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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

# Electronews

## The Victory Electric Cooperative Assn., Inc.

### Board of Trustees

- John Leis – President
- Pat Morse – Vice President
- Daryl Tieben – Secretary/Treasurer
- Cedric Drewes – Trustee
- Jim Imel – Trustee
- Gary Gillespie – Trustee
- Terri Larson – Trustee
- James Ochs – Trustee
- Randy Quint – Trustee
- Ken Schulte – Trustee
- Kenny Wehkamp – Trustee

### Staff

- Shane Laws – CEO
- Amy Grasser – Vice President of Corporate Services
- Mikey Goddard – Vice President of Safety
- Rob Henry – Vice President of Engineering
- Denzil McGill – Vice President of Information Technology
- Ryan Miller – Vice President of Operations
- Jerri Whitley – Vice President of Communications
- Angela Unruh – CFO

## CEO MESSAGE

# Making Washington Work for You



Shane Laws

Electric cooperatives are deeply connected to the communities they serve and are focused on meeting consumers' energy needs

today and into the future. Providing our consumers with safe, reliable and affordable power will always be our highest priority, but this requires much more than simply maintaining overhead power lines and other infrastructure.

It requires us to focus on what our elected leaders are doing in Washington to ensure they are acting in your best interest. Here are some of the legislative issues we're keeping an eye on in the nation's capital.

### RURAL ACT

Congress created a problem for electric cooperatives when it made changes to the tax code in 2017 that inadvertently put cooperatives' tax-exempt status at risk if they receive government grants. This could stick cooperative members

**"...safe, reliable and affordable power will always be our highest priority."**

with the cost of paying taxes unless Congress fixes the problem. Fortunately, there is a solution. Bipartisan legislation known as the RURAL Act has strong support in Congress, and we're working with lawmakers to pass this important piece of legislation.

### WIND ENERGY

Recently, the U.S. Department of Energy selected the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA)—our national trade association—to research small-scale, community-based wind energy solutions that can be deployed by electric cooperatives. This research, to be conducted in partnership with Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, is critical to helping cooperatives meet their members' desire for affordable renewable energy solutions.

### CARBON CAPTURE

In response to public policy discussions in Washington about ways to reduce emissions, electric cooperatives are participating in cutting-edge research to capture and use carbon emissions to make commercial products. This work is under way at the Integrated Test Center, just outside of Gillette, Wyo., where researchers will strive to advance technologies and expand understanding of what's possible in this new arena.

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# Home for the Holidays

18th Annual Dodge City Parade of Lights and Chili Cook-Off

Sydney Heimerman and daughter, Hattie Heimerman, admire the Christmas lights in Eisenhower Park after the parade.

The 18th Annual Christmas Parade of Lights and Chili Contest was held on Dec. 9 in Dodge City. Sponsored by the Dodge City Globe, Victory Electric, City of Dodge City, Dodge City Main Street, Boot Hill Museum, Southwind Broadcasting, Dodge City Convention and Visitor's Bureau, Dodge City Community College, Lewis Automotive, Dodge City/Ford County Development Corporation, and McDonalds, the events attracted hundreds of visitors to Eisenhower Park.

There were a total of 27 entries in the chili contest. The lucky winners in the Judges Choice category were Arrowhead West, first place; Ford County Fire Department and EMS, second; and the Dodge City Police Department, third.

Those who impressed the crowd were declared the winners of the People's

Choice category. Winners were Ford County Fire Department and EMS, first place; National Beef, second; and Arrowhead West, third.

All winners received an engraved chili ladle sponsored by Victory Electric. The parade attracted 22 entries, ranging from classic cars, to Dodge City school bands, to floats decked out in lights.

Also, for the third year Santa's sleigh virtual reality (VR) ride was at the event. Dodge City Community College, Dodge City/Ford County Development Corporation, McDonalds and Victory Electric all sponsored the attraction. Adults and children alike, enjoyed the four minute VR ride in Santa's sleigh driving the reindeer.

The 2020 Parade of Lights and Chili Cook-off is expected to be at Boot Hill Museum. Thanks to all who attended, and we hope to see you next year!



