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Electronews

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CEO MESSAGE

Still Here for You, Even at a Distance



Shane Laws

As we all deal with the new realities brought on by COVID-19, I want to assure you Victory Electric is here to help you and is dedicated to keeping

the power reliable and flowing. The cooperative maintains an emergency action plan that has always served us well in a variety of circumstances, from ice storms to tornadoes. Early in this crisis, our staff updated that plan with a special emphasis on ensuring we can continue to provide the reliable electric service you have come to expect.

So far, that is exactly what has happened. We know that after a sufficient supply of food and water, electricity is the No. 1 thing you need to maintain a sense of normalcy as we hunker down in our homes. With that in

mind, keeping the power flowing is the primary focus for everyone involved in maintaining the electric infrastructure. That starts with our generation cooperative, Sunflower Electric, which has taken extreme measures to ensure its workforce is healthy and its power plants are functioning as needed. It also includes Victory Electric, where business may be a bit unusual, but our service remains the same.

Steps taken to ensure your power keeps flowing include:

- ▶ Closing our office to the public to prevent the spread of germs. Instead, we are encouraging members to pay their bill through our payment drop boxes, SmartHub (our online payment system), AutoPay, phone payment options and the U.S. Postal Service.
- ▶ Many of our employees are working remotely. Those continuing to work at the office are divided into shifts and specific building locations

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MEMORIAL DAY We will be **CLOSED**

In observance of the Memorial Day holiday on Monday, May 25, our office will be closed.



Clara Bartlett



Mackenzie Birney



Gabe Ellis



Kerry Garcia



Abby Harding



Rileigh Heeke



Nathan Heeke



Gage McDonald



Hailey Minet



Samantha Woods

Lightner Community Spirit Scholarship Recipients Announced

Ten local students whose families are served by Victory Electric earned a \$1,000 Lightner Community Spirit Scholarship. The scholarship is designed to recognize students who have demonstrated academic success and show a commitment to bettering their community.

- ▶ **CLARA BARLETT** of Cimarron, daughter of Brian and Stephanie Sunday, senior at Cimarron High School.
- ▶ **MACKENZIE BIRNEY** of Bucklin, daughter of Kevin and Bev Birney, senior at Bucklin High School.
- ▶ **GABE ELLIS** of Bucklin, son of Will and Laura Ellis, senior at Bucklin High School.
- ▶ **KERRY GARCIA** of Dodge City, son of Maria Santos, senior at Dodge City High School.
- ▶ **ABBY HARDING** of Dodge City, daughter of Derrick and Jan Harding, senior at Dodge City High School.
- ▶ **RILEIGH HEEKE** of Dodge City, daughter of Justin and Sarah Heeke, senior at Dodge City High School.
- ▶ **NATHAN HEEKE** of Spearville, son of Rick and Jill Heeke, sophomore at Kansas State University.
- ▶ **GAGE MCDONALD** of Mullinville, son of Darren and Amy McDonald, senior at Kiowa County High School.
- ▶ **HAILEY MINET** of Ingalls, daughter of John and Toni Minet, senior at Ingalls High School.
- ▶ **SAMANTHA WOODS** of Cimarron, daughter of Phillip and Laura Woods, senior at Cimarron High School.

"We congratulate the 2020 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 own community."

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 be a student at or entering an accredited trade school, college or university (two or four year). For more information, please visit our website at victoryelectric.net or contact the communications department at askcommunications@victoryelectric.net.

Smart Device Dilemmas: Managing Kids' Screen Time

The American Academy of Pediatrics' recommendations for limiting children's screen time might surprise parents. They recommend no screen time (except video chat) for children less than 18 months old; one hour per day for children up to age five; and greater flexibility for children age six and older. With increased screen time, there is a higher likelihood a child will be overweight and suffer from poor sleep. With the rapid proliferation of screened devices, such as TVs, computers, phones and tablets, how can parents redirect a child's attention and reconnect? Here are some tips.

Model Screen and Device Etiquette

No matter what screen and device rules your family decides are necessary, the heads of the household should set the gold standard for etiquette, so follow your own rules.

