

**THE VICTORY
ELECTRIC CO-OP**

electronews



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FROM THE CEO

Rural Voices are Heard in Washington



Shane Laws

Given the incessant news out of Washington highlighting partisan bickering and gridlock in Congress, it can be hard to tell whether

our elected leaders are listening and being responsive to the concerns of rural Americans. That's why America's electric cooperatives urged members to get out and vote in the last election and are now focused on advancing the interests of rural communities in our nation's capital. We've asked for a seat at the table—a request that's been met with some success.

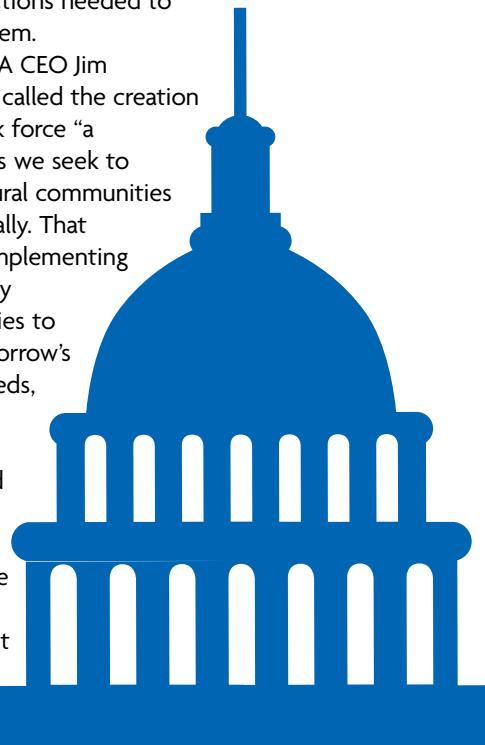
Early this year, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), our national service organization in Washington, led a group of more than 40 organizations in sending a letter to President Trump asking him to make rural issues a top priority of his administration.

"As you witnessed first-hand during the campaign, the issues facing rural America are no less significant than those facing urban parts of the country, but can be more easily overlooked because America's small towns and rural areas make up just 15 percent of the nation's population," the groups wrote.

To address this concern, the organizations urged the president to designate a senior member of the White House staff to take the lead on rural issues or establish an office of rural policy within the Executive Office of the President. In response to this and other electric cooperative outreach efforts, the president in late April signed an executive order establishing an interagency Rural America Task Force to examine the issues facing rural America and identify actions needed to address them.

NRECA CEO Jim Matheson called the creation of the task force "a key step as we seek to develop rural communities economically. That includes implementing new energy technologies to meet tomorrow's energy needs, while also deploying broadband and other services to enhance daily lives throughout

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Henry Earns Journeyman Lineman Certification



Kade Henry

Victory Electric congratulates **KADE HENRY** on becoming a journeyman lineman.

The journeyman status is earned with four years of experience and time on the job as well as working through four textbooks. Each book is completed with nine tests and one final exam. At the end of their fourth book, linemen take an accumulative final over the material. Currently, 20 linemen at Victory Electric have

their journeyman certification.

Henry started at Victory Electric as a second class lineman in November 2014.

"Becoming a journeyman is a goal for each of our linemen," said Ryan Miller, manager of operations. "It makes the guys more qualified and they can run a crew."

Help us congratulate Kade on his hard work and accomplishment!

Penney Welcomed to Victory Electric as IT Analyst

Victory Electric is pleased to announce the hiring of **ERICA PENNEY** as an IT analyst.

"I came to Victory because I like the cooperative business. I grew up in a small town; I know what people like about it," Penney said. "I liked the people here when I initially visited. I came for the career but stayed for the really nice people."

Penney joins the team as a graduate from West Virginia University. The Chincoteague, Virginia, native earned her bachelor of science in business administration and a major in management information systems.

"Erica is talented and we are glad she chose to come to Victory Electric," said Denzil McGill, manager of IT. "She

will help us better serve members as we continue to mainstream internal processes."

Penney enjoys surfing, other extreme water sports and outdoor activities, like hiking.

"Surfing won't be in my backyard anymore," Penney joked. "But I have two dogs so we run and hike some."

We look forward to having Erica as part of the Victory Electric team and what she can do to help our members. Help us welcome Erica to Dodge City and Victory Electric.



Erica Penney

Grain Bins: Tips for Harvesting Safely this Season

As rewarding as it may be, farming is an extremely difficult job and it ranks among the top 10 most dangerous professions in the United States. At Victory Electric, safety is top priority for our employees and our members.

