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A Touchstone Energy[®] Cooperative 

Electronews

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CEO MESSAGE

Member Information a Priority Following Payments Theft

While Victory Electric employees were out celebrating the Christmas holiday with loved ones, criminals broke into Victory Electric's after-hours payment drop box. After reviewing surveillance video, it was determined approximately 50-55 members dropped off payments between 7:45 a.m. on Friday, Dec. 21, and 7 p.m. on Christmas day.

The impact of stolen payments can potentially be devastating for consumers, and Victory Electric is taking steps to effectively secure payment drop boxes and mitigate any financial or identity theft issues.

Previously, Victory Electric had three drop boxes for members to conveniently access and drop off their payments. Two drop boxes were at Victory Electric headquarters and the third in downtown Dodge City by the

City of Dodge City building. The two existing drop boxes at Victory Electric will be replaced with a single, more secure box.

While we have video surveillance to help keep payments safe, Victory Electric highly recommends not dropping cash in the payment boxes, using black gel ink when writing checks, as it is reportedly more difficult to remove, and delivering your payment to the lobby drop box during regular business hours.

We also offer several other convenient payment methods including SmartHub, our online bill payment



Shane Laws

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VICTORY ELECTRIC
ANNUAL MEETING



Member Information a Priority Continued from page 16A ▶

site. SmartHub is safe, secure and available 24 hours a day, without the risk associated with a physical check or cash. Members can make a payment

each month, or set up AutoPay, which automatically deducts your payment on the due date each month from your credit/debit card or bank account.

Members can also call 866-999-8494 and pay over the phone with a credit/debit card or check. We recommend members use their account number when calling to ensure accuracy. Also, be prepared to create a 4-digit PIN number. For security reasons and to comply with the Federal Trade Commission's Red Flags Rule, Victory Electric employees cannot take your credit/debit card or check information over the phone via our local phone number; you must call 866-999-8494 to pay by phone. This service is available 24-hours a day, weekdays, weekends and holidays. This is a FREE service with NO fees.

Lastly, PowerMyWay is a self-managed pay-as-you-go billing plan with no deposits, no late fees, no disconnect or reconnect charges. Pay \$50 dollars toward

future electricity and after that, you can pay as much or as little as you want on an as-needed basis. So you can pick your bill due date! Every day your balance will adjust based on how much electricity you used the previous day, and when you have less than \$25 left in your account you will receive a text message, email or phone call reminding you that you are low and need to think about making a payment. Since you no longer get a paper bill, your account information is available 24/7 on our online bill payment site or mobile app so it is three easy clicks to access your balance information or make a payment.

Victory Electric is actively working with members affected by the theft, as well as providing the police department with the video surveillance of the crime for their investigation. If you have any information relating to the theft, we encourage you to call the Dodge City Police Department.

Thanks, Shane



Victory Electric Values Safety with Monthly Meetings

Every month, Victory Electric employees conduct safety training to further develop safety awareness and skills.

In 2016, Victory Electric took a step forward in making safety a bigger priority by creating the vice president of safety position.

"Safety is a huge for us every employee in the cooperative," said Mikey Goddard, vice president of safety. "In my role I get to focus specifically on safety and improving the conditions for the employees on the line and in the office."

In January, Victory Electric's engineering and operations department practiced safely wiring transformers and switching power back after an outage.

Top: Shae Ricke demonstrates to fellow linemen how to properly wire a transformer.

Left: Tyler Trent (left) and Ross Adams test amperage on a testing board.

Right: Felix Strauss tests a transformer on a computer simulator.



Scholarships Available In 2019

Applications for Victory Electric's Lightner Community Spirit Scholarship are available now and due March 1. Victory Electric will award 10 \$1,000 scholarships to high school seniors and enrolled college or technical program students.

The Lightner Community Spirit Scholarship is designed to recognize students who have demonstrated academic success and have showed a commitment to bettering their community.

Scholarship Eligibility

Applicants must be an active member in good standing with the cooperative or a dependent of such member. Applicants must be entering or a current student at an accredited two- or four-year college or university. All applicants for the scholarships shall be considered on the above criteria without regard to race, age, color, religion, gender, national origin, or existence of physical handicap.

How to Apply

Applications for the Lightner Community Spirit Scholarship can be found at victoryelectric.net/content/scholarships. Required items of the application include:

- ▶ Completed application
- ▶ Résumé
- ▶ Copy of official transcript in a sealed envelope
- ▶ Copy of acceptance letter from college (if in high school)
- ▶ Completed biographical statement and a one-page essay



- ▶ Submitted to Victory Electric no later than **MARCH 1, 2019**.

"We are thrilled to offer the scholarship program again this year, 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 honoring students with scholarships to give back to our local communities.."

The name of the scholarship honors the Lightner family of Plymell. Richard Lightner has been on Victory Electric's Board of Trustees for 36 years and his father, George, served 31 years previous. Both strongly supported Victory Electric's community and youth programs.