Set Basic Rules

Setting a few basic rules about screen time and device use can help draw boundaries and carve out allowances that make everyone happy. Some rules that might work for your family are:

- ▶ **NO DEVICES AT THE DINNER TABLE.** This also means no TV at meals. If you or your spouse has a profession requiring 24/7 access, such as physician or police officer, exceptions can be made; perhaps the phone goes on the counter instead of in another room. This might be difficult for families at first, but teaching children how to engage in small talk over a meal while using proper table manners will serve them (and you) very well throughout life.
- ▶ **NO DEVICES AT BEDTIME.** Set up a charging station in the family room where everyone leaves their device at night. This ensures kids get proper sleep and reduces eye strain; it also means you don't have to worry as much about what they're up to while you're sleeping. This rule might also mean no TVs in bedrooms.
- ▶ **NO FAMILY COMPUTERS BEHIND CLOSED DOORS.** Parents should monitor children's online activity, which is easier to do when devices stay in communal spaces.
- ▶ **ALWAYS USE A BLUE LIGHT REDUCTION FILTER.** This seriously reduces eye strain that, over the course of a lifetime, could cause significant damage to eyes and sleep cycles.

Help Your Children Find Other Things to Do

Screen time is an easy solution to myriad behavioral problems and frustrating situations, but there are other easy options, too. Make a list of fun, engaging and age-appropriate activities that don't involve screens. Ideas include:

- ▶ **ART:** Put together kits for age-appropriate activities, like art kits with character coloring books for preschoolers or garage sale dishes so older children can make mosaics.
- ▶ **PETS:** If you have a family pet, maybe it needs stimulation, too. Walking, brushing, playing with and training a dog are all things young children can do with your help and older children can do autonomously.
- ▶ **BOOKS:** The original TV. Make liberal use of your local or school library and check yard sales to keep reading an inexpensive hobby. Or check out the mobile app Libby that hooks up to your Kansas library card so you can check out books online through your phone or smart device!
- ▶ **INVEST IN YOUR COMMUNITY:** Spend time with your neighbors. It can be as simple as a meal together or playing games. The activity doesn't need to be elaborate to have fun.

Every family and every child is different. Parents have to evaluate and do what works best for you and your family.



Here for You

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so they can practice social distancing. As always, if members call the office, calls will be answered and a member service representative will be available to help you.

- Not only are the line crews now working in shifts, they are also physically separated from other employees and from the other crews to limit possible spread of the virus. Trucks are spaced apart to limit interaction with other crews and employees and some even head to the job site without coming to the office.

Victory Electric's management team and the board of trustees have frequent discussions to fine-tune and update our emergency plan as things continue to change. We are also in communication with the other electric cooperatives in Kansas, Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., as well as with our national electric cooperative, association, state legislators, and county emergency management officials.

While big changes are happening for employees, everyone is adapting to the new normal. No different than banding together to get through the aftermath of an ice storm, nothing brings out the best in our employees better than a crisis situation. We will get through this together.

Our main focus continues to be keeping the lights on and taking care of our employees, our members and the community. We are doing our best to keep your life as normal as possible during this situation and beyond.

All the best to everyone. Stay healthy, stay home and we will get through this together the cooperative way!

Thanks, Shane

PowerMyWay: Changing the Way Members Pay for their Electricity



No deposit. No fees. No due date. No monthly statements. You choose when and how much electricity to purchase.

PowerMyWay is changing the way members pay for their electricity. It gives you the flexibility to manage your budget by making smaller, more frequent payments on days it's right for you, instead of a single, larger payment on a fixed due date.

Think of PowerMyWay like putting gas in your car. Your vehicle has a gauge that allows you to monitor when you need to fill up. You can choose to purchase small amounts every few days or "fill up" the tank and not worry about it for several weeks. The more electricity you use, the quicker you will have to recharge your account.

By tying PowerMyWay to SmartHub, our online payment system, you can see your electric use for that day, week or month, and also know how much you spent in that time frame, and more importantly where you can save. SmartHub allows the flexibility for members to review account balances, make a payment, and evaluate energy use anytime and anywhere from a phone, tablet or computer.

