

THE VICTORY ELECTRIC CO-OP

electronews



The Victory Electric Co-op Assn., Inc.

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Tom Lowery
Manager of Special Projects

FROM THE CEO

Electricity Remains a Good Value

Since January, Victory Electric has been working to notify our membership of a proposed rate change. Our goal is to explain why the rate change is needed and how a Cost-of-Service Study is used to determine the amount of change needed to fulfill revenue requirements while maintaining fair and reasonable rates for our members.

We are proposing a 6.7 percent average increase to go into effect April 1, 2017. Victory Electric's board of trustees will meet on Friday, March 24 at 9 a.m. to discuss and vote on the proposal. In the event the proposal passes, the rate change will be reflected in May 2017 electric bills.

While virtually all aspects of today's cost of living continue to rise, we pride ourselves on avoiding routine price adjustments. Members haven't seen a rate increase for six and seven years, respectively. The last time rates changed was in 2010 for our Mid-Kansas Electric Cooperative (MKEC) system and 2011 for our rural

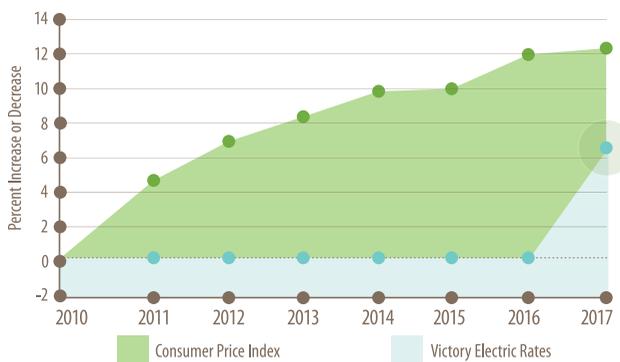
legacy system. In a world of rising costs for nearly all products, six to seven years is quite an accomplishment.

The board of trustees and management are sensitive to and concerned about altering your electric rates. Changing rates is never a popular decision, as no one wants higher electric bills. However, without some adjustment, Victory Electric cannot continue to provide the level of reliable service that you, the members, expect and deserve.



Shane Laws

VICTORY RATES VS. CONSUMER PRICE INDEX



* 2017 is based on January 2017 CPI data. All other years are an average of all 12 months.

Continued on page 16-D ►

Notice of Board of Trustees to Discuss Rate Change

Victory Electric's board of trustees will hold a meeting in which rates will be discussed and voted upon. The meeting will be held at 9 a.m. on Friday, March 24, 2017, at Victory Electric's office.

The meeting is open to all members of Victory Electric.

Six Employees Accept New Roles at Victory Electric

In recent months, Victory Electric's board of trustees, management and employees have focused on streamlining internal processes to incorporate cost-saving technology and increase efficiency. This process included several employees taking on new roles within the cooperative and a new hire.

Lowery transitions to new special projects role



Tom Lowery

TOM LOWERY, formerly manager of operations, was promoted to manager of special projects. He will focus on several key projects including the overhaul of the underground electric infrastructure in downtown Dodge City.

Lowery began his career as an apprentice lineman in 1973 with

Western Power and Light, which transitioned to Aquila in 2002. He started at Victory Electric in 2007 after Victory Electric's acquisition of Aquila. He is enjoying his new role, but is excited about his retirement in the coming years.

Miller moves up to management position

With Lowery's transition to a new role, **RYAN MILLER**



Ryan Miller

was promoted from supervisor of operations to manager of operations. He began his career as an apprentice lineman with Victory Electric in June 1997.

"I have worked closely with Tom and know what the operations guys do every day," Miller said. "Serving as a manager has offered a whole new set of obstacles and challenges, but I am excited."



Eric Speer

Speer promoted to supervisor

Another fellow lineman, **ERIC SPEER** was selected as the new supervisor of operations.

"I am excited for the change," Speer said. "I've worked as a lineman for 16 years, and I

was ready for a new challenge."

Speer started at Victory Electric as a groundsman and climbed the ranks to become a crew chief in 2007.