Our farmers work hard to get the job done, and sometimes it's easy to forget all the necessary steps to take when practicing safe operations. Grain bins are siloed spaces built for storing grain and fermented feed known as silage. These bins play an integral role in the efficiency and profitability of farm and ranch operations, and safety regulations should always be considered when working around these structures.

Whether you're purchasing new grain bins or remodeling areas that contain existing ones, proximity to overhead power lines must be a considered factor.

► **Safe clearance.** The National Electrical Safety Code requires an 18-foot minimum vertical clearance from the highest point of the filling port of the grain bin to nearby high-voltage wires and a 55-foot minimum distance from the power line to the grain bin wall. Changes to landscaping and drainage work can affect clearance heights of power lines, so remember to check these measurements regularly.

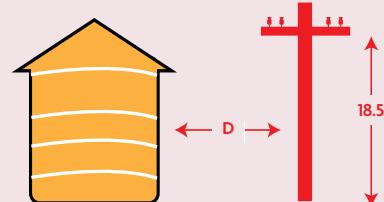
► **Filling grain bins.** High-voltage power lines are not insulated, so it's important to remember to maintain an

adequate high-wire clearance when using a portable auger, conveyor or elevator to fill your grain bin.

► **Moving equipment near grain bins.** When moving equipment, such as a hopper or a scaffold, be aware of nearby power lines. Remember to maintain a 10 foot clearance to ensure safety.

Accidents can happen in a split-second, which is why Victory Electric reminds you to always use caution when working near power lines. If you are considering a plan for a new grain bin or reconstruction of an existing bin's site, please contact our office at 620-227-2139.

Height of Structure	D= Minimum distance from line
15 ft.	55 ft.
20 ft.	68 ft.
25 ft.	80 ft.
30 ft.	93 ft.
35 ft.	104 ft.
40 ft.	118 ft.
50 ft.	143 ft.
60 ft.	168 ft.
70 ft.	193 ft.
80 ft.	218 ft.



Maintain safe distances this harvest.

St. George Earns National Communications Credential

Victory Electric is pleased to announce that **KENNEDY ST. GEORGE**, communications specialist, has earned recognition as a professional communicator in a national certification program offered by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

St. George has met the requirements to become a Certified Cooperative Communicator (CCC), which signifies standards of professionalism in communications and competency of the electric cooperative industry. Since 1985, more than 400 electric cooperative communicators have attained CCC status.

In order to become certified, St. George submitted a portfolio of her work, which was reviewed by an independent communications professional who has earned the CCC credential. In addition to passing the portfolio

review, St. George passed a rigorous four-hour essay examination.

The CCC Program was created to strengthen and enrich the professional skills and abilities of electric co-op communicators, to help them successfully fill their crucial roles in ensuring the best possible future for electric cooperatives. This is done through the establishment of professional development goals, identification of a body of knowledge and skills necessary to the practice of electric co-op communication, and recognition of those individuals who have demonstrated a professional level of excellence.



Kennedy St. George

On the Line: High Winds Cause Extensive Line Damage

A suspected micro burst caused extensive damage in south Dodge City on May 14.

At least seven pole structures collapsed from the

force of high winds and multiple others needed new cross arms. Members were without power for about two hours as the linemen worked safely to replace poles.



Jeremy Elling pulls line.



Kade Henry (left) and Jeremy Elling place a new crossarm on a pole.



Jesus Ruiz (left) and Vidal Moreno frame a new pole.



Several poles lay in the road the following morning.



The broken wires after the high winds needed repaired.

Rural Voices Heard in Washington

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rural America."

Electric cooperatives also have been weighing in on another big topic in Washington: the need to improve the nation's aging infrastructure. Co-ops have told policymakers that they must look beyond merely repairing roads and bridges if a federal infrastructure initiative is going to meet the needs of rural communities. High on co-ops' list of priorities is closing the rural-urban digital divide by expanding rural access to high-speed Internet service, which Matheson calls "a key ingredient for a healthy 21st century economy, particularly in rural areas."

Given this imperative, co-ops were very pleased when the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) appointed Matheson to serve on a newly created Broadband Deployment Advisory Committee. The

mission of the panel, which held its inaugural meeting in April, is to advise and make recommendations to the FCC on how to accelerate the deployment of broadband by reducing and removing regulatory barriers to infrastructure investment. Matheson will work to ensure that rural needs are addressed.

