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Electronews

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FROM THE CEO

Community Solar Gives You a Stake in Renewable Energy

Solar energy is a hot topic! The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) predicts there will be a 24% (10.8 terawatt-hour) increase in solar generation this summer compared with last summer. The number of Victory Electric member applications for residential rooftop solar systems has increased in the past few months as well. It's easy to see why interest in solar energy is high. Solar energy is abundant, affordable and environmentally friendly. The cost of photovoltaic (PV) technology continues to decrease every year, while the energy efficiency of solar technology continues to increase. Rooftop solar isn't for everyone, though. For example, if you rent a home or own a condominium, lack financing for a solar system, or your

home is unsuitable for placing solar panels because of shade, roof size or condition, then buying a rooftop solar system might not be an option.



Shane Laws

Victory Electric wants to help remove potential barriers to solar energy. The upcoming Victory Electric Community Solar program will offer eligible members the opportunity to hold a stake in solar energy without the significant initial investment, maintenance costs and ownership hassles of buying and installing a rooftop solar system.

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New Phone System

Victory Electric recently deployed a new phone system with enhanced capabilities designed to make phone communication with cooperative members the best it can be.

- We have added additional phone lines to accommodate more callers at a time, and an improved auto-attendant feature routes calls more efficiently to the right destination.
- We are now able to post a recorded message to notify incoming callers about major outages that our crews are working to resolve.
- We have integrated incoming calls with our account system so that our member service representatives can already have a member's account open when answering a call.
- A "follow me" feature allows incoming calls to ring on multiple devices so that employees can take calls even when they are away from their desk.



Pearce, Huelskamp Represent Victory in Washington, D.C.



Izaiah Pearce and Jacelyn Huelskamp were among 27 Kansas student delegates on the 2023 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour trip to D.C.

IZAIAH PEARCE and **JACELYN HUELSKAMP** were among 27 Kansas student delegates to attend the 2023 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., held June 15-22. Pearce, a senior at Bucklin High School, and Huelskamp, a senior at South Gray High School, were selected to represent Victory Electric for the opportunity to experience the country's history and government firsthand.

While exploring Washington, D.C., students learned more about America's electric cooperatives and developed valuable leadership skills. Victory Electric selected Pearce and Huelskamp to join 1,531 students from 44 states after they submitted an application, résumé and video, then completed an interview.

For Huelskamp, attending the youth tour as a representative of her cooperative was an inspirational experience. "So many things on this trip

were inspiring. This is truly a trip of a lifetime. Each day, I learned something new and was left in awe," she said.

Pearce also enjoyed the experience, saying, "One thing on this trip that inspired me was learning about how the electric cooperatives have always played a role in rural communities since they began. It also interested me at how well they work together and not against each other. It makes life in rural communities better and easier."

The 2023 Youth Tour began in Topeka with a get-acquainted dinner for the students, followed by a night tour of the Kansas State Capitol led by State Treasurer Steven Johnson and Kansas Rep. Kyle Hoffman, both alumni of the Kansas electric cooperative youth programs. Before departing for Washington, D.C., students visited with linemen at FreeState Electric Cooperative

My D.C. Youth Tour Experience

IZAIAH PEARCE BUCKLIN HIGH SCHOOL

My trip to Washington, D.C., was a wonderful experience. I don't travel much, so getting to go to D.C. was truly a blessing. My favorite place we went was Fort McHenry. I am very big into history and getting to see where a very important battle took place was very interesting. We also got to reenact raising the flag after the American forces won the Battle of Baltimore.

I also enjoyed watching the Changing of the Guard at Arlington National Cemetery. Seeing how much discipline

those guards had was captivating. Every step they took was timed perfectly and together. One other memory I will never forget is the Holocaust Memorial Museum. Seeing the museum had a completely different impact than learning about it in the classroom.

This trip has changed me forever and I will never forget it. I am very thankful for my electric co-op sponsoring it and choosing me to go.

