

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

P.O. Box 1335, 3230 N. 14th Ave.
Dodge City, KS 67801
620-227-2139
www.victoryelectric.net

THE VICTORY ELECTRIC CO-OP

electronews



The Victory Electric Co-op Assn., Inc.

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FROM THE CEO

Join Fellow Co-op Members at the 2016 Annual Meeting



Shane Laws

It's that time of year again; Victory Electric is gearing up for the 2016 annual meeting, which will be held April 12, 2016, at the Western State Bank Expo Center

starting at 5 p.m. A steak meal will be served to those attending.

The annual meeting is a special time for co-op members to gather, share experiences, hear from co-op leadership and, perhaps most importantly, vote to elect your new board members.

Victory Electric employees work hard to host this fun event, and we encourage you to attend and exercise some of the many rights you have as a member of an electric cooperative. We know the food and prizes are the best parts of the meeting, but there is so much more to the event.

Did you know the annual meeting is an occasion to discuss and learn more about the issues affecting our community and the electric utility industry? The listing of the Lesser Prairie Chicken on the Environmental Protec-

tion Act's threatened species list; the Clean Power Plan; and the possibility of a state sales tax on electric bills are just a few of the issues our cooperative faced in 2015. This is an opportunity to learn more about the topics that impact you and talk about what we as a community can do to address our most pressing challenges and take advantage of available opportunities.

Your annual meeting is also the occasion to exercise one of the greatest benefits of being an electric co-op member: voting for the upcoming year's board of trustees.

Your electric cooperative is not owned by far-away investor. Your electric cooperative is run by a democratically-elected board that is given the privilege to serve because of your vote.

At this year's annual meeting, not only will you have a blast (and maybe win a prize!), but you will feel good knowing that you had a voice in a very important decision that impacts one of our most vital resources, electricity.

From all of your friends at Victory Electric, we hope to see you in April at the annual meeting.

Thanks, Shane

Don't forget to spring forward

Turn your clocks forward one hour on March 13 when Daylight Saving Time begins.



Nominating Committee Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the nominating committee of The Victory Electric Cooperative Assn., Inc., was held on Wednesday, February 3, 2016, 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: David Bryant, Calvin Koehn, Ronald Cohoon, Brit Hayes, Larry Bilberry, Clinton Mott, Robert Carlson and Janet Brack. Dave Snapp, attorney for Victory Electric, Kenny Wehkamp, board president, 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, Robert Carlson was elected as chairman of the nominating committee and inspector of elections. Carlson then took over the meeting and asked for nominations from districts 5, 7, 9 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 5, Gary Gillespie; District 7, Jim Ochs and Brad Ochs; District 9, Richard Lightner; and District 10, Patrick Morse.

There being no further business to come before the meeting of the nominating committee, the meeting was adjourned at 1:20 p.m.

Mark Your Calendars!

The 70th Annual Meeting of Victory Electric has been scheduled for April 12 at the Western State Bank Expo Center.

A meal will be served and everyone attending will receive a registration gift and have a chance to win some great door prizes. Stay tuned for more details on the upcoming annual meeting.

April 2016						
S	M	T	W	U	F	S
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3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

Area Third Graders Receive Dictionaries

The Cimarron Rotary Club, along with Victory Electric, partnered to purchase and donate dictionaries to third grade students across Gray County.

The goal of the dictionary project is to assist all students in becoming good writers, active readers, creative thinkers, and resourceful learners by providing them with their own personal dictionary. The dictionaries are a gift to each student to use at school and at home for years to come.

Since The Dictionary Project's implementation in 1995, more than 18 million children have received dictionaries because thousands of people recognized the same need in communities all over the United

States. The program has been adopted and refined by individuals, businesses, and civic organizations all over the country. Groups such as Rotary Clubs, Kiwanis Clubs, Elks Lodges, Granges, Lions Clubs, The Republican Federation of Women, Pioneer volunteers, parent organizations, and many more, have implemented The Dictionary Project where they live.

Victory Electric has come together with the Cimarron Rotary Club for nearly ten years to purchase every third grader in Gray County a personal dictionary.

Mrs. Lutters' class at Montezuma Elementary received dictionaries courtesy of Victory Electric and Cimarron Rotary Club.