This isn't to say that everything in Washington will go co-ops' way. The federal government is a massive bureaucracy with many interests vying for attention. But there's one thing you can count on: Electric cooperatives will fight to make their voices heard on Capitol Hill and within the many federal agencies that impact the quality of life in rural communities. They'll always strive to get a seat at the table.

Thanks, Shane

Don't Let Phone Scammers Get the Best of Summer

Victory Electric would like our members to be aware of scammers who have attempted to defraud Victory Electric members by trying to collect funds over the phone. These scams have happened in the past, but the scammers are getting more sophisticated. In some cases, they have spoofed caller ID's, when they call, your caller ID will have Victory Electric's name and phone number. Individuals will call claiming to be a representative from the "electric company" telling members if they didn't buy a pre-paid credit card, like MoneyPak, to pay their electric bill, they would be disconnected within an hour.

Please do not fall for scams like this. Unfortunately there are always scam artists out there trying to take advantage of people.

Members should never give out personal or credit card information over the phone. When Victory Electric members are contacted, our representatives will clearly identify themselves and if you have any doubts, please hang up and call our local number.

MoneyPak cards are legitimate, but the scammers are using them as a way to get cash.

MoneyPak's website gives seven tips on how to protect yourself from fraud.

- ▶ Never give your MoneyPak number to someone you don't know.
- ▶ Never give receipt information about your MoneyPak purchase to another party.
- ▶ Use your MoneyPak only to reload your prepaid cards or accounts you control.
- ▶ Refuse any offer that asks you to buy a MoneyPak and share the number or receipt information.

- ▶ To use your MoneyPak with PayPal or eBay or other online merchants, transfer the money to your PayPal account before you pay the merchant. Don't email your MoneyPak number directly to any merchant.
- ▶ Don't use the MoneyPak to pay taxes or fees to claim "winnings" on a foreign lottery or prize promotion. Unless it's an approved MoneyPak partner, don't use MoneyPak for any offer that requires you to pay before you get the item.

We would like you to share this information with your employees, friends and families. Members who believe they have been a victim of this scam are urged to call Victory Electric, Dodge City Police Department or the Ford County Sheriff's office.



Knowing the status of your account can prevent a scam.

Power Strips vs. Surge Protectors

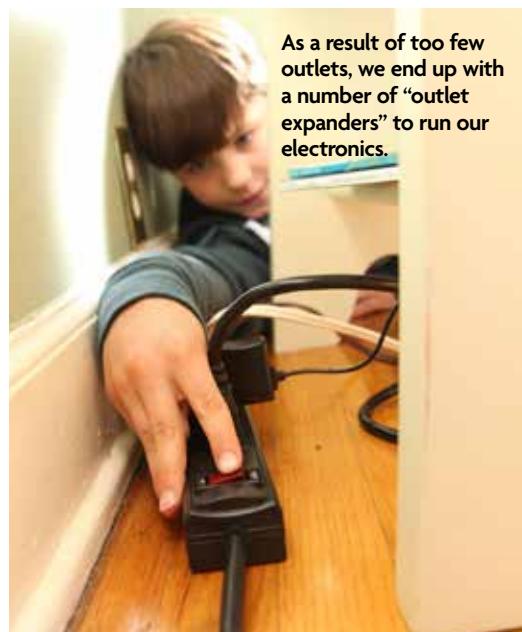
As the proliferation of electronics impacts our daily lives, we realize there simply are not enough outlets in our homes. This is particularly true for older homes. As a result, we end up with a number of "outlet expanders," commonly known as power strips.

Power strips are generic and fulfill a very simple function. They are inexpensive, and the quality, usually, is on par with the price.

Keeping this in mind, let's look at factors to consider when purchasing a power strip or a surge protector—the power strip's more talented cousin.

Purchasing a Power Strip

- ▶ Look for power strips with a built-in circuit breaker. If you connect too many electronics and devices, the strip will kick out the circuit breaker rather than cause the breaker in your electric panel to trip.
- ▶ Pay attention to the orientation of the outlets. The typical design is along the length of the strip, facing the bottom or end of the strip. Experts recommend using power strips with the outlets perpendicular to the length of the strip.



As a result of too few outlets, we end up with a number of "outlet expanders" to run our electronics.

▶ Get a smart strip. These are becoming more common and less expensive. With smart strips, one outlet serves as a master, receiving power all the time. The other outlets don't receive power until the master device is turned on (ideal for home entertainment setups).