Stormont is new serviceman



Nate Stormont

NATE STORMONT also gained a new title. He is moving from a construction crew to a one-man service truck where he will address outages, repair street lights, and more.

"I like the variety of work each day," Stormont said. "I am really enjoying the change."

Stormont came to Victory Electric as a journeyman lineman from the City of Cimarron in 2006.

Metering department gets new meter technician



Michael Stefan

MICHAEL STEFAN was recently promoted to meter technician after serving as a warehouse clerk for three years. He will be working with the supervisor of metering technology to address high bill complaints, meter testing, meter issues and more.

"I look forward to advancing my career with Victory Electric," Stefan said. "The change has presented a new chance to learn and I am liking it a lot."

Victory Electric welcomes new lineman



Kevin Freeman

We would like to welcome **KEVIN FREEMAN** to the team.

Freeman joins Victory Electric as a second class lineman. The Chapman native is a graduate of Manhattan Technical College and previously worked at J&J Powerline for four years.

The electric cooperative is a changing industry and Victory Electric continues to adapt our internal processes and procedures to work more efficiently and better meet the needs of our members.



A train nearly hits a downed pole

Storm Damage, a Train and Free Pizza

HEITH KOENCNY was taking photos of the storm damage outside of Mullinville when he saw a power pole toppled over railroad tracks.

"The lights got closer and then I realized it was a train heading down the tracks," Koencny said.

He ran back to his truck, called dispatchers to alert

the railroad and then turned on his flashers to warn the engineer of the train.

A potential accident was avoided and Koencny's photo won him a pizza in a contest hosted by Victory Electric's communication team to engage employees to send pictures of the storm damage during the January ice storm.

April 2017

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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23/30	24	25	26	27	28	29

Annual Meeting Reminder

The 71st Annual Meeting of Victory Electric has been scheduled for April 11 at the Western State Bank Expo Center. A meal will be served and residential members attending will receive a registration gift and have a chance to win great door prizes.

ROW Creates Path for Reliability

There are many ways that Victory Electric provides you with safe, reliable electric service. One of the most common—and crucial—ways is referred to as right-of-way (ROW) clearing or vegetation management.

A right of way refers to a strip of land underneath or around power lines that your electric cooperative has the right and responsibility

to maintain and clear. Trees must grow at a distance far enough from conductors where they will not cause harm to individuals or disruption to electrical service. Specifications can vary, but a general guideline of maintaining a safe ROW is 15-feet of clearance on either side of the primary conductors and 20-feet of overhead clearance above the highest wire on the pole.

Clearing the ROW is critical to keeping our members' lights on. An average of 15 percent of power interruptions occur when trees, shrubs or bushes grow too close to power lines.

If a tree encroaches on the ROW, our vegetation management team will trim back branches and

brush using chainsaws, bucket trucks, tree climbers, brush chippers and mowers. Chemical control methods can also be used as a way to support the growth of low-growing plant species while competing tall trees growing beneath power lines.



Steve Jimmerson trims limbs away from a powerline.

ROW clearing also keeps your family safe by ensuring that tree branches do not become energized due to

close contact with a downed power line. Power lines can carry up to 34,500 volts, and an energized tree branch is incredibly dangerous—even deadly. Be mindful when around trees close to power lines, and make sure your children know that climbing trees near power lines is extremely dangerous.

ROW clearing is also critical to ensuring that we provide members with affordable electricity. Staying ahead of the game keeps us from having to come out after a storm to restore power due to fallen trees.

Remember to contact Victory Electric if you decide to trim or remove trees near any power service or line. And never trim a tree in the right-of-way zone on your own.

Nominating Committee Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the nominating committee of The Victory Electric Cooperative Assn., Inc., was held on Thursday, January 19, 2017, beginning at 1 p.m., at the offices of the cooperative on N. 14th Avenue in Dodge City.