Montezuma third graders display their dictionaries. Back Row: Mrs. Lutters, Kennedy St. George, Micaela Morales, Lenzi Keihn, Yasmin Cervantes, Serenity Caro, Sebastian Lupercio, Adonis Batman, Jesus Marquez, Heath Hamilton, Daniel Loera, and Kurt Werth. Middle Row: Kyle Stapleton, Kelton Cook, Allie Reed, Dominick Black, Gwyn Jantz, Sam Moore, and Zac Hendrickson. Front row: Reagan Meairs, Esmerelda Ortiz, and Jacob Law.

ROW Clears the Way 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 this safe distance, 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 that will out compete the tall trees growing beneath power lines.

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.

ROW clearing just makes sense.



VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

Why it Matters to You

Right of way (ROW): Refers to a strip of land underneath or around power lines that your electric cooperative maintains and clears. Trees must grow at a distance far enough from conductors where they will not cause harm to individuals, or disruption to electrical service.

15 percent of power interruptions occur when trees, shrubs or bushes grow too close to power lines. By managing vegetation, Victory Electric cooperative keeps power safe and reliable.

Rebate Qualifications Change for Electric Water Heaters and Heat Pumps

Victory Electric offers rebates for the purchase and installation of electric water heaters, air source heat pumps, and ground source heat pumps. From time to time, Victory Electric adjusts the rebate efficiency qualifications in order to complement changes in efficiency standards established by the federal government or by Energy Star.

Effective April 16, 2015, the U.S. Department of Energy issued a new rule, which increased the efficiency ratings for all types of water heaters; electric, natural gas, and propane. The efficiency rating for electric water heaters has been set at such an efficient level that Victory Electric will no longer require a minimum efficiency, or EF rating, to qualify for a rebate.

Therefore, all electric water heaters installed after April 16, 2016, shall not be required to have a minimum

EF rating in order to be eligible for a rebate. The rebate amount shall remain the same, which is \$200. On-demand (tankless) water heaters will continue to not be eligible for a rebate.

In addition, effective September 15, 2015, Energy Star increased the efficiency standard (SEER) for air source heat pumps. Energy Star is a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy. To reflect the change in efficiency standards, effective April 16, 2016, Victory Electric will require air source heat pumps to be Energy Star certified and have a minimum SEER of 14.5 in order to receive a rebate in the amount of \$200 per ton.

If you have any questions about the changes, please give us a call at 620-227-2139.

The Importance of Member Engagement

In 2012, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), the premier trade association representing approximately 900 electric cooperatives in 47 states, released a report entitled, "The Electric Cooperative Purpose — A Compass for the 21st Century." The findings of the blue ribbon task force comprised of a dozen co-op leaders from across the country were that an electric cooperative's purpose is to, "Power communities and empower members to improve the quality of their lives."

Victory Electric is a member of NRECA and firmly believes that you, our members, need to be at the heart of everything we do. We are proud of the fact that we are different from investor-owned utilities where the primary purpose is to generate profit for their stockholders. Many of those stockholders don't live in the

communities served by the utility. While Victory Electric must generate enough revenue to cover our costs, profit is not our primary motive.

We will never move to Mexico or China like you hear of so many other companies doing. We will always be local—right here and ready to serve our members.

Serving you and your neighbors is our number one priority.

As the Electric Cooperative Purpose report noted, "Our story is about ordinary people that banded

together to improve the quality of life by providing electricity to our community when no one else would do it." But that was almost 70 years ago. As we look to the future, we once again need your active participation in determining the future of our co-op.

Cooperatives enjoy the support of people from all walks of life. We operate in every type of business from agriculture, housing, finance, health care, technology, small business, food and many more. Co-ops can be found in the most rural to the most urban areas.

One thing you can absolutely count on from your locally owned electric co-op:

We will never move to Mexico or China like you hear of so many other companies doing. We will always be local—right here and ready to serve our members.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Consider purchasing rechargeable batteries — and an ENERGY STAR charger for them — which are more cost effective than disposable batteries. In the U.S. alone, more energy-efficient battery chargers could save families more than \$170 million annually.

