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Electronews

The Victory Electric Cooperative Assn., Inc.

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CEO MESSAGE

Rising Costs Affect Us All

Victory Electric must remain financially stable so that the cooperative can continue to provide the safe and reliable services that members have come to know and expect. Our employees have been working hard to control costs and avoid increasing rates for a long time. As prices continue to climb, the price of electricity is on the rise as well. Like most consumer products, the cost of everything Victory purchases to maintain quality service and especially the cost of natural gas used for a significant portion of electricity generation, has been increasing at dramatic rates for the past 12 months. Price projections

for natural gas remain high throughout the rest of this year and throughout 2023.

Power generation and delivery is a complex industry. Victory does not generate the electricity distributed to you, the member, but rather we purchase it from our generation and transmission supplier, Sunflower Electric, and then distribute it to our members. When the cost of generating



Shane Laws

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★ HAPPY ★

Labor Day

REMINDER

Our offices will be closed Monday, Sept. 5.
 We hope you have a safe and happy holiday!

Rising Costs Affect Us All Continued from page 12A ▶

power goes up as the cost of fuel increases, and when we must buy on the open market to meet demand, that's when our members can see an increase in their electric bill.

The past two years have been challenging for all of us, and utilities have not been spared from these challenges. Supply chain disruptions in manufacturing, warehousing, and shipping have led to nearly unprecedented cost increases and delays in receiving the items required to build and maintain the electric grid. You may have noticed long lead times and delays when ordering consumer items like washing machines, dryers, dishwashers, furniture and other items. Electric cooperatives are also experiencing difficulties acquiring the materials needed to provide members with electricity. However, our employees are working hard with our suppliers to ensure we maintain a sufficient level of inventory.

Troubles began in early 2020 as the pandemic forced many manufacturers to reconfigure their plants to accommodate social distancing, which slowed production, packaging and shipping, and deliveries. As a result, some items critical to the co-op's infrastructure, such as wire, transformers, crossarms

and cable have seen double digit increases in cost over the last year. Despite the price increases, the cost of electricity remains a great value considering all the ways we depend on it. Over the last five years, the cost of rent increased 3.4%, medical care increased 2.8%, and education increased 2.2% nationwide. But the cost of electricity only increased 1%.

We are in a strong position financially and will continue to be in the future because of the amount of time our employees invest in planning for what comes next. We continually strive to maintain costs, improve the efficiency of our operation and equipment, and provide competitive rates to our members. This focus began long before the pandemic and remains a guiding light for the co-op's strategic initiatives.

As always, the board of trustees and staff at Victory remain dedicated to providing members with safe, affordable, and reliable electric service. We will continue to keep you updated as we progress through these difficult times, but rest assured we're in it together.

TAKE CARE! SHANE

10 Steps to Consider Before Solar

- 1** Research, research, research, before investing in a PV system.
- 2** Ensure that your home is energy efficient before purchasing solar — it may be a better money-saving option.
- 3** Understand how a PV system interconnects with Victory's system — a call to Victory early in the process is always a good idea.
- 4** Review your current energy use so you can determine what size PV system to install.
- 5** Consider all the costs and review the return on investment.
- 6** Search for incentives, rebates and tax credits.
- 7** Establish a project partnership between you, your contractor and Victory.
- 8** Understand and execute all safety precautions.
- 9** Choose a reputable contractor/installer — check reviews and ask for references.
- 10** Maintain good records, including financial records and notes from conversations.

Is Solar Right for You?



We know members are each unique and different and want options that match their interests, including the type of energy powering their homes. Many homeowners are looking for a green, reasonably priced energy source. These two motivations are why many homeowners are exploring solar, also known as photovoltaic systems (PV). As attractive and popular as these systems may appear, members should fully understand the true cost and the operational reality before making a decision.

We are here to help you navigate the decision at every stage by providing a better understanding of your electricity use, relevant policies, and accurate rates that should be central to your decision.

Please reach out to our office at 620-227-2139 or email askkeyaccounts@victoryelectric.net for more information or visit our website at <https://www.victoryelectric.net/solar> before you make the solar decision.

