

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



THE VICTORY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ASSN., INC.

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FROM THE CEO

Resolving to Put the Co-op's Needs First

As we hang a 2024 calendar on the wall or open up a new desk planner, many of us take time to reflect on the successes and challenges of the previous year. It's also a good time to make goals and resolutions for the year ahead.

Guiding Victory Electric's goal planning for 2024 is our mission: "To provide safe, reliable service at a competitive rate, provide economic development opportunities and services for our members, and ensure the financial stability of the cooperative through the use of prudent business practices and the latest technology."

Victory Electric's Board of Trustees and leadership team continuously assess the cooperative and plan for the future. During monthly board meetings, the member-elected trustees review financial reports and make strategic decisions in accordance with their fiduciary duty to protect the assets of the electric cooperative. Independent

audits of the cooperative's finances are conducted annually as well.

Like most Kansas rural electric cooperatives, Victory Electric is a self-regulated utility. This does not mean the cooperative is unregulated. It means that instead of the Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC), the board of trustees fulfills the regulatory role of setting reasonable, equitable rates and establishing fair electric service policies for the cooperative.

In addition to the valuable experience that trustees bring to the board, they receive specialized training to help them make informed decisions as well as gain a deeper understanding of the electric utility industry, the cooperative business model and local economic development efforts. They resolve to put the cooperative's needs first, use due diligence to ensure that



Shane Laws

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Victory Electric
COMMUNITY
SOLAR

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO SIGN UP, SCAN HERE!

Beginner's Guide to the Electric Grid

It powers our homes, offices, hospitals and schools. We depend on it to keep us warm in the winter (and cool in the summer), charge our phones and binge our favorite TV shows. If the power goes out, even briefly, our lives can be disrupted.

The system that delivers your electricity is often described as the most complex machine in the world, and it's known as the electric grid.

What makes it so complex? We all use different amounts of electricity throughout the day, so the supply and demand for electricity is constantly changing. For example, we typically use more electricity in the mornings when we're starting our day, and in the evenings when we're cooking dinner and using appliances. Severe weather and other factors also impact how much electricity we need.

The challenge for electric providers is to plan for, produce and purchase enough electricity so it's available exactly when we need it. Too much or too little electricity

in one place can cause problems. So, to make sure the whole system stays balanced, the electric grid must adjust in real time to changes and unforeseen events.

At its core, the electric grid is a network of power lines, transformers, substations and other infrastructure that spans the entire country. But it's not just a singular system. It's divided into three major interconnected grids: the Eastern Interconnection, the Western Interconnection and the Electric Reliability Council of Texas. These grids operate independently but are linked to allow electricity to be transferred between regions when backup support is required.

Within the three regions, seven balancing authorities known as independent system operators (ISOs) or regional transmission organizations (RTOs) monitor the grid, signaling to power plants when more electricity is needed to maintain a balanced electrical flow. ISOs and RTOs are like traffic controllers for electricity.

THE JOURNEY OF ELECTRICITY BEGINS AT POWER PLANTS

Power plants can be thought of as factories that make electricity using various energy sources, like natural gas, solar, wind and nuclear energy. Across the U.S., more than 11,000 power plants deliver electricity to the grid.

Victory Electric receives power from our generation and transmission (G&T) co-op, Sunflower Electric Power Corporation. We work closely with Sunflower Electric to provide electricity at the lowest cost possible. Being part of a G&T benefits members like you by placing ownership and control in the hands of your co-op, prioritizing affordability and reliability, supporting local economic development and fostering a sense of community.

