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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Electronews

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CEO MESSAGE

Partner with a Cooperative, Partner with People You Know



Shane Laws

Although cooperatives have been electrifying this country for decades, many people remain in the dark regarding the value of having an

electric co-op as their source of energy. Shining a light on the details helps to illustrate the value of being a member of a cooperative utility.

Electric cooperatives are focused on serving members. That commitment means electric cooperatives provide their members with affordable, reliable electricity at the lowest possible cost no matter where they live—from busy communities to the vast outreaches of the prairie—and no matter how many miles of line it takes to serve them.

Victory Electric is one of six rural distribution electric cooperatives that forms Sunflower Electric and Mid-Kansas Electric, which are not-for-profit, cost-of-service generation and transmission providers, often referred to as G&Ts. Just like Victory Electric, these two G&Ts operate on a cooperative, not-for-profit business model to provide wholesale electric power and services to Victory

Electric and all their other members, who in turn sell it to local consumers and businesses.

The cooperative relationship between Victory Electric, Sunflower, Mid-Kansas and other G&T members generates valuable synergies, such as shared infrastructure, educational opportunities, economic development opportunities and mutual aid in times of need. Finding ways to work together helps contain costs, which is good for everyone, especially consumer-members like you at the end of the line.

Cooperatives not only provide electric service to their members, but they also demonstrate the seventh cooperative principle, concern for community, by supporting the communities in which they serve.

Most importantly, cooperatives are member-owned and member-governed:

- ▶ Cooperatives have members, who are treated like owners rather than just a customer.
- ▶ Cooperatives follow a democratic process to make decisions for their members. At a cooperative, the members elect a board of trustees comprised of fellow cooperative members to make decisions in the best interest of the cooperative and

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COMMUNITY | LEADERSHIP | MEMORIES

COOPERATIVE YOUTH LEADERSHIP CAMP

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, COLORADO

Ochs and Rhodes Attend Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp

CHARLOTTE OCHS of Jetmore and **KELLIE RHODES** of Mullinville attended the 43rd annual Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, July 12-18. Joining others from across Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma and Wyoming, approximately 100 youth learned about the cooperative principles at the weeklong educational retreat.

“Victory Electric is proud to be a participating sponsor of the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp and send our local youth to develop essential leadership and teamwork skills,” said Jerri Whitley, vice president of communications.

The Kansas and Oklahoma participants met as they boarded the bus along its route to Colorado. When the bus arrived in Denver, the group was treated to an indoor skydiving experience and STEM educational lab at iFLY. Arriving at Glen Eden Resort, nestled in the Rocky Mountains, the campers formed a candy cooperative and began daily membership meetings, selecting a general manager, board of directors and committees. The trip experience also gave participants an authentic camp feel with a hike to Fish Creek Falls, river rafting, volleyball tournament, swimming, a dance and a talent show.

Several demonstrations and presentations enhanced students’ knowledge of the cooperative model and

operations at their local electric cooperative. Campers competed to build a model transmission line out of craft supplies, toured Trapper Coal Mine, Craig Power Plant and watched a high-voltage safety demonstration. The campers also raised \$293.13 to donate to the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) International Foundation. The money will be used to purchase backpacks and school supplies for students who attend school in Sillab, Guatemala.

Rhodes shared that her favorite memory is “the positivity and optimism of everyone” who attended camp. “Everyone was genuinely excited to be here and I don’t think I have ever been impacted so much by so many strangers. It truly was life-changing,” she said.

The campers said they left CYLC with a new sense of leadership and understanding of how their local electric cooperatives operate and contribute to the communities they serve.

“It taught me that even a group full of strangers can become your family,” Ochs said. “It inspired me to come home to my community and encourage others to share their story so they know that whatever they’re feeling, they’re not alone.”



Far left: Charlotte Ochs (left) and Kellie Rhodes enjoy the view of Elk River flowing near camp.

Left: Nearly 100 youth learned about the cooperative business model and leadership at camp.

HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS

Apply to Earn the Trip of a Lifetime for Summer 2020

Each year, Victory Electric sponsors four students to travel and experience the trip of a lifetime. Coordinated through Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., two students are selected to represent Victory Electric in Washington, D.C., at the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour and another two students travel to Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

The following are important dates for the selection process:

- ▶ **OCT. 4, 2019** – Deadline for interest form (this is the form in the magazine and online)
- ▶ **OCT. 25, 2019** – Deadline for application, letters of recommendation and résumé
- ▶ **NOV. 2, 2019** – Interviews and selection of winners
- ▶ **JUNE 18-25, 2020** – Electric Cooperative Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.
- ▶ **JULY 10-16, 2020** – Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp to Steamboat Springs, Colorado



Complete the online form or return the form below by Oct. 4 to:

- ▶ **ONLINE:** victoryelectric.net/apply-youth-tour-camp
- ▶ **MAIL:** P.O. Box 1335, Dodge City, KS 67801
- ▶ **FAX:** 620-227-8819
- ▶ **EMAIL:** askcommunications@victoryelectric.net

Name of applicant _____

Mailing address _____ City/Zip _____

Birthdate _____

Applicant cell number _____

Applicant email _____

Name of parent/guardian _____

Parent phone number _____

Parent email _____

High school _____

Partner with your Cooperative *Continued from page 16A* ▶

the members. An investor-owned or commercial utility follows board governance by its shareholders, with the one goal of increasing shareholder profitability.

- ▶ Cooperatives focus on the quality and reliability of the service they provide to their members versus making profits for shareholders.
- ▶ Cooperatives set electric rates to cover the cost of doing business and

maintaining infrastructure. There is no motivation to make huge profits because revenues beyond what it takes to operate the cooperative are refunded to members in the form of capital credits.

High levels of member satisfaction and ensuring all members feel they have a voice in the future of their cooperative have always been hallmarks of electric cooperatives. We

continuously look for ways to target improvements and create new programs to further enhance member satisfaction. While there is no difference between an electron provided by a cooperative versus an electron sold by an investor-owned utility; there is a difference in the cooperative business model, where the spotlight is on our members—and that makes all the difference.

Thanks, Shane Laws

How To Get an A+ in School Safety

Students get to school in a variety of ways—riding a bus, riding with a family member, carpooling, walking or even driving themselves. Electricity is not usually the first thing on a student's or driver's mind on the way to school. Yet, it is vitally important to know what to do if there is a downed line or an accident with a power pole along that journey. Victory Electric shares tips that can help keep students and those who transport them to and from school safe.

In April 2016, CBS News reported that a Pennsylvania school bus driver asked an 11-year-old student to move a downed power line. The boy's hand was burned, but fortunately, he was not left in a life-threatening condition.

In 2009, two Indiana teenagers were in a car accident with a utility pole. Just days earlier, these teens had seen a presentation about electrical safety at their school and learned to stay in the car if in such a situation. This incident could have ended in tragedy, but knowing what to do to stay safe saved their lives.

Severe storms, high winds and vehicular accidents with power poles can all cause power lines to fall. Just because a power line is down it does not mean it is not carrying electricity. While downed lines can sometimes show they are live by arcing and sparking with electricity, this is not always the case. Treat all downed lines as though they are energized, and stay far away from them. Call 911 to have first responders and the utility notified of the downed power line.

If you are in a vehicle that collides with a power pole, the vehicle may be charged with electricity. If this is the case and you step out of the car, you will become the electricity's path to the ground and could be electrocuted. Stay in the vehicle, and tell others to do the same. Call 911 to have emergency and utility services notified. Do not leave your vehicle until a utility professional has told you it is safe.

Victory Electric welcomes the opportunity to visit your school, community or business group with memorable, educational presentations tailored to meet your needs.

The only circumstance in which you should exit the vehicle is if it is on fire. If you must exit, jump clear of it with your feet together and without touching the vehicle and ground at the same time. Continue to “bunny hop” with your feet together to safety at least 40 feet away. Doing this will prevent an electric current running from one foot to another.