The following members of the nominating committee were present: Jim Lembright, Tom Stanley, Norval Ralstin, Earl Plattner, Greg Hainer, Kent Bartlett, Tim Gleason and Ralph Millershaski. Dave Snapp, attorney for Victory Electric; Shane Laws, Victory Electric CEO; Daryl Tieben, board secretary; and Rae Jean Amy, who recorded the minutes, were also present. Snapp called the meeting to order at 1 p.m.

Thereupon, Snapp went over qualifications and eligibility requirements for election as a trustee, as set forth in the bylaws of the cooperative, to determine if each potential nominee was eligible for election based upon the information available and the bylaws of the cooperative.

Thereupon, motions duly made, voted on and carried, Greg Hainer was elected as chairman of the nominating committee and inspector of elections. Hainer then took over the meeting and asked for nominations from districts 2, 4, 6 and 10.

Thereupon, motions duly made, seconded and adopted, the following persons were nominated to stand election as candidates for trustee of the cooperative for a three-year term: District 2, John Leis; District 4, Jim Imel; District 6, Kenny Wehkamp; and District 10, Randy Quint and Jeff Reinert.

There being no further business to come before the meeting of the nominating committee, the meeting was adjourned at 2:05 p.m.

Electricity Remains a Good Value

► *Continued from page 16-A*

Electricity in Comparison

While our prices have not increased since 2010 and 2011, there are very few other items, if any, that have not risen in price in the last six to seven years. In our homes today, electricity has become a very important part of our lives. Electricity powers the pump for our water and it heats our homes in the winter months. It chills our food, allowing us to store perishables for days at a time and it lights our homes to allow us to read and work at night. The electricity we use powers the machines that make many products we use daily such as the clothes on our backs, the automobiles we drive, and the couches on which we sit.

The consumer index chart indicates what electric rates for Victory Electric have done since 2010. It also shows the cumulative rate of inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index for the same time period. Clearly, one dollar today does not purchase the same amount of any commodity as it did at the time of our last rate change.

As an example, let's talk about how prices have changed for some items we use every day. In 2010 the average price for a loaf of bread was \$1.37, and the average price for a dozen eggs was \$1.16. The price for a gallon of milk was \$3.20, and a postage stamp was \$0.44.

Today's prices are significantly higher. The price of postage, for instance, is now \$0.49; this represents an 11.4 percent increase. The average price of a gallon of milk is now \$3.42, which is more than a 6.9 percent increase. Eggs today are priced at an average of \$2.47 per dozen, which represents a 113 percent increase. Bread today is averaging \$1.44, which is nearly a 5.1 percent increase.

Every member matters

On average, Victory Electric serves seven members per mile of line, whereas municipal utilities and investor-

owned utilities serve on average 30 to 60 members per mile. Our costs per member are double that of IOU's and municipalities, but their revenues per mile of line is three to five times more, therefore they are much better positioned to spread their fixed costs. It costs more than \$38,000 to build one mile of single-phase line (or to re-build one mile of old line), and \$79,000 for one mile of three-phase line. Nonetheless, Victory Electric's rates are generally lower than those of other utilities serving consumers in the state of Kansas.

Victory Electric is able to keep our rates low because we are a not-for-profit electric cooperative. As such, we are owned and controlled by our members. You elect a board of trustees, which oversees the operations of your cooperative including the rate structure. As members of an electric cooperative, the rate you pay for electricity is based on the wholesale rate Victory Electric pays for electricity plus a small margin the cost associated with upgrading existing infrastructure and operating expenses. The not-for-profit nature of cooperatives states any net profits made by the company must be paid back to the membership in the form of capital credit refunds.

Investor-owned utilities are in business to show a profit for their investors or stock holders. Profit is inherent in their rate structures and is passed along to their investors in the form of dividends on their investment. Profits do not go back to the consumer.

Back in 1945, Victory Electric was formed out of a need to serve areas and individuals who were not profitable enough for the big utilities to serve. As such, one of the attributes of any cooperative is that we are formed and managed with only one thought in mind: the membership. It is for you that we work so hard and it is for you that we continue to exist.

