIM THACH. Come by Victory Electric's office to get your free compact fluorescent light bulb (CFL). Every month Victory Electric will be giving members free CFL light bulbs. Congratulations winners!

Efficiency Tip of the Month



Cold air can enter into the house through open cracks and gaps from doors, windows and floors. Simple weather stripping and caulk will reduce cold drafts and keep your home warmer this winter.

Reporting an Outage this Winter

Reporting an outage is easy. If an outage occurs, call 620-227-2139 or 800-279-7915 or report your outage on any smartphone or tablet via the SmartHub app.

To create your SmartHub account, visit victoryelectric.smarthub.coop. You will need to have your account number for initial registration. Check Facebook and Twitter for outage updates.

CO-OP CONNECTIONS SPOTLIGHT Save on the Coffee with Cup of Jones

CUP OF JONES is one of several hometown businesses providing savings for co-op connection card users at Victory Electric.

Nestled in an old home built in 1925, Cup of Jones is not an ordinary coffee shop.

"It is the home away from home feel," said **ROBERT JONES**, Cup of Jones owner. "Since opening in February 2008, we have always wanted the home and comfort feel for this place. The kind that makes you ask, 'where is grandma?'"

Jones opened the shop after service to the U.S. Army. "While I was in the Army, I enjoyed going to places like this," Jones said. "It was the home away from home and for my customers I want to be just that. People come in all the time to watch TV and lounge on the couch or they work on their laptop or open a book. I like that."

While Cup of Jones is home to the Elvis Presley, Milky Way and Snickers beverages, they offer a full breakfast and lunch menu Monday through Saturday.

The freshness of the food is what keeps the community coming

back said **JONI CHOW**, a Cup of Jones employee. "Our food is made with the really fresh goodness you can't find at other places, and most of the menu is homemade."

"We can make whatever anyone wants," Chow said of the coffee, frappes, teas, lattes and more.

Each season offers a specialty drink. This winter, grab a peppermint tea and a Grandma Jones' cinnamon roll. Cup of Jones is open Monday through Friday 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Saturday from 6:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. and located on Wyatt Earp in Dodge City.

Start saving on local and national discounts today by using your Co-op Connections Card. If you need a new card, please stop by the office during business hours to get one. Start saving.



Robert Jones, owner at Cup of Jones is ready to serve you.

Victory Gives Back to Local Schools

Victory Electric donated pumpkins to Northwest Elementary. Each student picked their own pumpkin to take home. This is one way Victory Electric likes



Students from Northwest Elementary hold their pumpkins they chose to take home.

to continue to give back to the communities we serve. Victory Electric serves as a community partner and donates pumpkins each year so students have the opportunity to have pumpkins for Halloween.

WARNING: Be Aware of Common Electric Bill Scams

Victory Electric consistently sends out warnings about utility scams, and now the FCC's Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau has issued an alert warning consumers of a scam in which consumers are being called and told they owe money to their utility companies. These members are told they must pay by prepaid debit cards, credit cards, or gift cards.

The scam is always the same story. A member receives a phone call from someone, usually posing as a representative of Victory (or another utility), saying their payment had been denied, or never received, and demands immediate payment or they would shut off their power. They are even known for spoofing our telephone number so the caller ID makes it appear to be a call from Victory Electric. There are three main utility scams:

- ▶ **Scam #1 – The Green Dot Card Scam:** Scammers insist you need to pay your bill immediately or you will be disconnected. They tell you to purchase green dot money cards and call them with the verification codes.
- ▶ **Scam #2 – Phishing:** Scammers insist you need to pay your bill immediately or you will be disconnected. They ask you to verify the credit card or bank account you used to pay their bill.
- ▶ **Scam #3 – Door-to-Door Collections:** a person comes to your home demanding payment or they threaten to pull your meter.

If you receive a call or a visit from someone telling you Victory Electric will disconnect your power unless you provide a debit or credit card or a personal financial account number, close the door or hang up and contact us.

If a Victory Electric employee contacts you by phone, it is the policy of Victory Electric to NEVER request confidential, personal financial information – like a credit card number or checking/savings routing and account numbers. Only give your confidential financial information to the cooperative if you have contacted us directly to make a payment. Chances are, anyone contacting members asking for a payment is not employed or authorized by Victory Electric.

We want Victory Electric members to know about possible scams. We encourage you to play it safe and always contact Victory Electric directly. Never give anyone who contacts you your credit card or bank account information."

Prepaid debit cards are a popular method of payment for

scammers. Wire transfer services have tightened their security, so crooks have turned to these prepaid cards instead. The cards are difficult to trace, you do not need photo identification to collect or spend the money and transactions cannot be reversed.




Tips for Spotting a Scam

Because Victory Electric does sometimes contact members by phone, it can be difficult to tell a scammer from a member representative. Here are some tips:

1. If a caller specifically asks you to pay by prepaid debit card, this is a red flag.
2. If you feel pressured for immediate payment or personal information, hang up the phone and call the customer service number on your bill. This will ensure you are speaking to a real representative.
3. Never allow anyone into your home to check electrical wiring, pipes or appliances unless you have scheduled an appointment or reported a problem. Also, ask employees for proper identification.

These types of scam continue to make their way around the country on a regular basis. All utility industries have been on alert for this scam previously and as long as the scammers continue to make money, it will unfortunately continue to be an issue for all industries.

If you receive a suspicious call, capture as much information about the caller as possible. After calling Victory Electric directly to confirm we did not contact you, notify your local authorities. However, if the person is at your home, please be safe and contact the local authorities for assistance.

 Phone scammers are targeting utility customers.	 Don't fall for scammers pretending to be utilities.	 Urgent call asking for personal information? It could be a scam.
 Utility employees will never ask you to pay immediately.	 Utilities will never ask you to buy a prepaid debit card.	 Utilities will never demand payment with a credit card by phone.