How a Hop or Shuffle Can Keep You Alive

Harvest season brings the culmination of many long hours of effort in raising a crop. The long, grueling hours in the field can make workers weary and prone to forget safety precautions that can prevent serious or fatal injuries. Every year, an average of 62 farm workers are electrocuted in the United States and many more are injured, according to Labor Department statistics.

During National Farm Safety Week, Sept. 18-24, we want to remind farm workers to beware of overhead power lines, keep farm equipment safely away, and know what to do if accidental contact is made with power lines.

The increasing size of farm equipment, particularly grain tanks on combines that have become higher with extensions, allow operators to come perilously close to overhead power lines. It's vital to keep equipment safely away — a minimum 20-foot safety radius around the electric line.

Farm Operators, Family Members and Employees are Urged to Take These Measures:

- ▶ Use a spotter when moving tall loads near power lines.
- ▶ Inspect farm equipment for transport height and determine clearance with any power lines under which the equipment must pass.
- ▶ Make sure everyone knows what to do if accidental contact is made with power lines. These accidents are survivable if the right actions are taken.

It's best to stay in the cab, call for help, and wait until the electric utility arrives to cut off power. If the power line is energized and you step outside, your body becomes the path and electrocution is the result. Even if a power line is on the ground, it could be energized. Stay inside the vehicle unless there's fire or imminent risk of fire.

In that case, jump — not step — with both feet hitting the ground at the same time. Jump clear, without touching the vehicle and ground at the

same time and shuffle or hop to safety keeping both feet together as you leave the area.

Be Cautious and Think Twice

- ▶ If your machinery or vehicle comes in contact with a power line, do not get out. Once contact has been made with a live line, you are now a pathway to ground, and you could get electrocuted if you step out. Instead, stay where you are and call 911 to dispatch the appropriate utility to de-energize the power.
- ▶ If you come across an accident or incident near a downed power line, from a distance alert the individual to stay in the equipment or vehicle as long as there is no imminent danger. Do not approach the scene.
- ▶ When using machinery with long extensions or tall antennas and when using ladders, look up to avoid contact with overhead power lines.
- ▶ An electrical current can jump or arc even without making contact so always keep equipment at least 20 feet from surrounding power lines.
- ▶ Remember, non-metallic materials such as tree limbs, ropes and hay can conduct electricity, depending on dampness and dust/dirt accumulation.
- ▶ Visually inspect overhead lines. If a wire is hanging low or is on the ground, consider it energized and stay at least 50 feet away; call 911 to have the operator dispatch the utility.
- ▶ Every day, map out where equipment will be moved to ensure it will clear power lines.
- ▶ When working in the vicinity of power lines, always use a spotter who has a broad vantage point.
- ▶ Train everyone working with or for you to be aware of power line locations and proper clearance distance. Design and implement a safety training program that includes a review of electrical hazards and how to safely deal with power lines. Learn more at www.SafeElectricity.org.



HAY is for HORSES

Use extreme caution near power lines.

Using hay on the farm or ranch is like using water and feed — it is essential. Be careful near overhead power lines. Here are some safety tips to keep in mind.

- ▶ Be aware of overhead power lines when moving bales of hay.
- ▶ Tarps that cover hay can come loose in heavy winds, be whipped into power lines and cause an outage.
- ▶ Do not store hay bales underneath power lines. Bales could get close to or contact a power line, pole or guy wire.



McGill Promoted to CIO



Denzil McGill

Victory Electric is excited to announce the promotion of **DENZIL MCGILL**, former vice president of IT, to chief information officer. McGill has been with Victory

since March 2016. He has an extensive background in IT and the cooperative industry, with over 23 years of experience between his time with Complete Energy and CoServ Electric. For 19 of those years McGill was the director of IT at CoServ, a cooperative that, at the time, had 200,000 electric and 120,000 gas meters.

“Besides all the incredibly talented co-workers I get to work with every day, the thing I appreciate the most

about our organization is the commitment to its members,” McGill said. “The members’ needs are Victory’s North Star, which is reflected in every decision the board and employees make. Having this common focus is essential towards building a great team of employees and I believe it drives Victory to be better than we were the day before.”