Thanks, Shane

THE EFFECT OF CONSUMER DENSITY

	Investor-Owned Utilities	City Municipalities	Cooperatives	Victory Electric
Consumers / mile of line	34	48	7	7
Distribution plant / consumer	\$2,798	\$2,740	\$3,290	\$4,878
Revenue / mile of line	\$75,500	\$113,000	\$15,000	\$23,898

With the consumer price index rising in practically all consumer costs and the effect of consumer density, electricity still remains a good value.

CO-OP CONNECTIONS SPOTLIGHT

Fit for Summer with DC Zumba



Friends finish a Zumba class led by Sophia Gallegos, pictured middle.

Bright yellow walls, surrounding mirrors, and music at **DC ZUMBA** brings friends together each weeknight for fitness and fun.

DC Zumba offers a free class to Victory Electric members using their Co-op Connections Card. Join the fun with friends in the basement of Village Square Mall in Dodge City and become fit as summer nears.

“Zumba is one of the easiest ways to exercise,” said Sophia Gallegos, owner of DC Zumba. “It gets people moving with friends and music you like. It is fun; it doesn’t feel like you’re working.”

Gallegos became an instructor a year ago after participating in Zumba and realizing the benefits for herself and others.

“There are too many benefits to name,” said Gallegos. “Weight loss, toning, memory stimulation, stress relief, cardio, flexibility and time to

gather with friends are only some of the benefits people gain from Zumba.”

The classes are for everyone. Currently, Gallegos is the only instructor and provides three classes a day Monday through Friday. Classes are held at 8 a.m., 6 p.m., and 7 p.m. The classes are for everyone and include a diverse environment with different cultures and ages in the class.

“There is no one to judge you while you’re dancing,” said Gallegos. “Everyone is in it together to better themselves, it is a fun atmosphere.”

With a Co-op Connections Card, members will receive their first class free of charge. It can be used once per person. Zumba classes are \$4 per day, \$15 per week and \$25/month.

DC Zumba is not the only fitness option with your Co-op Connections Card. Tropical Island Tan and Fitness and Dodge City YMCA offer discounts for card holders.

The 20.20.20 Challenge Accepted

Victory Electric employees accepted a pushup challenge to support families of fallen/injured linemen.

The movement is hosted by Linejunk, a Facebook group focused on linemen, and requires a \$20 donation from each participant and 20 pushups for 20 days.

The money supports the National Sisterhood United for Journeyman Lineman (NSUJL). NSUJL is a nonprofit organization dedicated to assisting families of fallen/injured linemen. NSUJL’s mission is to provide emergency financial, emotional or physical assistance in cases of work-

related injuries or death.

“It is a great cause,” said Mikey Goddard, manager of safety. “It is so great to come together and be a part of something like this. As linemen and cooperatives, we’re all family. We wanted to support the cause.”

Victory Electric began the challenge on Feb. 2 and will continue to do 20 pushups a day until 20 workdays are complete.

View the videos of Victory Electric’s participation on Facebook and Twitter. If you are interested in joining our efforts and donating to the cause, visit nsujl.org.

Victory Electric Bill Payment Options



Pay your bill online at www.victoryelectric.net, at our office, by mail or at any of our pay stations.

Victory Electric has several convenient options for you, the member, to pay your bill.

In addition to paying in our office or by mail, options include online bill pay at victoryelectric.net, via phone at 866-999-8494, auto bank deduction, drop boxes at Victory Electric and City of Dodge City.

“Come Get Your Free CFL!”

This month’s lucky winners are... **SALLY CAUBLE, DEAN DOWLING, TWYLA GOMEZ, and JAIME J. MACIAS.** Come

by Victory Electric’s office to get your free compact fluorescent light bulb (CFL). Every month Victory Electric will be giving members free CFL light bulbs. Congratulations winners!



Efficiency Tip of the Month

Warmer weather is on the way! Use energy efficient window treatments or coverings, like blinds, shades and films, to reduce heat gain in your home. These devices not only improve the look of your home but also reduce energy costs.



Spring Forward with Time Change

Don’t forget to turn your clocks forward one hour on March 12 when daylight saving time begins.