JACELYN HUELSKAMP SOUTH GRAY HIGH SCHOOL

Seeing the exhibits in the Holocaust Memorial Museum as well as all of the memorials in D.C. was so eye-opening. Hearing about the many internships and job opportunities that this city has also had a big impact on me, allowing me to imagine myself having a job here someday.

Going into the U.S. Capitol and the White House was just such a cool experience. So many memories were made on this trip. Some of my favorites were with my roommate, Brinlie, who was one of the great friends I made in D.C. We planned out how to go to four or five Smithsonian Museums in under three hours.



Victory Electric sponsored Izaiah Pearce (left) and Jacelyn Huelskamp. Here they pose in front of the Capitol.

RIGHT: Jacelyn Huelskamp (right) poses in front of the Jefferson Memorial.



FAR RIGHT: Izaiah Pearce (right) proudly displays his collection of pins. Exchanging Kansas pins with as many states as possible allows delegates to meet peers all across the U.S.



and learned about the co-op's commitment to safety, viewed linemen safety gear and had the opportunity to ride in a bucket truck.

The seven-day trip to D.C. included a tour of the U.S. Capitol, the White House, the Smithsonian museums, the Holocaust Memorial Museum, Arlington National Cemetery and Mount Vernon. The students helped raise the garrison flag at Fort McHenry, and they sang "Take Me Out to the Ballgame" alongside Screech the mascot of the Washington Nationals during the seventh inning stretch of a Major League Baseball game. Students experienced an elevator ride to the top of the Washington Monument, a dinner cruise on the Potomac and a driving simulation at the Law Enforcement Museum. They also enjoyed a performance at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, a visit to the National Aquarium and an interactive language experience at the Planet Word Museum.

“So many things on this trip were inspiring. This is truly a trip of a lifetime. Each day, I learned something new and was left in awe.”

JACELYN HUELSKAMP

Kansas delegates joined youth from other states to attend a day of inspirational programming and speakers at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) National Youth Day on June 17. The Kansas student delegates witnessed government in action by engaging with United States Sens. Jerry Moran and Roger Marshall. The Kansas legislators answered questions from the students about the farm bill, crop insurance, labor shortages, the impact of a flat tax and how students can succeed in future internships.



FAR LEFT: Jacelyn Huelskamp (second from left) snaps a selfie with friends during a Washington Nationals baseball game.

LEFT: Izaiah Pearce (left) poses with Screech, the Nationals' mascot, during the game.

Therapy Clinic Is a ‘Perfect Fit’ for CoBank Sharing Success Grant

The Victory Electric Cooperative, Assn., Inc., is pleased to announce that the **PERFECT FIT FOUNDATION OF SWK** is the recipient of the 2023 CoBank Sharing Success Grant. The annual grant opportunity is made possible by Victory Electric’s Board of Trustees in partnership with CoBank, whose \$5 million Sharing Success fund matches customer donations to charities across rural America.

The Perfect Fit Foundation of SWK operates the Perfect Fit Therapy Clinic. The behavioral health facility provides Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) therapy to children with autism. The organization aims to increase acceptance of individuals with special needs throughout southwest Kansas and to provide the services necessary for them to live fulfilling lives and be productive members of their communities. Perfect Fit is in the process of acquiring a larger facility this year and will use the \$20,000 grant to construct an outdoor playground with inclusive equipment for the children the clinic serves.

“With this additional facility we will create an outdoor space for playground equipment that allows our students the opportunity to work on gross and fine motor skills in an inclusive and sensory-friendly playground during their therapy sessions,” said Trista Ferguson, clinic director and autism specialist.