Your Victory Payment Options

Victory Electric has six convenient payment options for our members. All members receive a standard monthly bill for your electrical use. Bills are due and payable upon receipt. We realize one method of payment does not fit every Victory Electric member's need, so we have several payment options available for your convenience.

1. Mail



Victory Electric's monthly bill comes complete with a return envelope that you can insert your check and mail back to us at **P.O. Box 1335** or **P.O. Box 1398 Dodge City, KS 67801**.

** Please note, ALL mail goes to Wichita first to be sorted, so please allow additional time if using the postal service. Payment must be received in our office on or prior to due date. We **DO NOT** use the mailing post date for the payment date.

2. Victory's office



You may pay by check, cash, or credit/debit card at our office at **3230 N. 14th Ave. in Dodge City**.

A payment kiosk is located in our lobby if you choose to pay with debit or credit. There is no need to speak with a customer service representative unless you need assistance.

Our lobby is open from **8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday - Friday**, except for select holidays. *(See website for holiday closings.)*

3. Drop boxes



Three conveniently located drop boxes make payments easy.

Two are located at Victory Electric's headquarters. One in the **south customer parking lot**; the other in the **north employee lot**.

The third is located downtown by the City of Dodge City building at **806 N. 2nd Ave.**

4. Phone



Members can call **866-999-8494** and pay over the phone with a credit/debit card or check. We recommend members use their account number when calling to ensure accuracy. Also be prepared to create a 4-digit PIN number.

For security reasons and to comply with federal Red Flag Rules, Victory Electric employees cannot accept payments over the phone. The service is available 24/7 via 866-999-8494.

5. Online bill pay



Online bill pay is also available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Click the online bill pay button at the top of Victory Electric's website or follow **victoryelectric.smarthub.coop/login.html**.

Members can also download the "Smart Hub" app from the Apple or Android marketplaces on any mobile device.

6. Auto Payment / Bank Draft



Members have the option to have payments automatically withdrawn from their **bank accounts** or **credit/debit cards**. Sign-up is available through our online bill pay system or the kiosk in Victory's office lobby. Auto payments are drawn automatically each month on the due date of the bill. There is no required action from the member.

** Members will continue to receive a monthly bill with direct payments.



Victory Electric also has budget billing for those members who prefer to pay the same amount each month. Payments are set at your monthly average, making it easy to budget. An accurate 12-month history of your use at your current residence is helpful in determining payments. If you are interested, please call Victory Electric's office at 620-227-2139 to see you if you qualify.

CFL Charlie Says "Come Get Your Free CFL!"

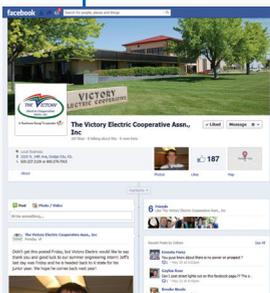


This month's lucky winners are...

LES BRADLEY, MAGDA CARRILLO, TAMMY ESCOBAR, MARIA GAMEZ, JUSTIN JARNAGIN, and RHONDA PEREZ.

Come by Victory Electric Cooperative to get your free compact fluorescent light bulb (CFL). Every month, Victory Electric gives members free CFL light bulbs. Congratulations winners!

Join Victory Online!



Visit us at www.victoryelectric.net to pay your bill and find energy calculators—just to name a few tools!

Find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/VictoryElectric](https://www.facebook.com/VictoryElectric) for

updates and energy efficiency tips.

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 Cooperative 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.

CO-OP CONNECTIONS SPOTLIGHT

LaQuinta Inn and Suites Offers Savings

Serving as the Dodge City Rodeo's official hotel, **LAQUINTA INN AND SUITES** welcomes people to the west. LaQuinta is extending discounts to the members of Victory Electric through the Co-op Connections Card program.

LaQuinta Inn is one of several local and national businesses offering discounts to Victory Electric members through the Co-op Connections Card program.

Victory Electric's commitment to members goes beyond its mission to balance rates with safety, reliability, service quality and the financial strength of the cooperative. Victory Electric offers the Co-op Connections Card free to members as a money saving tool.

"People travel all the time — might as well help them save," said **AMEE SHAH**, manager and co-owner of LaQuinta. "We've had a LaQuinta in Dodge City since 2007 and all of our visitors have been great."