Lineman Kevin Freeman served Victory Electric's chili for the chili cook-off.





(Above Left) A chili competitor serves a sampling of chili and garlic bread.



(Above Right) A Victory Electric truck lit up for the parade.

(Upper Right) Allison Doll, communications coordinator, presents Arrowhead West with their 1st place Judge's Choice chili ladle.



(Lower Right) Allison Doll presents the Ford County Fire/EMS the chili ladle for 1st place People's Choice.



(Far Right) Santa poses for pictures in Santa's House provided by Main Street of Dodge City.



(Bottom) The chili judges sampled 27 chili entries.



## The Opportunity to Represent Your Community

Members, elected trustees, and employees – that's who powers a not-for-profit electric cooperative.

Members elect representatives called trustees to serve on the board of trustees and to represent their best interests. Like you, they are cooperative members but with a special perspective. Trustees are local citizens who live throughout the Victory Electric service area. They have the challenge of not only balancing the interests of other cooperative members, but also the community and the cooperative business, and have to make business decisions for all.

The business and affairs of the cooperative are directed by the board of trustees, whose primary function

is planning and policy oversight, establishing the long-term objectives of the cooperative, and providing resources to meet those objectives. Board members work closely with the CEO and senior staff to review progress, ensure accountability, make strategic decisions, and stay current on an increasingly complex business.

The cooperative territory is divided into districts, all of which are represented by a trustee. Trustees are elected at the annual meeting for three-year terms of office. A commitment to the cooperative board is also one to the community. Each trustee holds the responsibility of representing their cooperative in the public eye.

Duties of an elected trustee include:

attending monthly six-to eight-hour board meetings, board training events, and some travel is required. Trustees attend outreach events, serve on additional board subcommittees, attend trainings, and listen to those in their district. They act as liaisons between the greater membership and the cooperative management team and employees to make sure the needs of the members are met. Trustees also ensure all perspectives are presented and discussed when making cooperative business decisions.

For the orderly operation of an electric cooperative, the board of trustees must understand, be dedicated, and ultimately fulfill their responsibility to the members and the cooperative.

# Save the Date

*Tuesday, April 14th, 2020*

**Western Bank Expo Center**

Mark your calendars for our Annual Meeting as we celebrate our 75th Anniversary! During the meeting, members will hear from their co-op leaders as they report on the fiscal health of the co-op. Members will also participate in the co-op's annual board of director's election process. Please join your co-op team and fellow members for fun, fellowship and giveaway prizes on this very special celebration of you and our history.

We hope to see you there!





FROM THE  
BOARD PRESIDENT

## Victory Electric Seeks Board Nominations



John Leis

Dear Victory Electric members,

Once again, it is time to start thinking about Victory Electric's annual membership meeting to be held

April 14, 2020 in Dodge City.

We are currently soliciting nominations for Victory Electric's board of trustees. Positions up for election are in district 2 currently held by **JOHN LEIS**; district 4, currently held by **JIM IMEL**; district 9, currently held by **KENNY WEHKAMP**; and district 10, currently held by **RANDY QUINT**.

To qualify, you must be a natural person (not a corporation, LLC, partnership or any other business entity); and your principal residence must be served by Victory Electric and located within our service territory and within the board voting district you wish to represent. If a close relative—within the third degree – is an employee or a trustee of Victory Electric, you are not eligible to run for the board of trustees.

If you would like to run for a the board of trustees, or you know someone who might be interested, please send a letter of interest with qualifications to Shane Laws at Victory Electric, P.O. Box 1335, Dodge City, KS 67801 by January 9, 2020.

Sincerely,

**JOHN LEIS, PRESIDENT**

## Ten \$1,000 Lightner Community Spirit Scholarships Available

Applications for Victory Electric's Lightner Community Spirit Scholarship are now available. Victory Electric will award ten \$1,000 scholarships to graduating seniors and current college students going on to a post-secondary institution. The Lightner Community Spirit Scholarship is designed to recognize students who have demonstrated academic success and have showed a commitment to bettering their community.