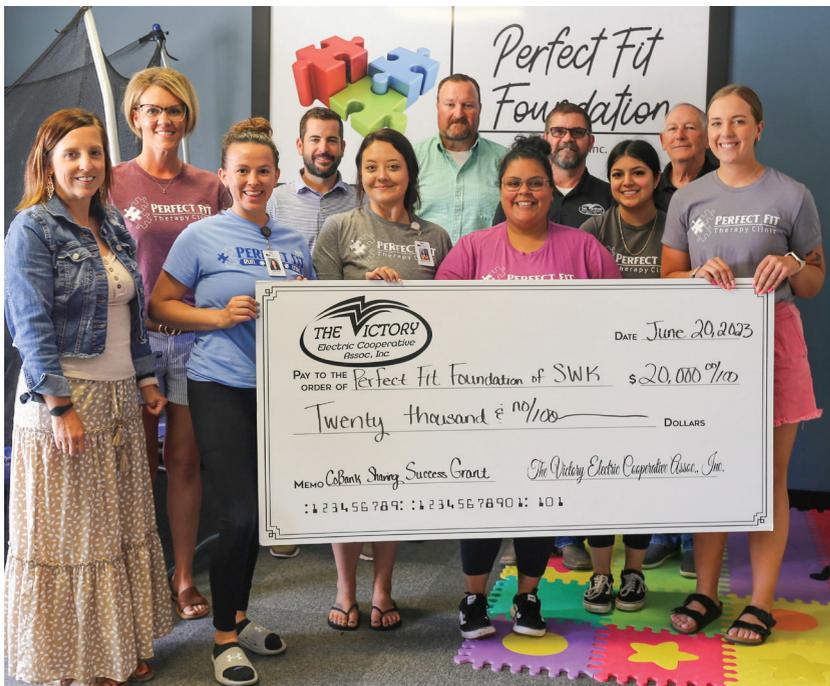
The Perfect Fit Therapy Clinic was formed to help address the lack of therapy services and providers in the area. “We are the first and only facility that offers clinical-based ABA therapy in southwest Kansas,” Ferguson said.

The clinic currently serves 200 hours per week of in-person therapy and telehealth services throughout southwest Kansas. Perfect Fit has one Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA), two autism specialists and six registered behavior technicians on staff. Four staff members are receiving additional professional education and training to receive BCBA or Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst (BCaBA) certifications as well.

Since 2012, Victory Electric has awarded \$165,000 in Sharing Success grants to nonprofit organizations in its service area. The matching grant program, capped at \$20,000 per year, is designed to celebrate the vital role that cooperatives play in individual communities across the country.

“Thanks to the generosity of Victory Electric’s board of trustees and CoBank, the Sharing Success Grant enables us to give back to the communities we serve,” said Shane Laws, CEO of Victory Electric. “We urge all eligible nonprofits to take advantage of Sharing Success, and together we can make a meaningful impact in rural Kansas.”

To learn more about the Sharing Success grant, visit www.victoryelectric.net/cobank-sharing-success-grant or email askcommunications@victoryelectric.net.



Victory Electric staff presented the 2023 CoBank Sharing Success Grant to the Perfect Fit Foundation of SWK in Dodge City, Kansas.

Applications for the 2024 grant opportunity will open next spring.

Back-to-School Travel Safety

As summer comes to a close and children start heading back to school, family life can get pretty hectic. It's important to remember — and share with your children — some key tips that will help keep them safe throughout the school year.

Whether children walk, ride their bicycle or take the bus to school, it is extremely important that they take proper safety precautions. Here are some tips from the National Safety Council to make sure your child safely travels to school:

Walkers

- ▶ Review your family's walking safety rules and practice walking to school with your child.
- ▶ Walk on the sidewalk if one is available. When on a street with no sidewalk, walk facing the traffic.
- ▶ Before you cross the street, stop and look left, right and left again to see if cars are coming.
- ▶ Make eye contact with drivers before crossing and always cross streets at crosswalks or intersections.
- ▶ Stay alert and avoid distracted walking.

Bike Riders

- ▶ Teach your child the rules of the road and practice riding the bike route to school with your child.
- ▶ Ride on the right side of the road with traffic and in a single file.
- ▶ Come to a complete stop before crossing the street, then walk bikes across the street.
- ▶ Stay alert and avoid distracted riding.

- ▶ Make sure your child always wears a properly fitted helmet and bright clothing.