The best part? There are no additional costs or fees with the PowerMyWay billing plan. Rates, including energy charges, taxes, franchise taxes, the service availability charge, and the energy cost adjustment are

exactly the same as accounts on a standard residential billing plan, but the member is NOT required to make a security deposit and there are no disconnect, reconnect or late fees.

Who can participate?

Any new or existing residential member of Victory Electric can take advantage of PowerMyWay. Residential accounts with an advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) meter are eligible for PowerMyWay. Access to SmartHub is required to participate in PowerMyWay. The member is responsible for creating a SmartHub account and/or updating the account with a valid email address or phone number to guarantee receipt of PowerMyWay notifications.

How do I get started?

Upon enrollment, new members purchase at least \$50 toward future energy costs. Existing members must have their conventional account paid in full, including unbilled electric use, before switching to PowerMyWay.

Those existing members who paid a deposit may apply it to the \$50 needed to open a PowerMyWay account, apply to any outstanding balance on a conventional account, transfer the deposit to a PowerMyWay account, or have the deposit refunded.

To learn more, please visit our website at victoryelectric.net/powermyway or call our office at 620-227-2139.



Regístrese hoy para el Pago Automático!

¿Está usted cansado de escribir cheques cada mes? ¿Le gustaría remover otro artículo de su lista de hacer mensualmente? Regístrese para pago automático para tener su factura de electricidad directamente pagada por su tarjeta de crédito/débito o de su caja de chequera/ahorros. Todos los miembros de Victory Electric son elegibles para unirse en el programa y el servicio es gratis.

- ▶ Es fácil, conveniente y rápido
- ▶ Sin esperar en fila
- ▶ Te ahorra tiempo- tu pago mensual es procesado automáticamente
- ▶ No hay gastos de envío o cheque- ahorre la molestia de escribir un cheque cada mes, pagando gastos de envío y mandándolo por correo cada vez
- ▶ Evite pagos atrasados y facturas atrasadas- si está en casa o fuera, este servicio mantiene sus pagos a tiempo porque ya los pagos están programados para usted
- ▶ Elimina el papeleo – si usted elige no recibir su factura por papel, usted produce menos papeleo y recibe menos facturas en el correo cada mes porque su factura es mandada por correo electrónico cada mes y es accesible por SmartHub
- ▶ Ayude a coordinar sus finanzas – especialmente cuando este distraído por otros eventos que están ocurriendo en su vida

¿Cómo funciona?

Normalmente, usted recibirá su factura electrónica mensualmente. Cuando está registrado en Pago Automático, su declaración de su cuenta será monitoreada “[\$] TO BE DRAFTER ON [DATE]” en la caja de amount due (cantidad debida). Usted también puede seleccionar para no recibir su factura en forma de papel y recibir su factura electrónicamente. Usted recibirá un correo electrónico o mensaje de texto declarando lo que es debido y los detalles de su factura están listos para ser vistos en la aplicación móvil de Smarthub.

Con los dos métodos, usted va a tener tiempo, típicamente un par de semanas, para contactarnos con cualquier pregunta o preocupación antes de que lo que es debido sea automáticamente redactado de su cuenta en la fecha de vencimiento. Transacciones de tarjetas de crédito/débito son limitadas a \$2,500.

Nota: La mejor ventaja de Pago Automático es asegurándose que sus facturas sean consistentemente pagadas a tiempo.

Victory Electric no es alertado cuando la cuenta bancaria o tarjeta de crédito/débito del miembro es cancelada, cerrada o sobrepasada. Si es que esta en pago automático de su cuenta bancaria y no tiene suficiente dinero en su cuenta, su banco negará el pago en su cuenta y usted va hacer sujetado a recargos tardes y posiblemente desconexión. Similarmente, si su tarjeta de crédito/débito esta maximizado, cancelada o congelada, la compañía de la tarjeta rechazará el cobro y su cuenta será sujetada a recargos tardes y posiblemente desconexión.