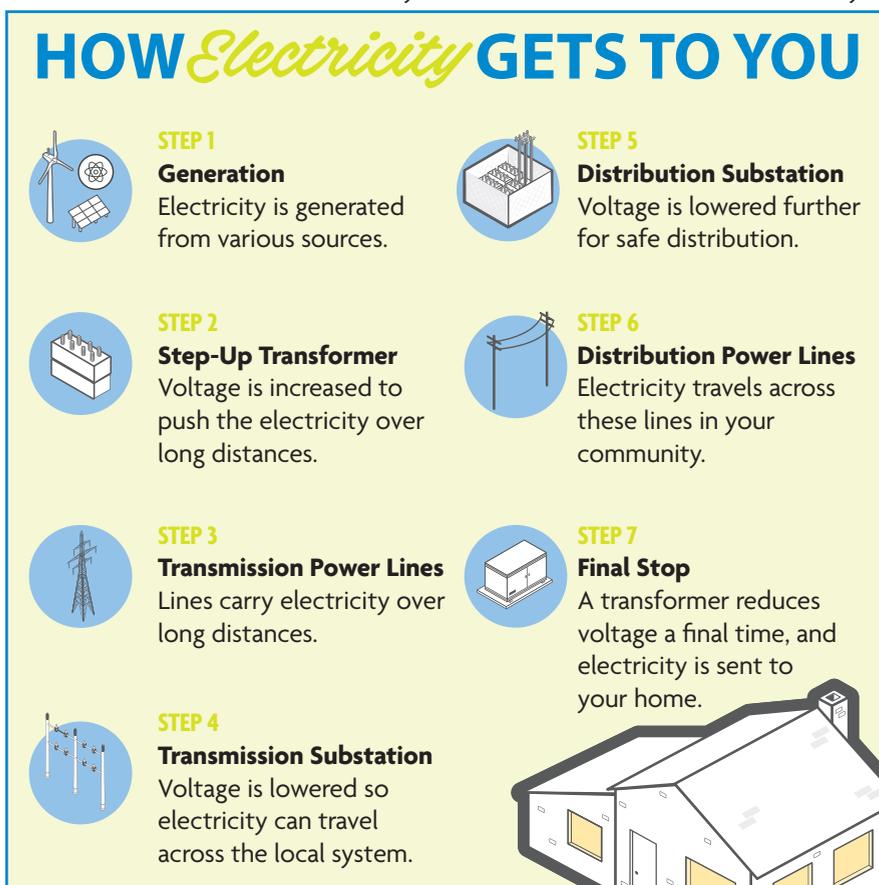
High-voltage transmission lines act as the highways for electricity, transporting power over long distances. These lines are supported by massive towers and travel through vast landscapes, connecting power plants to electric substations.

Substations adjust the voltage of electricity and play a crucial role in managing power flow and ensuring that electricity is safe for use in homes and businesses.

Once the electricity is reduced to the proper voltage, it travels through distribution power lines, like the ones you typically see on the side of the road. Distribution lines carry electricity from substations to homes, schools and businesses. Distribution transformers, which look like metal buckets on the tops of power poles or large green boxes on the ground, further reduce the voltage to levels suitable for household appliances and electronic devices.

After traveling through transformers, electricity reaches you — to power everyday life.

We're proud to be your local, trusted energy provider. From the time it's created to the time it's used, electricity travels great distances to be available at the flip of a switch. That's what makes the electric grid our nation's most complex machine — and one of our nation's greatest achievements.



Scholarship Program Celebrates Community Spirit

Victory Electric encourages high school seniors and current college students who are passionate about their communities to apply for one of 10 scholarships for \$1,000. Victory Electric proudly sponsors the annual Lightner Community Spirit Scholarship program to recognize area scholars who have excelled academically while demonstrating a commitment to bettering their communities.

The name of the scholarship honors the Lightner family of Plymell, Kansas, who provided many years of dedicated service to Victory Electric. George Lightner served Victory Electric's Board of Trustees for 31 years, and his son, Richard, served in that role for 36 years. Both strongly supported the cooperative's community and youth programs.

"As a not-for-profit cooperative, one of our guiding principles is 'Commitment to Community,' and I can't think of a better way than honoring students with scholarships to give back to our local communities," said Shane Laws, Victory Electric CEO.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for the scholarship, applicants must be a dependent of an active cooperative member in good standing, have and maintain a 3.0 GPA on a 4.0-point scale, and be a current full-time student or entering an accredited trade school, college or university in fall 2024. Students may win only once, and the scholarship award is not renewable. Previ-

ous applicants are encouraged to apply again if they were not selected as a Lightner Community Spirit Scholarship winner.

HOW TO APPLY

Applicants need to submit the following:

- ▶ Completed application form, including the Victory Electric account number of the applicant's parent or guardian;
- ▶ Biographical statement introducing the applicant, educational goals, financial need and other information deemed important;
- ▶ Essay explaining how Victory Electric demonstrates the principle of Commitment to Community and sharing examples of how the applicant makes his or her community better;
- ▶ Headshot, including a copyright release if the photo was taken by a professional photographer;
- ▶ Résumé listing school activities, clubs, awards, work experience and volunteer work; and
- ▶ Official transcript sent directly to Victory Electric via mail or email by a counselor or other school official.

Please contact us at askcommunications@victoryelectric.net if you have any questions. Visit WWW.VICTORYELECTRIC.NET/LIGHTNER-COMMUNITY-SPIRIT-SCHOLARSHIP for more information and to apply.

Applications will be accepted beginning Jan. 15, 2024, and the **DEADLINE TO APPLY IS FEB. 29.**

BE ON THE LOOKOUT

LIGHTNER COMMUNITY SPIRIT SCHOLARSHIP

SCAN TO APPLY

Applications are open from **January 15—February 29**

10 \$1,000 scholarships available!

▶ High school seniors or current students at a university, college or technical school who are dependents of a Victory Electric member, have a 3.0 GPA and have demonstrated a commitment to their community are encouraged to apply.