“Denzil’s accomplishments make him the perfect leader to continue to drive our information technology vision to new heights,” Shane Laws, CEO, said. “Denzil has successfully modernized technology systems, built new capabilities, and elevated our cybersecurity preparedness. At the same time, he’s continuously developed and trained technology professionals to support our cooperative. Denzil leads with a unique blend of head, heart, and foresight. He has a keen desire to empower

the people around him, learn through thoughtful questions and identify synergies that lead to impactful solutions for our employees and members. These qualities make him a valued member of Victory’s executive team.”

“Our industry is far more complex than just a few years ago and is constantly changing, so being a small part of an organization designed to meet those demands in the best way possible is exciting and gives purpose to our mission,” McGill said. “Fundamentally, members have always wanted two things, inexpensive and reliable energy. How it’s made, how they get it and how they use it is dynamic and challenges us daily to be prepared for the future.”

Congratulations Denzil, we look forward to the leadership and expertise you continue to bring to our organization day in and day out.



Denton Joins Victory



Dayton Denton

From intern to full-time employee, Victory Electric is excited to announce **DAYTON DENTON** has accepted a full-time position. Denton is a Jetmore native. He graduated from Hodgeman County High School in 2021, and then attended Pratt Community College where he studied Electrical and Power Transmission. Denton joined Victory in May 2022 as an intern and will now make the transition to groundman.

“I love working outside, that is my one of my favorite parts of working at Victory,” said Denton. “I get to work outside and make money to buy more cows!”

“Dayton has proven himself to be a valuable asset to Victory during his short time as an intern,” Ryan Miller, vice president of operations, said. “He is very smart, dependable and hardworking. It’s not every day an intern has the opportunity to move to a full-time position so quickly, but Dayton has demonstrated the skills and qualifications to be deserving of that opportunity. I am looking forward to watching Dayton develop his skills and grow to achieve his goal of journeyman. He has a great future ahead of him and I am excited he is part of our team!”

Denton lives outside of Jetmore with his family, is the youngest of six siblings, and he has two nephews and one niece. When he is not tending to his cattle, he enjoys hunting and fishing.

Congratulations Dayton, Victory is glad to have you as a part of the team!

Victory Electric is celebrating
National Co-op Month in October
with our *Co-ops Love Local* campaign.



Co-ops

LOCAL

Co-ops Love Local will benefit
50 locally owned businesses
and **50 community members** through
a giveaway of **50 gift certificates**
in the amount of **\$50 each!**

Be on the Lookout for Your Chance to Win!

DRAWINGS WILL BE HELD EACH MONDAY THROUGHOUT THE MONTH OF OCTOBER.

For more information, check out our social media and/or website.