Sin embargo, si usted tiene su correo electrónico en archivo, será alertado cuando su tarjeta de crédito/débito se va a vencer, dándole tiempo para renovar la información de su tarjeta para evitar recargos o desconexión.

¿Cómo me registro?

PagoAutomático puede ser preparado en la conveniencia de su propio hogar u oficina por SmartHub con estos pasos sencillos. Si tiene preguntas, hable o pase por nuestra oficina y un representante de Victory Electric estará feliz para explicarle el proceso.

Si usted decide en no preparar su PagoAutomático por SmartHub, complete esta forma para registrarse en pago automático de su cuenta bancaria solamente. Para PagoAutomático por tarjeta de crédito/débito, tiene que usar SmartHub.

¿Puedo cancelar PagoAutomático?

Por supuesto que sí! Si no está satisfecho con la opción de PagoAutomático, llámenos a Victory Electric o visite SmarthHub para cancelar. Si es que necesita temporariamente suspender su PagoAutomatico, solamente contacte a Victory Electric o visite SmarthHub antes de la fecha de vencimiento en su factura. Usted puede después pagar con efectivo o cheque. Si su tarjeta de crédito/débito se venció, recibió una nueva tarjeta, o cambio de cuenta bancaria, eso fácilmente puede ser cambiado por SmartHub.

Para aprender más visite victoryelectric.net.



Fighting COVID-19: Together We Power On

When the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic began to hit home in Ford County, Victory Electric and Boot Hill Distillery partnered to meet the community's urgent need for hand cleanser amid a nationwide shortage.

"The main ingredient in hand cleanser is alcohol, and Boot Hill Distillery was in a prime position with the equipment and ingredients to make it," said Jerri Whitley, vice president of communications. Employees volunteered at the distillery to help brew hand cleanser and fill, label and pack 4-ounce bottles for distribution.

"With the nationwide shortage of disinfectants, cleaning products, toilet paper and many other items, many of our members were desperately searching for hand sanitizer to protect themselves from getting sick," said Shane Laws, CEO. "We knew we wanted to do something to help our members and local communities."

Victory Electric quickly put together a plan for two drive-up distribution events at the Victory Electric headquarters and the distillery in downtown Dodge City. More than 2,500 bottles were distributed from the two locations within a few hours. Ford County Sheriff's Office had deputies on hand to help with distribution and traffic control.

"We challenged our businesses to be innovative during this time and this project exceeded our expectations. The amount of community support that was put into making this happen is amazing," said Anna Bierken, president and CEO of the Dodge City Area Chamber of Commerce. "Projects like these show the true character of our community."

Additional distribution events were held in Bucklin, Ford, Ingalls, Jetmore, Cimarron, Montezuma, Copeland and Spearville. In total there were 12 events, 127 volunteers, \$2,5300 donated at the events to the cause, and more than 3,500 bottles given away



to the southwest Kansas communities.

“Boot Hill Distillery and Victory Electric have always been pillars of the community, giving back where they can,” said Christina Haselhorst, a Victory Electric member.

“Not only did they provide this wonderful sanitizer for our citizens, but there were countless members volunteering their time to hand out the bottles efficiently, quickly, safely, and with welcoming smiles.”

With no slowdown in demand, Boot Hill Distillery is embracing the fact that it’s becoming known for more than just spirits — they are now a regional source for hand cleanser.

“Our original goal was 2,500 bottles. Within less than a day we had increased our goal to 15,000 4-ounce bottles and are now set up to produce over 60,000 4-ounce bottles and 240-gallon jugs,” said Hayes Kelman, the distillery’s owner.

The U.S. Treasury Department’s Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau has cleared distillers to produce cleaning products, but the Food and Drug Administration hasn’t provided guidance for distillers on hand sanitizer formulas. Kelman has been following guidance from the World Health Organization for mixing ethanol, hydrogen peroxide and other ingredients to produce the cleaner.

Grateful Kansans have been kicking in cash to help keep the hand cleanser flowing, and shipments are in progress to other areas of the state. Through the Distillery’s GoFundMe page, a website designed for crowd funding, they have raised almost \$7,000 from 66 donors.