Bus Riders

- ▶ Teach your children school bus safety rules and practice with them.
- ▶ Go to the bus stop with your child to teach them the proper way to get on and off the bus.
- ▶ Teach your children to stand 6 feet (or three giant steps) away from the curb.
- ▶ If your child must cross the street in front of the bus, teach him or her to walk on the side of the road until they are 10 feet ahead of the bus. Your child and the bus driver should always be able to see each other.

Driving Your Child to School

- ▶ Stay alert and avoid distracted driving.
- ▶ Obey school zone speed limits and follow your school's drop-off procedure.
- ▶ Make eye contact with children who are crossing the street.
- ▶ Never pass a bus loading or unloading children. You must stop your car and wait until the red lights stop flashing, the extended stop-arm is withdrawn and the bus begins moving before you can start driving again, regardless of which side of the road you are traveling on.
- ▶ The area 10 feet around a school bus is the most dangerous for children. Stop far enough back to allow them to safely enter and exit the bus.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month

Did you know ceiling fans can make a room feel 4 degrees cooler? To save energy through ceiling fan use, remember to raise your thermostat a few degrees while fans are turned on. In the summer, operate ceiling fans in a counter-clockwise direction. Reverse the direction to clockwise during winter months and set fans on a low speed so warm air can circulate from the ceiling to the lower levels of the room. Remember, ceiling fans cool people, not spaces. Be sure to turn them off when you leave the room. **SOURCE: WWW.ENERGY.GOV**



CAMPUS SAFETY TIPS

Every College Student
Should Know

Relay these safety tips to your young adults who are campus bound for the first time or returning for another year.

- 1 Do not overload electrical outlets, power strips or extension cords. Use power strips with an overcurrent protector.
- 2 Be aware of your surroundings, especially when listening to music or texting.
- 3 Unplug small appliances when not in use and all appliances when away for extended periods.
- 4 Never walk alone at night.
- 5 Avoid using generic charging cubes or cords. They could overheat, shock or burn you.
- 6 Locate the emergency call buttons or phones across campus in case of an emergency.
- 7 Do not put your cellphone on or under your pillow or bedding. It could overheat or catch fire.



ANALYZE YOUR ENERGY USAGE *with SmartHub*

Have you ever been surprised to open your monthly electric bill and see much higher numbers than you anticipated? You may already know you can use Victory Electric's SmartHub web page or mobile app to make a payment, view current and previous bills, sign up for email or text notifications and report an outage. SmartHub also contains a suite of useful digital tools that give you the power to track — and take control of — your energy usage. Analyzing this data regularly helps you make informed decisions and prevent surprises on your bill.

SmartHub's usage management tools allow you to view your monthly, daily or hourly energy usage and look for trends, which helps you find ways to cut back on how much electricity you use. Create a monthly budget and track it throughout the month to avoid unexpectedly high utility bills, or set a point or range in time to compare differences in usage. Log in to your account at www.victoryelectric.smarthub.coop to get started, and learn more about the available tools below.

Usage Explorer

Usage Explorer gives you a detailed look at your past and current usage, all in one place. View your monthly, daily and hourly usage and see how weather trends affect it. Select a date range and see graphs for your current bill, previous bill, the year to date or your past 13 bills.

Usage Comparison

The Usage Comparison tool lets you select any two bills and compare the usage history side by side. View the differences between this month and the same month last year, or select other combinations to see how your bill varies each month.

Average Usage

The Average Usage tool shows you what your typical or average usage is for a selected time period. For example, see your average usage for each day of the week (such as Tuesdays) over an entire year. Or see your typical usage in each hour of the day over the course of two weeks. This tool helps you discover what times of day you use the most energy and where making changes to your habits will make the biggest difference.

Usage Planning

The Usage Planning Tool lets you create markers to help you keep track of differences in your energy usage. For example, set a point-in-time marker if you install a new energy-efficient air conditioner, water heater or large appliance. Use a range marker to call attention to energy usage during a particular date range you set, such as when you go on vacation, guests come to stay for the holidays or your college student returns home for the summer.