If you come upon or witness an accident involving power lines, do not approach the accident scene. If you see someone approaching, warn them to stay away from the accident until utility professionals and emergency responders have confirmed there are no electrical dangers.

Teaching about the dangers of electricity and how to stay safe around electricity is a top priority at Victory Electric. Therefore, we offer several safety programs and demonstrations appropriate for all ages from preschool children to adults. Victory Electric welcomes the opportunity to visit your school, community or business group with memorable, educational presentations tailored to meet your needs.

If you are interested in learning more about Victory Electric, industry trends or electric safety, Victory Electric personnel are always available to give interesting, informative presentations to local civic clubs, social clubs, city and county organizations, senior citizen groups, K-12 school groups and others. There is no cost for presentations. Please fill out our online form at victoryelectric.net/community-school-and-electrical-safety-presentations or call our office at 620-227-2139.

Dodge City Days Western Parade



1



2

Thank you to our employees and members who helped Victory Electric “Strike up the Band” for Dodge City Days Western Parade.

In the parade, Victory Electric employees and their families rode on a float pulled by a line truck. Parade participants handed out candy along the parade route. Victory Electric extends appreciation to all our volunteers for donating their time to make this year’s float a success. In addition to the parade, Victory Electric sponsored the rodeo and the Salute the Troops event.



3



4



5

1. Jordyn (left), daughter of lineman Jason Gier, and Arabella, daughter of meter technician Ray Brown, hand out candy during the parade.
2. Lea, daughter of Jason Gier, waves to the crowd from the parade float.
3. Jordyn Gier made sure everyone got some candy.
4. Employees and their families ride on the line truck through the parade.
5. Employees and families of Victory Electric participate in the parade.

Co-op’s Vote Event

On July 30, Victory Electric hosted local and state officials as part of America’s Electric Cooperatives Co-ops Vote program. With 42 million members in 47 states, electric co-ops can stand together as a powerful voice in local, state and national elections. This nonpartisan campaign strives to inform our members and candidates about issues important to electric co-ops and the communities they serve.

Right: Rileigh Heeke, a 2019 Victory Electric youth tour delegate, spoke to the group about her experience in Washington, D.C.



CAMP: From the Delegates' View

Kellie Rhodes

The Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp was above and beyond my expectations and I would give anything to have one more day with all the amazing people I met! I would recommend this trip to anyone, whether they are outgoing or not because it changed my whole perspective of what it means to be a good leader.

When I first stepped onto the bus I was intimidated to meet new people, but that changed the instant I met the ambassadors. They made us feel so comfortable. The best part about the trip was meeting all the amazing people who quickly became my family. The first night we went indoor skydiving and I knew the upcoming week was going to be the best week ever!

On our way to camp, we played loud music and everyone sang along, just so we could make a grand entrance into camp! The first night I was elected as treasurer of the board of directors gaining the responsibility of managing the money for the mock cooperative we formed.

Some of my favorite highlights from the trip were learning about the coal mine and power plant (we all looked fabulous in our hard hats!), rafting, playing sand volleyball, helping run the canteen,

the dances, living in a cabin with three other strangers, waking up at 5:30 a.m. just to go run with friends, the countless leadership activities and the banquet.

The banquet was filled with many tears as we knew that was the last time all of us would be dining together. The goodbyes were by far the worst part about camp. I will forever cherish the friends I made and plan on keeping in touch with them for a long time! Thanks for all the memories CYLC!

Charlotte Ochs

The Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp was an incredible experience, to say the least. Through this opportunity, I was able to learn so much about myself, make lifelong friends and learn about different cooperatives.