"There's a lot of competition for service almost anywhere you go, so LaQuinta makes sure to offer the best customer service and cleanliness. We even allow pets," Shah said.

Shah managed a LaQuinta in Las Vegas, Nevada for 14 years before coming to Dodge City. "It was a change

but people are so friendly here in Dodge; it's refreshing."

The LaQuinta Inn and Suites of Dodge City has 77 rooms, two meeting rooms, a pool and spa, and a fitness room, and Shah and her crew are ready to serve travelers.

Every time a Co-op Connections card holder stays at LaQuinta Inn and Suites, they'll receive ten percent off of their stay.

LaQuinta Inn and Suites is located at 2400 West Wyatt Earp Blvd. and can be reached at 620-225-7373 to make reservations.

The program is entirely free to Victory Electric members with no strings attached. It's Victory Electric's way of saying thank you for being a co-op member and a way to extend savings to the whole community.

Victory Electric encourages members to take advantage of the Co-op Connections Card.



Amee Shah, manager and co-owner, of LaQuinta Inn and Suites is ready to offer savings to Dodge City guests.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

The Victory Electric Cooperative Association, Inc., is the recipient of federal financial assistance from the rural utilities Service (RUS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In accordance with federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)

The person responsible for coordinating this organization's non-discrimination compliance efforts is Shane Laws, CEO of The Victory Electric Cooperative Association, Inc. This institution is an equal oppor-

tunity employer. If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complain of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866)632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax 202690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

Calculating the Benefits of Electricity vs. Propane

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, heating and cooling account for nearly half of the energy use in a typical U.S. home, making it the largest energy expense for most households. While few people enjoy spending money on home heating fuels, consumers are willing to pay for comfort in the form of heat.

In these colder months when the temperatures dip and the need to heat your home rises, it makes sense when trying to determine the most economical heating method to evaluate the cost per unit of heat. This is referred to as a British thermal unit (Btu).

Evaluating cost per unit of heat for propane and electricity

The Btu content per gallon of propane is 91,500 Btu. The Btu content for electricity is 3,413 Btu per kilowatt-hour (kWh). It takes 26.8 kWh to equal the Btu content of one gallon of propane.

Using the U.S. Energy Information Administration's table on residential propane and electricity rates for November 2014, \$2.40 per gallon, excluding taxes, and 13.01 cents per kWh, we arrive at the following calculation:

$$26.8 \text{ kWh} \times 13.01\text{c} = \$3.49$$

If we used only Btu content to determine the best energy source for home heating, it would appear that propane is less costly than electricity if the price for propane is below \$3.49 per gallon.

Electric heat is 100 percent efficient

What may surprise most consumers is that the least efficient electric heating system delivers 100 percent efficient heat. Yes, electric resistance heat (i.e., space heaters, baseboard heating) is 100 percent energy efficient. Every single Btu in a kilowatt-hour is delivered as usable

heat. So if you are paying more than \$3.12 per gallon of propane for a 90 percent efficient propane furnace, it would be cheaper to use electric resistance heat.

Are we recommending that you use electric resistance heat as your sole heating source? No. While we are proud to offer a reliable source of electricity, we don't want to empty your wallet.

Pumping up efficiency

There are even more efficient electric heating systems called heat pumps. An air-source heat pump is at least 250 percent energy efficient. How is it so efficient?

In the heating mode, heat pumps do not use electric energy to create heat; they use it to pump heat into your home through a reversal of the refrigeration process. If you have central air conditioning, you have already experienced this process in reverse when your unit pumps heat out of your home in the summer. If you have ever stood next to the outdoor

components you know the air conditioning system is exhausting very hot air. In winter, it simply does the opposite, moving heat into your home. Air source heat pumps are equipped with some type of auxiliary heat for those

times when temperatures are near freezing or dip below. The typical back-up is in the form of electric resistance heat strips, but there is also a dual fuel propane option.

The price of propane would need to drop to \$1.25 per gallon to break even with the cost of home heating using an air source heat pump. Efficiency increases even more sharply when looking at the 350+ percent efficiencies of a geothermal (water source) heat pump. An additional advantage of geothermal systems is that they can be equipped to provide free water heating most of the year.