Easy Steps to Greater Energy Savings This Season

Do you want to save money and electricity but have limited time, money and patience? According to the Department of Energy, a “typical American family” spends nearly \$2,000 per year on their home energy bills. Much of that money; however, is wasted through leaky windows or ducts, old appliances or inefficient heating and cooling systems.

Luckily, there are several relatively easy ways to save energy without a substantial commitment of time and money. These efforts will help you save whether you own or rent an older or newly constructed home. And, you won't have to hire a specialist or call in a favor from someone who is handy with tools to help you.

Where to Start

According to Money Magazine, “improving the envelope” of your home is a good place to start. Sunlight, seasonal temperature changes and wind vibrations can loosen up a home, increasing air leakage. Doors and windows may not close tightly, and duct work can spring leaks, wasting cooled and heated air. By placing weather stripping and caulk around windows and doors, you can keep cool air inside during warm months and prevent chilly air from penetrating the indoors during colder months. Sealing gaps around piping, dryer vents, fans and outlets also helps to seal the envelope and creates greater efficiency. Apply weather stripping around overlooked spaces like your attic hatch or pull-down stairs.

Replacing incandescent bulbs with LED bulbs can make a big difference in home efficiency and is one of the fastest ways to cut your energy bill. Known for their longevity and efficiency, LED bulbs have an estimated operational life span of typically 10,000 to 20,000 hours compared to 1,000 hours of a typical incandescent. According to the Department of Energy, by replacing your home's five most frequently used light fixtures or bulbs with models that have earned the Energy Star rating, you can save \$75 each year.

Wrapping up Savings

Installing a blanket around your water heater could reduce standby heat losses up to 45 percent and save you about 7 to 16 percent in water heating costs, according to the Department of Energy. For a small investment of about

\$30, you can purchase pre-cut jackets or blankets and install them in about one hour. On a safety note, the Department of Energy recommends that you not set the thermostat above 130 degrees Fahrenheit on an electric water heater with an insulating jacket or blanket; the higher temperature setting could cause the wiring to overheat.

Given that a large portion of your monthly energy bill goes toward heating and cooling your home, it makes sense to ensure your home's heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system is performing at an optimal level. Checking, changing or cleaning your filter extends the life of your HVAC system and saves you money.

Air filters prevent dust and allergens from clogging your HVAC system. Otherwise, dust and dirt trapped in a system's air filter leads to several problems, including: reduced air flow in the home and up to 15 percent higher operating costs; lowered system efficiency; and costly duct cleaning or replacement. Many HVAC professionals recommend cleaning the system filters monthly. A simple task like changing the filters on your HVAC system makes your unit run more efficiently, keeping your house cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter.



Combat high energy use with simple steps.

Take Control of Your Energy Savings

Take a look at your programmable thermostat. When was the last time you checked to make sure it was programmed for the current season and family schedule? This is one of the best energy-saving tools at your fingertips. It enables you to fine tune the temperature during particular hours of the day. Many models allow you to differentiate between weekday and weekend schedules, and internet-connected thermostats can learn your schedule and make adjustments automatically. Most models come with an override option so you can make manual adjustments without losing overall programming. You can only achieve these efficiencies and savings if it is programmed properly and adjusted periodically to keep pace with changes in household routines.

Remember, there are easy steps you can take now to improve the energy efficiency of your home. To learn about additional ways to save, view Victory Electric online at victoryelectric.net as well as Facebook and Twitter.

La Electricidad Sigue Siendo de Buen Valor

Desde enero, Victory Electric ha estado trabajando duro para notificar a nuestros miembros sobre una propuesta cambio de tarifa. Nuestro objetivo es explicar por qué el cambio de tarifas es necesario y cómo se usa un estudio de costo de servicio para determinar la cantidad de cambios necesarios para cumplir con los requisitos de ingresos y mantener tarifas justas y razonables para nuestros miembros.

Proponemos un aumento de promedio 6,7 por ciento para entrar en vigor el 1 de abril de 2017. El consejo de administración de Victory Electric se reunirá el viernes 24 de marzo a las 9 am para discutir y votar sobre la propuesta. En caso de que la propuesta pase, el cambio de tarifa se reflejará en las facturas de electricidad de mayo de 2017.