I admit I was nervous at the beginning of the camp. To climb on a bus with 45 strangers seemed daunting, but even on the bus ride to Denver, I made a great friend. It felt good to have someone I could easily connect with. As we continued with our excursion I continued to make friends and to grow the friendships I had already created. The biggest impact camp had on me was during a simple leadership seminar. In small groups, we had to work together as a team to complete

Being a leader is sitting down and having a connection with someone you don't know. It's about asking to hear their story and sharing yours. Being a leader involves patience and commitment.

different tasks. However, this activity didn't affect me until we were told to find someone we had not talked to yet as a partner. I found a girl named Brooklyn and we were told to answer a series of questions to each other about ourselves. The questions became more in-depth as we went on, but it made me realize that being a leader isn't about what you control or how many people follow you. Being a leader is sitting down and having a connection with someone you don't know. It's about asking to hear their story and sharing yours. Being a leader involves patience and commitment. As this camp is a leadership camp, I expected to come out with ideas on how to lead, but I learned so much more. I learned the character a great leader possesses and how to use those character traits to benefit others.



Campers participate in a variety of team-building and leadership activities.



Kellie Rhodes poses with a new friend during a wildlife presentation.

CO-OPS CARE CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

The Golf Club at Southwind

FRIDAY
SEPTEMBER 13

9 a.m. SHOTGUN START

4-MAN SCRAMBLE/ \$100 PER PLAYER

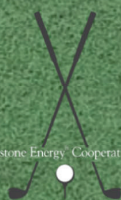
ALL PROCEEDS BENEFITING



Wheatland's Cram the Van Food Drive and Friends of the Wright Park Zoo in Dodge City



A Touchstone Energy Cooperative



TO REGISTER CALL 620-275-4080 OR EMAIL NNUMRICH@WECI.NET

Look for Your Capital Credit Allocation

The allocation of 2018 margins to members doing business with Victory Electric in 2018 is calculated and assigned. Unlike previous years when members received a separate allocation notice in the mail, this year members' allocation amounts of 2018 margins will appear in the message box on September electric bill statements.

The allocation amount will appear on the bill for those who were members in 2018, and will only appear on the bill of your primary account. Former members will receive a separate allocation notice in the mail. This amount is an accounting entry and cannot be claimed at the present time nor can it be applied against your current electric bill.

What are Capital Credits?

Victory Electric is a not-for-profit electric cooperative with members who share in the ownership, maintenance, construction and prosperity of the cooperative. A benefit of cooperative membership and ownership is your share of the earnings or margins Victory Electric may earn each year.

Victory Electric's rates are set to bring in enough money to pay operating costs, make payments on loans and provide an emergency reserve. A cooperative does

not earn profits; instead, when revenues exceed the expense of providing electric service it is considered "margins" and allocated to you in the form of "capital credits." Capital credits are the difference in operating costs and revenues and denote each member's ownership of the cooperative. The margins represent a contribution of operating capital by the membership to the cooperative with the intent the capital will be retired (repaid) to you in later years.

The amount of capital credits you earn in a given year is based upon the yearly margins in relation to the amount of capital you contribute through payment of your electric bills. The more electricity you use, the greater your capital credit allocation.

Allocated vs. Retired Capital Credits

Allocated capital credits are the member's share of net margins and reflect your equity and ownership in Victory Electric. This money is set aside to be used as operating capital for improvements and maintenance over a period of years.

Retirement is the amount a member receives as a refund. It is a portion of your total allocation. When capital credits are retired, a check is issued and your

equity in the cooperative is reduced. Retirements may happen years after the year in which the margins were earned or allocated. Until retired, an allocation has no cash value. The decision to refund (retire) capital credits rests with the Victory Electric board of trustees and is dependent on the financial situation of the cooperative, bylaw provisions and the requirements of our lenders.

Remember, you must be a member and have service in your name to have capital credits allocated to you. If you are receiving electric service under someone else's membership or the service is in the name of a deceased person, you will not receive capital credits. Any future capital credit retirements will be issued in the name of the person on the membership or the estate of a deceased member. Should you discontinue service with Victory Electric and/or change your current mailing address, please notify us of the new address, as there may be future correspondence relative to the final disposition of these capital credits.

For more information to help you better understand capital credits and explain how your investment in Victory Electric works, visit our website at victoryelectric.net.

Save the Date

Pumpkin Painting & Carving Festival

Saturday, Oct. 26, 2019

9 to 11 a.m.

at Victory Electric

More details
to come!