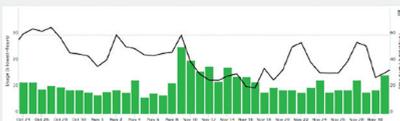
Budget Gauge

The Budget Gauge tool allows you to set and track a monthly target. By setting a usage budget, you can quickly track how you are trending toward that goal.

Graphs showing the usage for yesterday, this week, last week, this year, last year as well as the current and previous billing period can also be viewed on the SmartHub mobile app. To use all the available usage management tools or to download your usage history in a spreadsheet, please log in to SmartHub on a computer at www.victoryelectric.smarthub.coop. To learn more or sign up for a free SmartHub account, visit www.victoryelectric.net/smarthub.

Analyze Your Usage
Plan and Save
Explore Usage Management

Usage Explorer



Usage Explorer gives you a detailed look at your past and current usage, all in one place.

View your usage and weather trends by month, or if available by day or hour.

Use the Usage Explorer tool

Usage Comparison

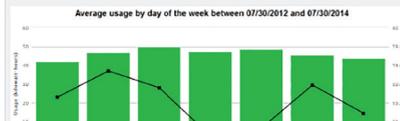


Usage Comparison lets you compare two bills worth of usage history side by side.

View the differences between this month last year, or other combinations to see how your bill varies each month.

Use the Usage Comparison tool

Average Usage



Average Usage shows you what your typical or average usage is for your selected time period.

For example, see your average usage on each day of the week (such as Tuesdays), over the course of a year. Or see your typical usage in each hour of the day over the course of 2 weeks. Discover when you can save the most on your utility bill.

Use the Average Usage tool

Community Solar Gives You a Stake in Renewable Energy Continued from page 12A ▶

As part of its electric generation portfolio, Sunflower Electric Power Corporation — Victory Electric's generation and transmission provider — generates solar energy at its Johnson Corner Solar farm in Stanton County, Kansas, near Johnson City. The 20-megawatt facility was co-developed with the National Renewables Cooperative Organization (NRCO), and came online in April 2020. Sunflower transmits wholesale energy from the solar facility to Victory Electric through the electric grid. Victory then delivers power to members through its electric distribution system.

Residential members of Victory Electric will soon have the ability to subscribe to the new Community Solar project by purchasing shares. One share is equivalent to 125 kilowatt-hours, or two solar panels. Community Solar participation costs will be in addition to members' monthly energy bills.

Based on the amount of power generated by Johnson Corner Solar farm and the market revenues from the power sold into the energy market, a Community Solar subscribers' monthly electric bills will reflect the performance of their subscribed number of solar shares.

Although we project members will save money under the Community Solar program, we can't guarantee savings,

as the solar adjustment is based on the revenues the solar facility receives in the Southwest Power Pool Integrated Market. When market prices are high, participants may save money. When market prices are low, participants may pay a premium.

Sunflower will allocate a limited number of Community Solar shares to Victory Electric, and the number of shares each member may subscribe to will be based on their average energy usage for the past 12 months. Shares will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Rural electric cooperatives like Victory Electric are owned by our members, and our leadership team and trustees strive to respond to energy trends and our members' interests. Victory is pleased to provide members this new option for convenient, economic solar participation.

More details about the Victory Electric Community Solar program and how to sign up will be available soon in *Kansas Country Living* magazine and on Victory's website (www.victoryelectric.net), Facebook (www.facebook.com/VictoryElectric) and Instagram (www.instagram.com/victoryelectric2022) pages.