If you are connecting expensive electronics, you may want to consider a surge protector. Here, price is even more important because a cheap surge protector can be worse than none at all for two reasons. One, they use cheap, small surge-fighting components. Two, these components can fail and the strip still will provide power, all without any indication that its protective side is gone.

Like power strips, there are some key factors to consider when buying a surge protector.

- ▶ Significant joule (jewel) rating. This is a measure of how much energy it can withstand.
- ▶ Cable and internet connection protection. You may want to consider this for your entertainment and computing needs as surges can enter via any wired connection. Be sure the protector is designed to handle a digital television. Otherwise, it can cause pixilation if it's only designed for analog signals.
- ▶ Indicator light that shows if protection has burned out.
- ▶ The same outlet orientation as previously mentioned.
- ▶ Power conditioning feature (for PCs, this is a nice-to-have feature but not a necessity).
- ▶ Smart capability (mentioned above).

Power strips and surge protectors are worth the investment when you follow these simple suggestions.

Pool

SAFETY TIPS

The Consumer Product Safety Commission reports that since 1990, there have been 60 electrocutions and nearly 50 serious electrical shocks involving electrical hazards in and around swimming pools.

Here are a few simple steps to summer safety at the pool:

- ▶ All outdoor receptacles should be covered to keep them dry.
- ▶ Use a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) for electrical devices used outdoors to help prevent electrocutions and electric shock injuries. Portable GFCIs require no tools to install and are available at prices ranging from \$12 to \$30.
- ▶ Make sure all electrical equipment used for swimming pools (even the cleaning equipment) is grounded.
- ▶ Electrical devices and cords should be kept at least 10 feet away from water sources such as pools and spas. When possible, use battery operated electrical devices outside.
- ▶ Never handle electrical devices when you are wet—either from water activities or from perspiration.
- ▶ Make sure there are no power lines over a swimming pool.
- ▶ Do not swim during a thunderstorm.
- ▶ To avoid electric shock drowning, have an electrician inspect and upgrade your pool, spa or hot tub in accordance with applicable local codes and the National Electrical Code® (NEC).

Source: Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI)

Victory Electric Bill Payment Options



Pay your bill online at 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...

CHRISTINE ALAM, PAULO CAMPOS, JOSHUA RILEY, STEVE RIEGEL, DEREK SEACAT, SHIRLEY TERRELL and CESAR VETA.

Come by Victory Electric's office to get your free compact fluorescent light bulb (CFL). Every month Victory Electric will randomly choose members for free CFL light bulbs. Congratulations winners!



Efficiency Tip of the Month



Routinely cleaning your air conditioner's filter can lower your energy consumption by between 5 and 15 percent. Replace as needed or as recommended by the manufacturer.

Office Closed for Fourth of July



Victory Electric's office will close Tuesday, July 4. We wish you have a safe and happy Fourth of July!

Overhead vs. Underground Wires

High winds mixed with precipitation can cause tree limbs to fall on overhead power lines, triggering outages. You might remember a few years back when major ice storms in southwest Kansas knocked out power twice within a couple months. Although Victory Electric linemen are on call around the clock and respond quickly to problems, some folks wonder why power lines are kept in harms way.

There are two ways electricity can be delivered: through overhead or underground power lines. Underground lines may seem attractive during storms because the lines are not exposed to extreme weather, but the technology doesn't always make sense for co-ops focused on affordability and reliability.

Building three phase distribution underground lines would cost between two to three times more than overhead lines, and transmission lines could cost as much as six times more.

In 2005, Hi-Line Engineering, a Georgia-based utility consulting firm, compared the increased cost of underground lines against their benefits in Virginia. The results showed that underground savings did not outweigh the heavy initial cost of installation.

Most underground lines are found in subdivisions where developers request and pay for the option for aesthetic reasons or to comply with local statutes. These locations typically have a high concentration of homes which helps spread out the expense.

There are pros and cons to both forms of power distribution. For instance, underground facilities are more reliable during storms and generally require less right-of-way maintenance because there are no trees, brush, or other vegetation to clear away.

In the other hand, in underground power lines are not

easy to track down and fix. A North Carolina reliability study measured both the frequency and duration of power outages and found that the frequency of outages on underground systems was 50 percent less than for overhead systems, but the average duration of an underground outage was 58 percent longer.