At Victory Electric, we believe it is our responsibility to provide members with reliable energy facts regardless of fuel type so you can get the most from your energy dollars. We are committed to helping you find the best energy solution for your budget and lifestyle and hope you will consult with your local co-op before making any big home-heating decisions.

IN COMPARISON TO OIL OR GAS FURNACES, ELECTRIC HEATING HAS MANY ADVANTAGES

Electric resistance heat

(i.e., energy-efficient space heaters, baseboard heating):



...is 100% efficient – every single Btu in a kilowatt-hour is delivered as usable heat.



...is quick to respond and can be very quiet.



...takes up less space in the house than other conventional systems (assuming space heaters are used).



...can warm select rooms, allowing you to keep your main thermostat down while ensuring continued comfort.

Electric heating systems are:



...generally less expensive to purchase and install.



...safe because there is no combustion process. There is no chance of flames starting a fire or having combustion products contaminate the air.

Opciones de Pagos de Factura

Victory Electric tiene seis opciones de pago convenientes para nuestros miembros. Todos los miembros reciben una factura mensual estándar para su uso eléctrico. Facturas son pagaderas al recibir. Nos damos cuenta que algunos método de pago no se ajusta a cada necesidad de los miembros de Victory Electric haci que tenemos varias opciones de pago disponibles para su conveniencia.

1. Correo



Factura mensual de Victory Electric viene por correo en un sobre de devolución que puede insertar su cheque y enviar por correo a **PO Box 1335, Dodge City, KS 67801**.

** Tenga en cuenta que todo el correo va a Wichita a ordenarse incluye el correo Dodge City), así que por favor, permita tiempo adicional si utiliza el servicio postal. Pago debe ser recibido en nuestra oficina en o en fecha anterior a la deuda. NO utilizamos la fecha electrónica del servicio postal para la fecha de pago.

2. Ubicación de oficina



Usted puede pagar por cheque, efectivo o tarjeta de crédito en nuestra oficina **3230 N. 14 Ave Dodge City**.

El quiosco de pago se encuentra en el vestíbulo para los miembros que deciden pagar con tarjeta de crédito/débito o cheque. No hay necesidad de hablar con un representante al cliente a menos que necesite ayuda.

El lobby está abierto de 8:00 a 5:00 de Lunes a Viernes, (excepto días festivos.)

3. Lugar de recogida



Tenemos tres convenientes buzones.

Los primeros lugares de recogida dos están en la sede de Victory Electric. El primer lugar de recogida está localizado en el estacionamiento del lado sur del estacionamiento el segundo está en el centro del lado norte del estacionamiento de empleados.

Tenemos un tercer lugar de recogida en el céntrico edificio de la ciudad de Dodge en **806 N 2nd Ave.**

4. Teléfono



Miembros pueden llamar **866-999-8494** y pagar por teléfono con una tarjeta de débito / crédito o cheque También esté preparado para crear un número PIN de 4 dígitos.

Victory, no puede tener su / tarjeta de débito de crédito o cheque información por teléfono a través de nuestro número de teléfono local: todos ustedes deben **866.999.8494** para pagar a través del teléfono.

5. Factura en línea



A pago haga clic en el botón de pago de facturas en línea en la parte superior de la página para pagar su cuenta en línea o link **victoryelectric.smarthub.coop/Login.html**.

Miembros también pueden descargar la aplicación "SmartHub" de apple o mercados de Android en cualquier dispositivo móvil

6. Pago Automático / Giro Bancario



Con estas dos opciones, los miembros seguirá recibiendo una factura mensual. Los miembros pueden inscribirse en cualquiera de estas opciones en nuestro sistema de pago en línea.

Pago directo de su cuenta bancaria -la factura mensual de electricidad se transfiere automáticamente a Victory Electric directamente desde su cuenta bancaria en la fecha de vencimiento de la factura. Este es automático cada mes y no requiere ninguna acción del miembro.



Victory Electric también tiene una facturación de presupuesto para los miembros que prefieren pagar la misma cantidad cada mes. Los pagos se fijan en un promedio mensual, lo hace fácil para un presupuesto. Una historial exacta de 12 meses de su uso en su residencia actual es útil en la determinación de los pagos. Si usted está interesado, por favor llame oficina Victory Electric 620-227-2139 a ver si usted califica.