UTILITIES UNITED AGAINST SCAMS

Avoid scams this holiday season by knowing these quick tips.

Evitar Consumo de Electricidad: Tiempo de Uso sí Importa

¿Sabías que cuando se utiliza la electricidad a menudo importa tanto como la cantidad de electricidad que consume?

No es de extrañar que el uso de electricidad fluctúa a lo largo del día en función de la demanda del consumidor, y las cooperativas eléctricas debe ser capaz de proporcionar electricidad suficiente para satisfacer las demandas de energía de sus miembros durante los momentos de mayor consumo de energía, también conocido como “horas de mayor consumo.” a primera hora de la mañana, cuando la gente suele comenzar el día y horas de la tarde, cuando la gente regrese a sus hogares después del trabajo, son tiempos comunes durante horas pico. Para reducir la demanda de pico y ahorrar dinero, muchas cooperativas eléctricas han creado un programa de ritmo de tiempo de uso para fomentar el uso de electricidad durante las horas de menor –uso cuando la energía es menos costosa. Al igual que en el ahorro de dinero por asistir a una sesión matinal, se puede mantener más dinero en su billetera simplemente mediante el uso de electricidad durante un período de tiempo de menor actividad.

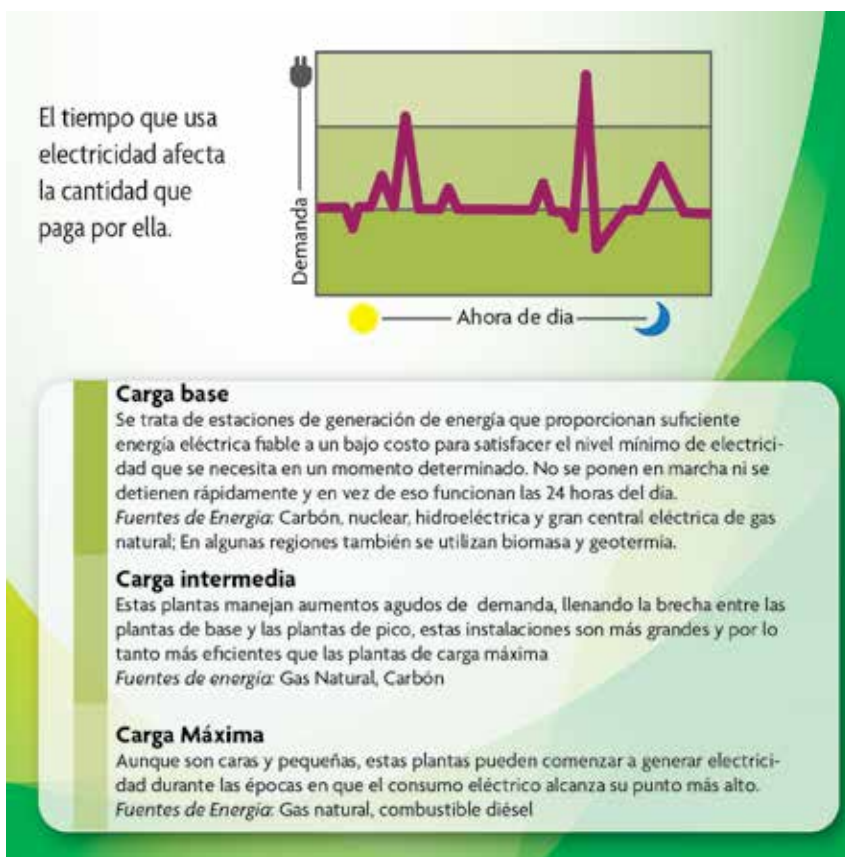
El uso de menos energía en horas pico se traduce en menores costes para la co-op - y en última instancia, las tasas, más bajas para los miembros.

Las tarifas eléctricas a partir del tiempo de uso ofrecen a los consumidores la capacidad de bajar sus costos de electricidad sin reducir la cantidad de electricidad utilizada. Mediante la realización de algunas de sus tareas diarias, como el funcionamiento de la lavadora de platos o lavar la ropa durante las horas de menor actividad, se puede ahorrar en su factura de servicios públicos. En una línea similar, conecte equipos electrónicos, como ordenadores, impresoras, televisores

y herramientas eléctricas a una regleta, y luego apagarlo durante las horas pico.

También se puede poner la tecnología a trabajar para usted. Si usted tiene un termostato programable, ajuste la configuración para que su sistema de calefacción / refrigeración se sincroniza con los períodos de tasas de menor actividad. Use temporizadores automáticos para ejecutar bañeras de hidromasaje, bombas de piscinas, calentadores de agua y otros aparatos de la misma manera.

El ahorro de energía puede ser simple. Recuerde, desplazando su consumo de energía a las horas valle, usted tiene el poder de ahorrar en su factura mensual de energía. Para aprender más acerca de por qué el tiempo de los asuntos de uso, ver un vídeo de corta duración, visitando el siguiente enlace: <http://tinyurl.com/TOUmatters>.



Visite Sitio Web y Únase a Nosotros en Facebook



Visite nuestro sitio web www.victoryelectric.net. En nuestro sitio Web, usted encontrará un calendario de eventos, con frecuencia pregunta, pago de factura y energía calculadora sólo por nombrar algunas herramientas!

También puede ser una fan de Victory Electric en Facebook buscando Victory Electric Cooperative Assn, Inc. Consulte nuestra página en Facebook para actualizaciones, información de interrupción y consejos de eficiencia de energía. Facebook es una excelente forma de mantenerse en contacto con nuestros miembros.