The name of the scholarship honors the Lightner family of Plymell, Kansas. Richard Lightner served on Victory Electric's board of trustees for 36 years, and his father, George, served 31 years previous. Both were strong proponents of Victory Electric's community and youth programs.

### Scholarship Eligibility

Applicants must be an active member in good standing with the cooperative or a dependent of such member. Applicants must be a current student or entering an accredited trade school,



college or university. All applicants for the scholarship 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/lightner-community-spirit-scholarship](http://victoryelectric.net/lightner-community-spirit-scholarship). 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 February 28, 2020.

Students can apply through our webform online or submit a physical application to Victory Electric's office. Since the program began in 2016, Victory Electric has awarded scholarships to 40 deserving students. For more information, please call Victory Electric's office at 620-227-2139 or email Carleigh Albers, communications coordinator, at [askcommunications@victoryelectric.net](mailto:askcommunications@victoryelectric.net).

## Konrade Promoted to Crew Chief



Kirk Konrade

Victory Electric is proud to announce journeyman lineman Kirk Konrade's promotion to crew chief.

Konrade's new crew chief position officially took effect in November. The promotion to crew chief means Konrade now has the responsibility of running a crew of linemen and is tasked with training new apprentice linemen. Konrade has been with Victory Electric for almost 13 years as a lineman in the operations department. Before working with Victory Electric, Konrade previously owned and operated Konrade Masonry in Spearville for eight years.

Please help us congratulate Kirk on his promotion!

## New Look. New Experience. Same SmartHub

Paying your monthly electric bill should be simple and easy. Now, with SmartHub's updates and new mobile app enhancements, managing your account and service with Victory Electric is easier than ever. All of the features you love about SmartHub are still available, just with a refreshed look and an enhanced user experience.

SmartHub is Victory Electric's innovative resource for member account management and our online bill payment system, and it can do more than you think. It can help you take control and manage your member account like never before, giving you more time to focus on other responsibilities.

If you haven't tried SmartHub, check it out today. Whether through the web, your smartphone or your tablet, you'll be able to pay your bill, view your

electric use, contact a member service representative, and get the latest news.

If you are a current user, you'll notice the mobile app has fresh, new look. When you open the app, you can easily see your energy use analysis and you can contact us with the click of a button right from the home screen. Outage notifications and billing alerts are also displayed on the home screen, making it easy for us to communicate important information with you. Billing, payment and other features are available with one click of a button in a new condensed menu.

Making payments through SmartHub is fast and easy. The first time you make a payment either through the web or through your mobile device, you will be able to securely store your payment information for future transactions. The next time you need to pay your bill, it

will only take a couple of clicks.

Victory Electric also has important notifications posted, and you can choose how you want to be notified about your bill—by email or by text message. You can also set energy use thresholds so you'll know when your energy use is higher than you'd like, which ultimately helps keep your electricity bill as low as possible.

SmartHub's contact feature makes connecting with us quick and easy. Reporting an outage is also quick and easy with the SmartHub mobile app. No need to call, just let us know about a service issue with a few taps in the app.

Anyone can access SmartHub by visiting [victoryelectric.net](http://victoryelectric.net) or by downloading the app on your mobile device through the Apple App Store (iOS devices) or Google Play Marketplace (Android devices).

### Statement of Non Discrimination

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Person with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, sign language, etc.) should contact the

responsible agency or USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at 800-877-8339. Program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call 866-632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights at 1400 Independence Ave., SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; Fax: 202-690-7442; or email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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### Washington Works