"If a tree falls on an overhead line, you can normally drive down the line, see the problem, and get to work restoring power," explained Tom Lowery, manager of operations at Victory Electric. "The same holds for repairing broken insulators and cross arms. If you see it, you can fix it."

"But underground lines are tough to troubleshoot. You can't find a problem with your eyes. You have to search harder for it, using expensive equipment to track it down based on where the power flow stops. Then a line crew has to dig a hole to reach the spot before repairs can be made."

Long-term reliability is also an issue. As underground lines get older, they become less reliable and are more difficult and costly to repair. A Maryland utility found that customers served by 40-year-old overhead lines had better reliability than those by 20-year-old underground lines.

Lowery agreed with the results of the study, saying that some of the co-op's overhead lines that were installed 40 and 50 years ago are still providing reliable service to members.

Storms inevitably will continue to cause power outages, but Victory Electric works year-round to minimize and prevent outages.

"Overhead lines are inspected regularly, and our tree crews work hard to clear branches away from power lines so they hopefully won't cause problems during a storm," Lowery said. "We can't control the weather, but we try to minimize the damage it causes to our lines."

Contenedores de Granos: cosecha de forma segura

Tan gratificante como le puede ser, la agricultura es un trabajo extremadamente difícil y se encuentra entre los 10 principales profesiones más peligrosas en los Estados Unidos. En Victory Electric, la seguridad es la máxima prioridad para todos-nuestros empleados y nuestros miembros.

Nuestros agricultores trabajan duro para hacer el trabajo, a veces es fácil olvidarse de todos los pasos necesarios para practicar las operaciones de seguridad. Contenedores de granos están en espacios en silos construidos para el almacenamiento de granos y alimentos fermentados conocido como ensilaje. Estos contenedores desempeñan un papel integral en la eficiencia y rentabilidad de las operaciones en granjas y ranchos, y las normas de seguridad siempre deben ser consideradas al trabajar cerca de estas estructuras.

Ya sea que usted está comprando nuevo contenedores de silo o en áreas de remodelación que contienen la proximidad a líneas eléctricas debe ser un factor considerado.

► **Distancia de seguridad.** El Código Nacional de Seguridad Eléctrica requiere una altura mínima de 18 pies desde el punto más alto del puerto de llenado del silo a los cables de alta tensión cercanos y un distancia mínima de 55 pies de la línea de alimentación a la pared del silo de grano.

Cambios en el paisajismo y obras de drenaje puede afectar a alturas del paso de las líneas de energía, por lo que no olvide comprobar estas medidas con regularidad.

► **Llenar los depósitos de granos.** Líneas eléctricas de alta tensión no están aisladas, por lo que es importante tener en cuenta para mantener un espacio adecuado en la cuerda floja cuando se utiliza una barrena portátil, transportador o elevador para llenar su recipiente de granos.

► **Equipos de movimiento cerca de granos**

de silos. Al mover el equipo, tal como una tolva o un andamio, estar al tanto de las líneas eléctricas cercanas. Recuerde que debe mantener una distancia de 10 pies para garantizar la seguridad.

Los accidentes pueden ocurrir en una fracción de segundos, Victory Electric, le recuerda utilizar siempre trabajar con cuidado cerca de líneas eléctricas. Si usted está considerando un plan para un nuevo silo o reconstrucción de sitio de un contenedor existente, póngase en contacto con nuestra oficina al 620-227-2139 y permitanos asistirlo ayudándole en el mantenimiento de un ambiente seguro para usted y su familia.



Visite Sitio Web y Únase a Nosotros en Facebook

Visite nuestro sitio web www.victoryelectric.net. En nuestro sitio Web, usted encontrará un calendario de eventos, con frecuencia pregunta, pago de factura y energía calculadora sólo por nombrar algunas herramientas!

También puede ser una fan de Victory Electric en Facebook buscando Victory Electric Cooperativa Assn, Inc. Consulte nuestra página en Facebook para actualizaciones, información de interrupción y consejos de eficiencia de energía. Facebook es una excelente forma de mantenerse en contacto con nuestros miembros.





COOPERATIVE Energy Explorers

4th of July Word Search

Practice safety this 4th of July and always have an adult supervise your firework festivities. Do not handle sparklers of any kind if you are under the age of 12.

For a fun way to celebrate our independence, use the word bank to find the 4th of July-related words in the puzzle below.

AMERICA
CELEBRATION
FIREWORKS
RED

STARS
STRIPES
FLAG
FREEDOM

WHITE
BLUE
INDEPENDENCE
PICNIC