Mientras que prácticamente todos los aspectos del costo de vida actual siguen aumentando, nos enorgullecemos de evitar los ajustes rutinarios de precios. Los miembros no han visto un aumento de la tarifa durante seis y siete años, respectivamente. La última vez que las tarifas cambiaron fue en 2010 para nuestro sistema Cooperativa Eléctrica de Mid-Kansas (MKEC) y 2011 para nuestro sistema de legado rural. En un mundo de crecientes costos para casi todos los productos de consumo, de seis a siete años es todo un logro.

La mesa directiva y la administración están sensibles y preocupados por alterar sus tarifas eléctricas. Cambiar las tasas nunca es una decisión popular, ya que nadie quiere mayores facturas de electricidad. Sin embargo, sin algún ajuste, Victory Electric no puede continuar proporcionando el nivel de servicio confiable que usted, los miembros, esperan y merecen.

Electricidad en Comparación

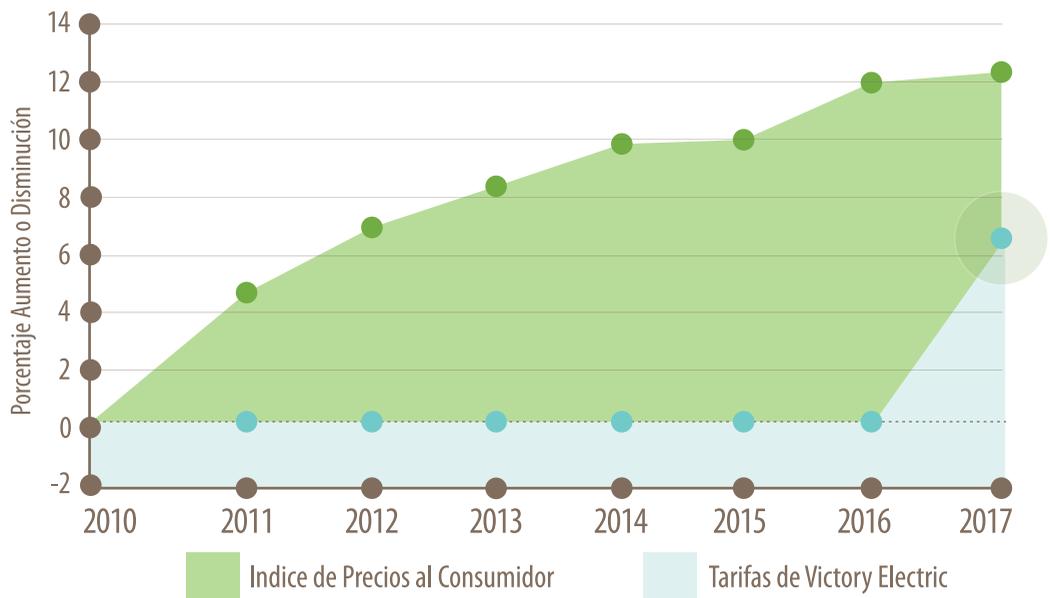
Aunque nuestros precios no han aumentado desde

2010 y 2011, hay muy pocos otros artículos, si los hay, que no han subido de precio en los últimos seis a siete años. En nuestros hogares hoy en día, la electricidad se ha convertido en una parte muy importante de nuestras vidas. La electricidad alimenta la bomba para nuestra agua y calienta nuestros hogares en los meses de invierno. Se enfría nuestra comida, lo que nos permite almacenar perecederos durante días a la vez y se enciende nuestras casas para que podamos leer y trabajar por la noche. La electricidad que utilizamos impulsa las máquinas que fabrican muchos productos que utilizamos diariamente, como la ropa a nuestras espaldas, los automóviles que manejamos y los muebles en los que nos sentamos.