To apply, scan or visit—www.victoryelectric.net/lightner-community-spirit-scholarship.

Visitors Gather for Parade of Lights and Chili Cook-Off

Dodge City's Annual Christmas Parade of Lights and Chili Cook-Off kicked off the holiday season on Nov. 27 at the Boot Hill Museum. Seventeen teams contributed 26 entries in the chili contest. A panel of judges awarded **FORD COUNTY EMS** first place for serving the tastiest chili; **FORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE** followed in second place, and **MATT BAILEY** placed third.

After visitors sampled the delicious chili entries and voted for their own favorites, the People's Choice awards went to **CARGILL**, first place; **ARROWHEAD WEST**, second place; and

FORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE, third place. Boot Hill Museum offered homemade cinnamon rolls to all attendees.

Santa was in town to visit with local children at the Convention and Visitors Bureau's information center. Hundreds of visitors also attended the snowball drop, tree lighting and a performance by the Dodge City High School madrigals before watching the parade, which featured marching bands and floats decorated for the season with colorful lights. Thank you to all of the attendees and volunteers who made this year's festivities a success!



The Ford County EMS placed first in the Judges' Choice chili contest.



Second place in Judges' Choice went to the Ford County Sheriff's Office.



Chili makers representing the Dodge City Fire Department serve visitors at Boot Hill Museum. Participants sampled 26 chili entries from 17 teams at the popular holiday event Nov. 27.



Third place in Judges' Choice went to Matt Bailey.



The Dodge City Fire Department dropped a blizzard of 1,500 ping pong balls during the Building Solutions Snowball Drop event. Eighty of the balls were marked, and lucky members of the crowd could redeem their winning "snowballs" for gift certificates from local businesses.



A Victory Electric bucket truck was one of 17 brightly lit entries in the 2023 Parade of Lights.



Christa Roy from Western Kansas Broadcast Center eagerly samples one of the chili entries during the cook-off.

Resolving to Put the Co-op's Needs First

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all transactions are properly conducted and reported, and make sure the co-op abides by all applicable laws and regulations.

As part of that oversight duty, the trustees recently decided to hire an independent consulting firm to conduct a cost-of-service study (COSS), a fundamental tool for evaluating and establishing utility rates. The consultants use standard methods developed by regulatory authorities to examine the costs of providing service to each rate class Victory Electric serves. Residential and commercial rate classes have unique load and service characteristics that affect costs for those classes.

The consultants will determine the cooperative's cost of service and revenue requirements for paying expenses and having adequate

margins, then provide impartial recommendations based on their findings. These guidelines will assist the board in responsibly and fairly allocating costs to each rate class and making any necessary rate or policy changes.

The purpose of undergoing the COSS is to keep the business financially strong on behalf of all members and continue to provide safe, reliable service — now and in the future. As a member-owned, not-for profit cooperative, Victory Electric aims to keep the power on while keeping members' costs as low as possible.

In 2024 and the years ahead, Victory Electric resolves to provide reliable electricity at fair rates, keep members informed and be a dependable source of power for our communities.

THANKS, SHANE

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at 800-877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call 866-632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: 202-690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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SAVE THE DATE

ANNUAL MEETING

April 9, 2024

JOIN US!

This year we will be holding our annual meeting in the Boot Hill Casino & Resort Conference Center.

A Storm Is Always Ready

ARE YOU?

When Mother Nature threatens to unleash a severe storm, be ready by having an emergency kit on hand.

Your kit should include:

- ▶ Bottles of water
- ▶ Nonperishable food
- ▶ Can opener



- ▶ Portable phone charger
- ▶ Flashlights
- ▶ Batteries

- ▶ First-aid supplies
- ▶ Hand sanitizer
- ▶ Prescriptions



- ▶ Pain reliever
- ▶ Warm clothing
- ▶ Blankets

- ▶ Battery-operated radio
- ▶ Important documents
- ▶ Books and games



- ▶ Cash money
- ▶ Baby supplies
- ▶ Pet supplies

Once your kit is assembled, check it a few times a year to make sure items have not expired and that no one has borrowed a necessary item.

Prepare for Energy Costs This Winter

Energy costs are heating up as winter weather cools down, but there are a few things you can do to make your home more energy efficient.

1 LET THE SUNSHINE IN. Use heat from the sun's rays to help warm your home during the day. Close blinds and curtains at night to provide another layer of insulation against the windows.

2 GRAB A BLANKET AND SNUGGLE UP. Turn your thermostat down to 68 degrees if your health permits. Instead of cranking up the heat and putting a strain on your furnace and energy bill, layer on your favorite sweater and get cozy.

3 ENSURE OPTIMUM AIRFLOW FOR YOUR FURNACE. Check and change the filter at least every three months, or change it every two months if you have pets or a family member has allergies. Some professionals even recommend changing your furnace filter every month.