THANKS, SHANE

Victory Sponsors 4-H Shirts for Three Fairs

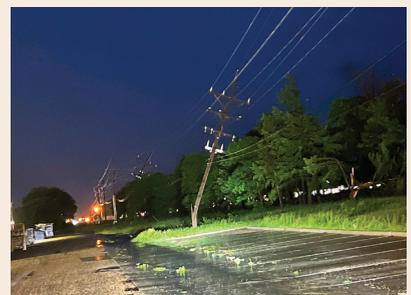
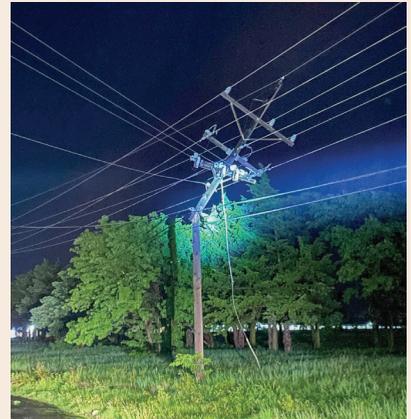
Victory Electric designed and donated T-shirts for 4-H members to wear during the **HODGEMAN COUNTY FAIR**, July 10-15 in Jetmore; the **GRAY COUNTY FAIR**, July 17-20 in Cimarron; and the **FORD COUNTY FAIR**, July 20-24 in Dodge City. Victory appreciates all the 4-H youth, parents, leaders and extension agents in our service area. We hope you had a great fair!



Working on the Line

Summer Storm Damage

Severe thunderstorms and damaging winds blew into Dodge City and surrounding areas the evening of June 17, with some gusts of over 80 miles per hour reported. Victory Electric crews repaired poles and downed power lines to restore power after the storm caused numerous outages in Ford and Gray counties.



Benefits of Community Solar

Participating in a Community Solar program has several advantages over installing rooftop solar:

- ▶ If you rent or have homeowner agreements that prevent the installation of rooftop solar, participating in Community Solar may be an option. If your home is too shaded or your roof isn't strong enough to support a solar array, you can still participate. If you can't afford the often steep upfront investment in a solar array, you may be able to afford participation in a Community Solar program.
- ▶ The Johnson Corner Solar project also has tracking motors that adjust the angle of the solar panels throughout the day to maintain maximum exposure to the sun. This provides maximum utilization of solar irradiance with no impacts from shading from trees or adjacent buildings.
- ▶ Johnson Corner Solar is a 20 MW facility and about 2,000 times bigger than a typical residential rooftop solar installation. The utility-scale size of Johnson Corner Solar provides a significantly lower price for solar energy compared to solar energy from rooftop installations because Community Solar systems have the advantage of economies of scale, meaning that costs decrease as the size of the system increases. The costs can also be spread out among many participants, which makes a portion of a large solar system less expensive than a comparable residential rooftop system.
- ▶ Participating in Community Solar allows subscribers to avoid the upfront cost, hassle and maintenance of rooftop solar. Victory Electric will handle all the logistics, details and maintenance.
- ▶ If a subscriber moves to a new house within Victory Electric's service territory, their subscription may transfer to their new service. The subscription may need to be adjusted based upon the past year's usage of their new home.

SHARE IN THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF SOLAR POWER WITHOUT THE COST OF INSTALLING ROOFTOP PANELS

COMING SOON!

Solar Made Easy!

Victory Electric Cooperative Assn., Inc. COMMUNITY SOLAR

- ☀ AN AFFORDABLE ALTERNATIVE TO OWNING AND MAINTAINING A SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEM
- ☀ NO ROOF DAMAGE
- ☀ NO LARGE, UPFRONT INVESTMENT
- ☀ SIMPLE SIGN-UP AND BILLING
- ☀ AVAILABLE TO OWNERS AND RENTERS
- ☀ EASY WAY TO SUPPORT RENEWABLE ENERGY

1. Victory Electric's power supplier, Sunflower Electric Power Corporation, generates solar energy at its Johnson Corner Solar facility in Stanton County, Kansas.

2. Residential members can choose to subscribe to Victory Electric's Community Solar Program at a cost of \$5/share per month. 1 share = 125 kWh or 2 solar panels

3. On your electric bill, every month you will receive a solar adjustment for your solar shares, which is based on the revenues derived from the power sold into the energy market.

Shares are limited to no more than the average of your previous 12-month electric use. If your 12-month average = 1,000 kWh, then a max of 8 shares is allowed.

CONTACT US TO LEARN MORE:

VICTORYELECTRIC.NET

620.227.2139 OR 800.279.7915