Por ejemplo, hablemos de cómo los precios han cambiado para algunos artículos que usamos todos los días. En 2010, el precio promedio de una hogaza de pan era de \$1.37, y el precio promedio para una docena de huevos era \$1.16. El precio de un galón de leche era \$3.20, y un sello postal era \$0.44

Continuidad en pagio 16-H ►

TASAS DE VICTORY VS. ÍNDICE DE PRECIOS AL CONSUMIDOR



***2017 se basa en los datos del IPC de enero de 2017. Todos los demás años son un promedio de todos los 12 meses.*

Aviso de Junta de la Mesa Directiva para Discutir el Cambio de Tasa

El consejo de la mesa directiva de Victory Electric celebrará una reunión en la que las tarifas serán discutidas y votadas. La reunión se llevará a cabo el viernes 24 de marzo de 2017, a las 9 de la mañana, en oficina de Victory Electric.

La reunión está abierta a todos los miembros de Victory Electric.

La Electricidad Sigue Siendo de Buen Valor Cont.

Continuidad de 16-G ►

Los precios de hoy son significativamente más altos. El precio del franqueo, por ejemplo, es ahora de 0,49 dólares; Esto representa un aumento del 11,4 por ciento. El precio promedio de un galón de leche es ahora de 3,42 dólares, lo que supone un aumento del 6,9 por ciento. Los huevos de hoy tienen un precio promedio de 2,47 dólares por docena, lo que representa un aumento de 113 por ciento. El pan hoy está promediando \$ 1.44, que es casi un aumento del 5.1 por ciento.

Cada miembro importa

En promedio, Victory Electric sirve a siete miembros por milla de línea, mientras que las empresas de servicios públicos municipales y los servicios públicos de propiedad de inversionistas sirven en promedio de 30 a 60 miembros por milla. Nuestros costos por miembro son el doble de los IOU y los municipios, pero sus ingresos por milla de línea es de tres a cinco veces más, por lo tanto, están mucho mejor posicionados para distribuir sus costos fijos. Cuesta más de \$ 38,000 para construir una milla de línea monofásica (o para reconstruir una milla de la antigua línea) y \$ 79,000 para una milla de línea trifásica. Sin embargo, las tarifas de Victory Electric son generalmente más bajas que las de otras utilidades que sirven a los consumidores en el estado de Kansas.

Victory Electric es capaz de mantener nuestras tarifas bajas porque somos una cooperativa eléctrica sin fines de lucro. Como tales, somos poseídos y controlados por nuestros miembros. Usted elige un consejo de administración, que supervisa las operaciones de su cooperativa incluyendo la estructura de tarifas. Como miembros de una cooperativa eléctrica, la tarifa que paga por la electricidad se basa en la tarifa mayorista que Victoria Electric paga por la electricidad,

además de un pequeño margen, el costo asociado con la mejora de la infraestructura existente y los gastos operativos. La naturaleza sin fines de lucro de las cooperativas establece que los beneficios netos obtenidos por la empresa deben ser devueltos a los miembros en forma de reembolsos de capital.

Las empresas de servicios públicos de propiedad de inversionistas están en el negocio para mostrar un beneficio para sus inversores o accionistas. El beneficio es inherente a sus estructuras tarifarias y se transmite a sus inversores en forma de dividendos sobre su inversión. Los beneficios no vuelven al consumidor.

En 1945, Victory Electric se formó a partir de una necesidad de servir a las áreas y las personas que no eran lo suficientemente rentables para las grandes empresas de servicios públicos para servir. Como tal, uno de los atributos de cualquier cooperativa es que estamos formados y gestionados con un solo pensamiento en mente: la membresía. Es para ustedes que trabajemos tan duro y es por ustedes que continuamos existiendo.

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EL EFECTO DE LA DENSIDAD DEL CONSUMIDOR

	Utilidades de los Inversionistas	Ciudad Municipios	Cooperativas	Victory Electric
Consumidores / milla de línea	34	48	7	7
Planta de distribución / consumidor	\$2,798	\$2,740	\$3,290	\$4,878
Ingresos / milla de línea	\$75,500	\$113,000	\$15,000	\$23,898