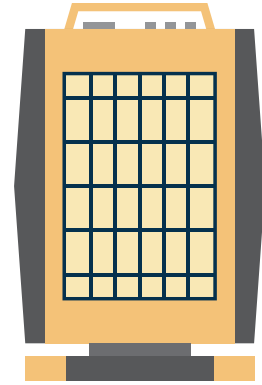
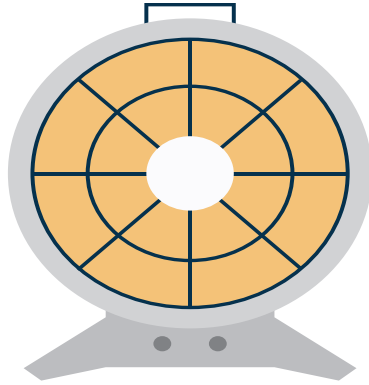
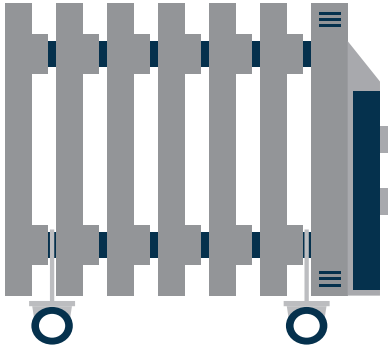
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#### RURAL BROADBAND

Many electric cooperatives are working to help close the digital divide by bringing broadband to unserved and underserved areas. NRECA called on Congress to make more funds available for rural broadband deployment. Congress answered the call and funded ReConnect, a pilot program that supports efforts to make broadband possible in rural communities. The first grants were announced late last year, with several cooperatives and their communities the beneficiaries.

These are just a few of the ways that electric cooperatives are working in Washington to meet the needs of the communities we serve. Because our commitment to you extends far beyond the edge of our service territory.

*Thanks, Shane*



## Stay Safe in Your Home: Five Space Heater Safety Tips

As temperatures drop this winter, many will look for supplemental heating sources for their homes. Space heaters can be a good alternative for those who want to warm one area of their home without turning up the thermostat on the central heating system. However, according to the National Fire Protection Association, space heaters are responsible for 32% of house fires. If you plan to use a space heater in your home this winter, review these tips from Victory Electric to keep you, your family and your property safe. Stay safe this winter with these tips.

► **Materials**—What are the components of your space heater made of? Parts like metal grating can be hot to the touch and may burn anyone who gets too close. Make sure you purchase a heater that is cool to the touch and has

guards over the coils just in case little fingers get too close.

► **Placement**—While it can be tempting to place a small heater on a shelf so it is not in the way of pets and children, it is safest to leave the heater on a level, nonflammable floor. Placing the space heater on the floor can keep it from falling over, preventing fire hazards. Also, remember space heaters and bathrooms are not a good combination unless the heater is designed for bathroom use.

Moisture can damage the heater. The most important rule about space heater placement is the three-foot rule. Whether you are using the heater in the bedroom, living room or kitchen, space heaters should always be kept three feet away from flammable materials and out of the

way of children and pets.

► **Special Features**—Does your space heater have an auto shutoff function if tipped over? Auto shut-off can be a lifesaver. If you currently own a space heater without auto shut-off, consider purchasing a heater with this important safety feature.

► **Cords**—You should never use an extension cord when plugging in a space heater as it can cause overheating. The space heater should be plugged directly into a wall outlet, and should be the only thing plugged into the wall outlet. Also make sure cords aren't in a high-traffic area so they are not a tripping hazard.

► **Use**—Never leave a heater unattended while in use. If you are leaving your home or going to bed, unplug the space heater.



## COMMUNITY-FOCUSED

Electric cooperatives are different than other types of energy providers.

- We are led by consumer-members just like you.
- We were built by the community we serve.
- We still belong to the community.

**That's the cooperative difference!**

# Cooperative Sudoku

Every Sudoku has a unique solution that can be reached logically. Enter numbers into the blank spaces so that each row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9 without repeats.



	5		2				1	
					8			
1	2					3		7
	7							
		2	3	5	7			
		5					7	
2				1			5	
8	1				5			

Easy

2		5						1
	1						7	
				1	3			2
		8	7	5		1		
3			5	2	8			
	7						5	
1	5					3		8

Medium



1				3	8			
							7	
				5				
	8	3						
7		2						
						3	5	
	5				2			1
2			5					7

Hard

## Energy Tip of the Month

Let the sunshine in! For additional warmth, open drapes over windows that receive sunlight during the day. Close them at night, which can reduce heat loss from a warm room up to 10%.

SOURCE: ENERGY.GOV