Victory Electric has awarded 30 scholarships to 30 deserving students since the program began in 2016. The 2018 scholarship winners included:

DEREK BOGNER, Cimarron; **HAYLEE BROWN**, South Gray; **ANDREA BRYANT**, Cimarron; **MIREYA CHACON**, Dodge City; **SYDNEY FOSTER**, Dodge City; **FAITH IMEL**, Bucklin; **KAMERON LOWERY**, Dodge City; **JUSTIN MORRISON**, Cimarron; **AIDAN TRENT**, Dodge City and **MADELYN WRIGHT**, Dodge City.

For more information, please contact Kennedy St. George at 620-371-7738 or via email at kstgeorge@victoryelectric.net.

Energy Efficiency Tips of the Month

Energy efficiency may be a year-round objective for many members and this goal will vary by season.



There are a number of factors that impact energy efficiency, including weather, the age and condition of your home, and desired comfort levels. To maintain a warm indoor environment in chillier weather, there are simple steps you can take:

- ▶ Caulk seals on windows
- ▶ Weatherstrip as needed to seal in warm air and energy savings
- ▶ Open curtains on south-facing windows to enable sunlight to heat your home naturally during the day
- ▶ Install plastic to the inside of your window frames to create an additional barrier against cold air
- ▶ Seal off the vents in the rooms and areas you do not use like storage closets or guest rooms
- ▶ Turn down the temperature of your water heater to the warm setting of 120 degrees
- ▶ Check your furnace filter monthly and replace it when it is dirty to save even more money

Bring the family together. Gaining control of your energy use to reduce your home's overall demand can be challenging when you consider the whole home. Save by having the family consume energy in the same room—together.

You're at the heart of everything we do.

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY
FROM OUR CO-OP FAMILY TO YOURS!

Members Win FREE CFL

The following members have won a FREE compact fluorescent lightbulb (CFL): **LISA J. AKERS, RAUL BAILON, TERRY PITTS, TONY REMIGIO, DENNIS H. SALEM, PRESTON SCHMIDT** and **RITA TWEEDY**. Winners can pick up their lightbulb at Victory Electric's office. Congratulations winners!



Prepare for Winter Storms to Stay Safe and Warm

When winter temperatures drop and storms hit, it can be a challenge to stay safe and warm. Snow and ice are an inevitable part of the winter season. They can lead to downed power lines and outages. During a power outage, our crews will continue to work as safely and quickly as possible to restore your power.

Victory Electric cares about your safety and we want you to be prepared. The following tips can keep you safe and warm if you find yourself in the dark after a winter storm:

- ▶ When an outage occurs, it usually means power lines are down. It is best not to travel during winter storms, but if you must, bring a survival kit along, and do not travel alone. If you encounter downed lines, always assume they are live. Stay as far away from the downed lines as possible, and report the situation to Victory Electric at 620-227-2139. Avoid contact with overhead lines during cleanup and other activities.
 - ▶ In the event of an outage, an alternate heating source—such as a fireplace, propane space heater, or wood stove—may be used. Extreme caution should be taken.
 - ▶ Plan to stay in an area of the home where the alternate heat source is located.
 - ▶ Fuel and wood-burning heating sources should be vented.
- Be sure to follow the manufacturer's directions.
 - ▶ Make sure carbon monoxide detectors and smoke detectors are working properly.
 - ▶ Do not use a gas-powered oven for heating. A gas oven may go out or burn inefficiently, leading to carbon monoxide poisoning.
 - ▶ Do not use a gas or charcoal grill inside the home. Do not use charcoal briquettes in the fireplace.
 - ▶ If you use a portable generator to power a heating source, be sure the generator is located outside your house for proper ventilation. Do not use a generator in an attached garage. Follow manufacturer's directions for operating the generator.
 - ▶ Take special care not to overload a generator. Use appropriately sized extension cords to carry the electric load. Make sure the cords have a grounded, three-pronged plug and are in good condition.
 - ▶ Never run cords under rugs or carpets.
 - ▶ Never connect generators to power lines. The reverse flow of electricity can electrocute an unsuspecting utility worker. Winter weather can be unpredictable and dangerous, and planning ahead can often be the difference between life and death. Victory Electric is ready for what Mother Nature has in store, and we want you to be ready too.

YOUR POWER OUTAGE PANTRY

We do our best to avoid power outages, but unfortunately, Mother Nature occasionally has different plans. Stay ahead of the storm by stocking your pantry with a variety of non-perishable items.

Set these items aside for extended outages only, and your storm prep will be a breeze!

- BEANS
- CANNED FRUIT
- CANNED TUNA
- CANNED VEGETABLES
- CEREAL
- DRIED FRUITS
- DRIED MEATS/JERKY
- GRAHAM CRACKERS
- PASTA
- RICE
- SPAM
- OATMEAL