“We have prioritized medical, first responders, nursing homes, and then others that have no chance to wash their hands such as truck drivers and delivery drivers,” said Kelman. “Our ultimate goal is to get the product into as many hands as possible.”

If you would like to donate to the cause, visit gofundme.com and search for Boot Hill Hand Cleanser. All donations go directly to the costs associated with producing hand cleanser and distributing it to the community. The hand cleanser is also available to purchase, but cannot be shipped. To acquire cleanser as an individual, watch the distillery’s Facebook page for distribution event announcements.



Local volunteers pose for a photo before distributing hand cleanser in Copeland on March 26. The community drives typically lasted anywhere from one to two hours. Each vehicle was limited to one bottle per adult.



Victory Electric employee, Brent Nau, hands a bottle of cleanser to a community member. Dodge City hosted four drives, two at the Victory Electric office and two at Boot Hill Distillery.



Victory Electric employees Brenda Hertel, Christy Granlund and Alexa Lozano happily showcase bottles of Boot Hill Distillery’s hand cleanser. The cleanser was created and distributed in response to a lack of supplies available in southwest Kansas.

Tree Trimmers Have No Job Too Small, No Tree Too Tall

There's really no other way to say it: trimming branches or limbs near power lines can kill.

If you look the other way, get distracted when deciding which limb to trim next, or lose your footing, you could inadvertently make contact with a power line. You might think you have a steady hand, but moving a few inches off course could be the last thing you do. No one is perfectly stable on a ladder, especially while working and handling equipment.

Victory Electric employs tree trimmers to assist our community with trimming trees near power lines. This crew also works to reduce outages caused by trees.

It doesn't take contact with a wire to cause a fatal shock — electricity will jump to find the quickest path to the ground. Keep yourself, your tools and your equipment more than 10 feet away from lines.

Did you know trimming within 10 feet in any direction of a power line is illegal? Only OSHA-certified line clearance workers are authorized to trim near power lines. When hiring a tree trimmer to trim trees in your yard or on your property, make sure the person you hire is certified to do so.

- ▶ **NEVER** attempt to clear the lines yourself.
- ▶ **NEVER** climb a tree with branches near lines.
- ▶ **NEVER** touch power lines. Contact with power lines could result in serious injury or death.

Why is clearing important?

Trees make our communities beautiful, but tree limbs and power lines are not a good combination. Victory Electric's distribution lines carry high voltage electricity to our members' homes and businesses and keeping the lines clear of trees increases power reliability and protects our members and workers. Trimming trees also reduces safety hazards and electrical outages.

Placement Consideration

Members can help by being strategic with the location when planting new trees. The right trees in the right places help reduce the need to clear right-of-ways. Before selecting and planting a tree, remember to look up to determine where the tree will be located in relation to overhead and

underground utility lines.

- ▶ When landscaping near right-of-way areas, choose low growth shrubs.
 - ▶ Plant smaller trees on right-of-way edges, 10 feet from power lines.
 - ▶ Medium trees need to be planted at least 35 feet away from lines.
 - ▶ Plant large trees at least 45 feet away from overhead lines.
 - ▶ Trees planted too close to power lines will always be a danger by unavoidable pruning of limbs to prevent interference with lines.
 - ▶ Remember, you are required to call Kansas One Call at 811 or visit kansasonecall.com before any digging project on your property to identify any underground utility lines. Keep yourself safe by hiring an OSHA-certified line clearance worker to trim your trees near power lines. It's the law and helps protect you. Trimming trees within 10 feet of a power line can be fatal or cause serious injuries.
- Call us with any questions about trees and power lines at 620-227-2139.

Your Life is On the Line

Be aware of overhead power lines when trimming trees. Victory Electric has a tree trimming crew that wants to trim your trees if they are close to power lines. Call Victory Electric at 620.227.2139 if trees are growing in electrical lines.

Su Vida Está en la Línea

Este consiente de los cables de electricidad cuando está cortando las ramas del árbol. Pídale que nosotros le cortemos las ramas del árbol que están en las líneas de electricidad. Visite a victoryelectric.net por más información.