SMARTHUB

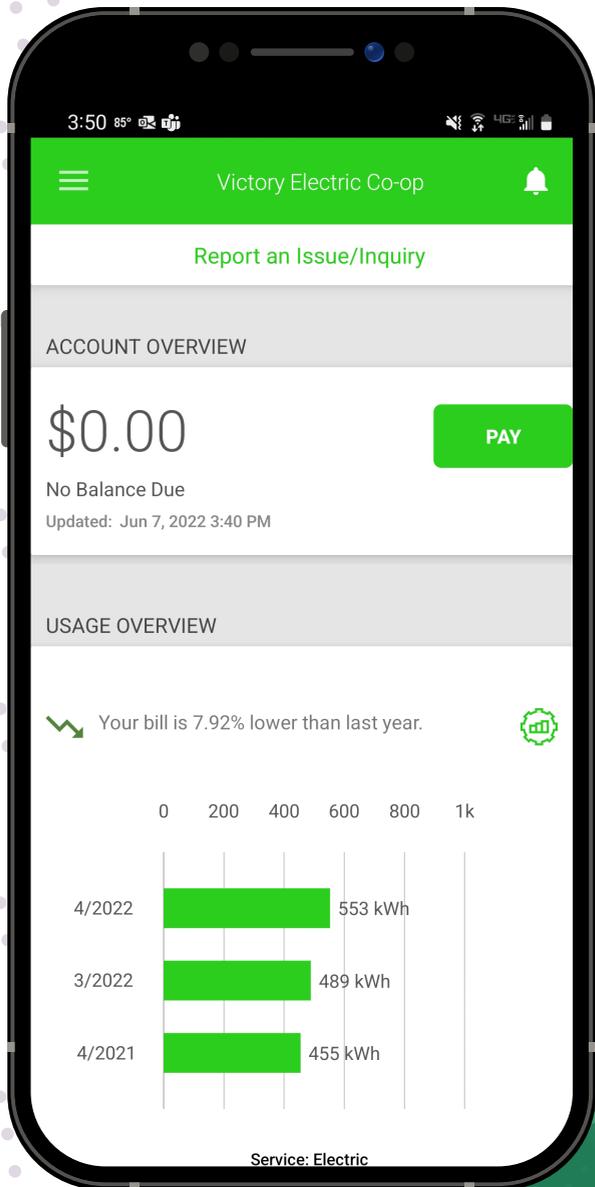
Voice Assistant

Now you can connect with Victory Electric through SmartHub and your smart home device like your Amazon Echo or Google Home. Pay your bill, get payment history, check your usage and more anytime. Here are some tips on how you can interact with Victory Electric through your smart home device.

What Devices are Supported?

All Amazon Echo and Google Home devices are supported. This includes:

- ▶ Amazon Echo
- ▶ Amazon Echo Show
- ▶ Google Home Hub
- ▶ Amazon Echo Dot
- ▶ Amazon Echo Spot
- ▶ Google Home Max
- ▶ Amazon Echo Plus
- ▶ Google Home
- ▶ Google Home Mini



Scan to download the app!

smart hub

TM

Sign up online by visiting the website at <https://www.victoryelectric.net/pay-online-smarthub>.

What Functionality is Available?

Below is a list of the current functionality included in SmartHub voice assistant:

- ▶ **ACCOUNT BALANCE (IF PREPAID, DEVICE WILL GIVE DAYS REMAINING)**
 - ▶ What is my balance?
 - ▶ What's my payment amount?
 - ▶ When's my due date?
 - ▶ How much do I owe?
 - ▶ What's my electric bill?
- ▶ **MOST RECENT BILLING AND PAYMENT HISTORY**
 - ▶ What was my last payment amount?
 - ▶ What was my prior billing?
 - ▶ What is my payment history?
 - ▶ What is my last bill?
- ▶ **PAYMENTS**
 - ▶ You can make a one-time payment with a previously-stored payment option.
- ▶ **CURRENT OUTAGE INFORMATION**
 - ▶ Is there an outage?
 - ▶ Do I have any outages on my account?
 - ▶ Is my power out?
- ▶ **ACCOUNT NUMBER**
 - ▶ What's my account number?
- ▶ **CUSTOM ALERTS**
 - ▶ Any news?
 - ▶ Any alerts?
 - ▶ Is there any information available?
- ▶ **HELP**
 - ▶ You can request your current balance, get information about your last payment, check for outages on your accounts, read your account number, and get information or alerts.



Manage Your Account



Monitor Usage 24-7



View and Pay Your Bill



Report Service Issues



Receive Important Updates

Victory Joins the Local Fun!

This summer, Victory Electric joined in the local Dodge City fun while accessorizing the **LA SALSA MAN**. As a cooperative, we're proud to be powered by our community. It's our local people who drive the mission of our cooperative and in return allow us to invest in the communities we serve.

The La Salsa Man was donated by Dodge City native Dennis Hopper in 2010, erected in 2016 and found its current location in 2017. Since finding its permanent place and becoming a Dodge City landmark, Victory Electric linemen have helped adorn the man with traditional accessories.



ABOVE: The La Salsa Man was donated by Dodge City native Dennis Hopper in 2010, erected in 2016 and found its current location in 2017.



LEFT: Victory Electric employees assist the City of Dodge City in accessorizing the La Salsa Man.

Victory Helps Celebrate Dodge City



Victory Electric participates in the annual Dodge City Days parade.

In July, Victory joined in the **DODGE CITY DAYS PARADE** to help celebrate Kansas' second-largest community festival. This 10-day celebration honors Dodge City's rich history and western heritage complete with a cattle drive through town and events for the whole family. The festival draws local community members and visitors from both near and far.



ABOVE: Victory employees grill burgers for guests at the hamburger feed.



LEFT: Victory employees and their families hand out candy and Victory memorabilia during the 2022 Dodge City Days parade.