4 DID YOU KNOW MANY CEILING FANS HAVE A SWITCH YOU CAN FLIP TO REVERSE THEIR DIRECTION? Use your ceiling fans to distribute warm air by reversing the fans so the blades turn clockwise during the winter.

5 IF AN APPLIANCE IS NOT CURRENTLY IN USE, TURN IT OFF OR UNPLUG IT. Before heading out of town, remember to unplug electronics and appliances that pull energy even when they're not in use, such as TVs, gaming consoles, electric toothbrush chargers and more.

6 BE MORE ENERGY EFFICIENT IN THE KITCHEN by using a slow cooker, microwave or air fryer, which use less power than ovens.

7 HELP LOWER THE COSTS OF ENERGY BY BETTER INSULATING YOUR HOME. Try using plastic sheeting over windows to reduce drafts, sealing space under doors with "door pillows," sealing drafty windows and weatherproofing doors.

We know this time of year can be tough on the pocketbook and want to help cooperative members reduce costs. For more tips on saving energy in the winter, visit www.victoryelectric.net/energy-resources to use Victory Electric's new **ENERGY ADVISOR** and **SMART THERMOSTAT-HEATING** tools.

Be Prepared for Winter Weather

During hazardous winter weather conditions, stay off the roads whenever possible. If you must travel, make sure your gas tank is filled and your cell phone is charged. Download the KanDrive mobile app for real-time travel updates on road closures and weather conditions. Keep the following supplies in your vehicle in case of emergency:

- ▶ Jumper cables;
- ▶ Flares or reflective triangles;
- ▶ Ice scraper, shovel and snow brush;
- ▶ Car cell phone charger;
- ▶ Blanket;
- ▶ Flashlight;
- ▶ First-aid kit;
- ▶ Tow rope;
- ▶ Boots, mittens and warm clothes;
- ▶ Water and snacks; and
- ▶ Cat litter or sand (for better tire traction).

SOURCES: WWW.WEATHER.GOV AND WWW.READY.GOV

Working on the Line

Victory Linemen Install Flagpole at City Building

On a foggy November morning, Victory Electric partnered with the City of Dodge City to place a flagpole in front of the Municipal Services Building, located east of town on Chaffin Road.

A flag was raised on the new pole as part of the renovated city building's ribbon cutting and open house Nov. 13. Victory Electric works with local government and other organizations on community projects throughout the year. We are grateful to be involved in helping improve the communities we serve!

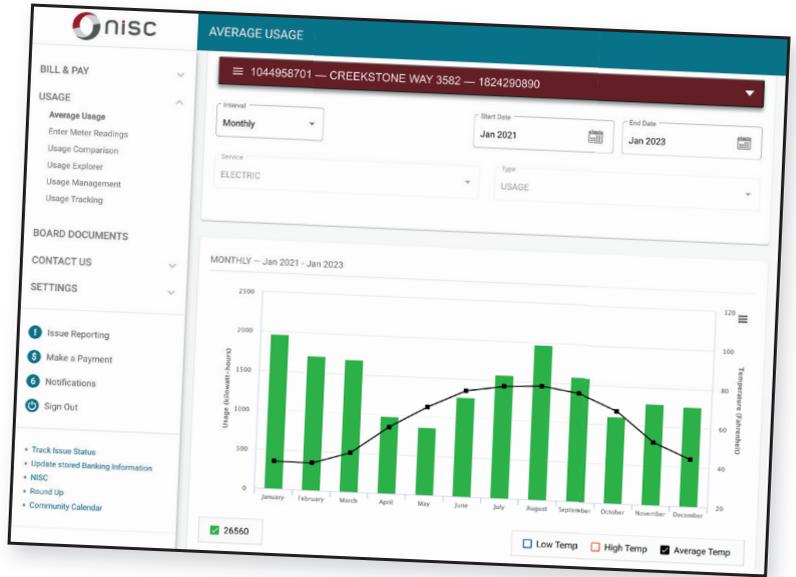


Upgrades Enhance User Experience

SmartHub is a web and mobile app that gives you secure access to your Victory Electric account to maintain your contact information, view bills, see payment history, make payments, report outages and track your electric usage. Manage your account like never before with the new, improved SmartHub. A simplified yet enhanced design is coming your way soon!



This new version of SmartHub puts your usage and payment details front and center for fast, easy access. The simpler menu structure makes navigating the site easier than ever. Learn more and sign up for a SmartHub account at WWW.VICTORYELECTRIC.NET/SMARTHUB.



This new version of SmartHub puts your usage and payment details front and center for fast, easy access.

Going through tough times? Help is available.

Application period is open until **March 29**

Scan here to apply.

The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) is a federally funded program that helps eligible households pay a portion of their home energy costs by providing a one time per year benefit.