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Electronews

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CEO MESSAGE

Communication Helps Us Serve You



Shane Laws

At Victory Electric, we constantly strive to improve our operational efficiency so we can provide the most reliable electric service possible for our

members (that's you!).

We rely on data for nearly every aspect of our operations, which is why we need your help. By making sure we have your most accurate contact information, we can continue to provide the high level of service that you expect and deserve. Accurate information enables us to improve customer service and enhance communications for reporting and repairing outages.

We occasionally need to plan power outages to update, repair or replace equipment and infrastructure. In these instances, having your updated contact information and communication preferences allows us to provide advance notification to affected members through automated phone messages, text messages or email.

Keeping us updated with your contact information also helps us when there is a question about energy use

or billing. In addition, discrepancies on your account can be taken care of promptly if Victory Electric has accurate account information.

For those long-time members, it is likely your account information hasn't been updated for some time. We recognize many members now use a cell phone as their primary phone service, and we may not have that number in our system.

I want to emphasize that in providing your contact information to Victory Electric, we will never sell your information. It is only used by Victory Electric. To update your contact information, members can call our office and speak to a member service representative or log in to your SmartHub account.

Just as Victory Electric strives to connect with our members, we also need to hear from you, too! Your feedback helps us improve service and efficiency so we can better serve you and all members of the cooperative.

We Want to Hear From You

We live in a device-driven world. Our smartphones, tablets, laptops and an assortment of other devices help us communicate and connect. Companies spend billions pushing out a steady drumbeat of messages and information,

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Serving You

Continued from page 16A ►

and we are constantly bombarded with one-way communication. But is anyone listening on the other end?

At Victory Electric, we are not only listening, we are eager to hear from you. Whether you call us, respond to a survey or social media post, send an email, or simply stop by and chat in person, we thrive on your feedback. Connecting with you helps us keep pace with our member's and our community's priorities and needs.

We conduct quarterly member satisfaction surveys via phone and email to gather feedback that helps us to plan for new initiatives and technical upgrades on existing cooperative programs and services. Our planning is led by local members just like you who understand the needs of the community and are looking out for the long-term interests of the larger community.

We also have a feedback form on our website as an additional way of obtaining member feedback. Members can access this online form 24/7/365 to submit comments.

We are in the midst of significant changes in the energy sector, and various technological advances and consumer needs impact our long-term planning. This is why it's so important we hear from you and other community members as we plot our course for the future.

As a local business that supports this community, Victory Electric works to continually learn from our members about their priorities so we can better serve you – because your electric co-op was built by the community, for the community. But we can only improve, adapt and effectively plan for the future if we have two-way communication. We look forward to connecting with you.

Thanks, Shane

Victory Electric Receives National Communications Award

Every year, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) Spotlight on Excellence Awards program recognizes outstanding work produced by electric cooperative communicators from across the country.

This year, Jerri Whitley, vice president of communications, earned a Spotlight on Excellence award for her creation of "Powering Your Future: 2018 Victory Electric Annual Report" in the Best Annual Report category.

The goal of a cooperative annual report is to present a comprehensive breakdown of the cooperative's activities throughout the preceding year. The report is intended to give the members information about the cooperative's activities, programs and financial performance.

NRECA and the Council of Rural Electric Communicators created the Spotlight on Excellence awards program in 1987 to recognize the best communication and marketing efforts by electric cooperative communicators. Entrants compete nationally with cooperatives of similar sizes in 16 award categories recognizing the best in writing and publications, graphic design, photography, and digital media. More than 670 entries were submitted for the program's 32nd year.

"The Spotlight on Excellence Award winners' leadership in communications and their valuable ideas and insights help create a model



Jerri Whitley, vice president of communications, displays the Spotlight on Excellence award for Victory Electric's 2018 annual report.

for communications and marketing professionals and practitioners across the cooperative network," said Scott Peterson, NRECA senior vice president of communications.

During her 12 years with Victory Electric, Whitley has won multiple Spotlight Awards, primarily in the graphic design category.

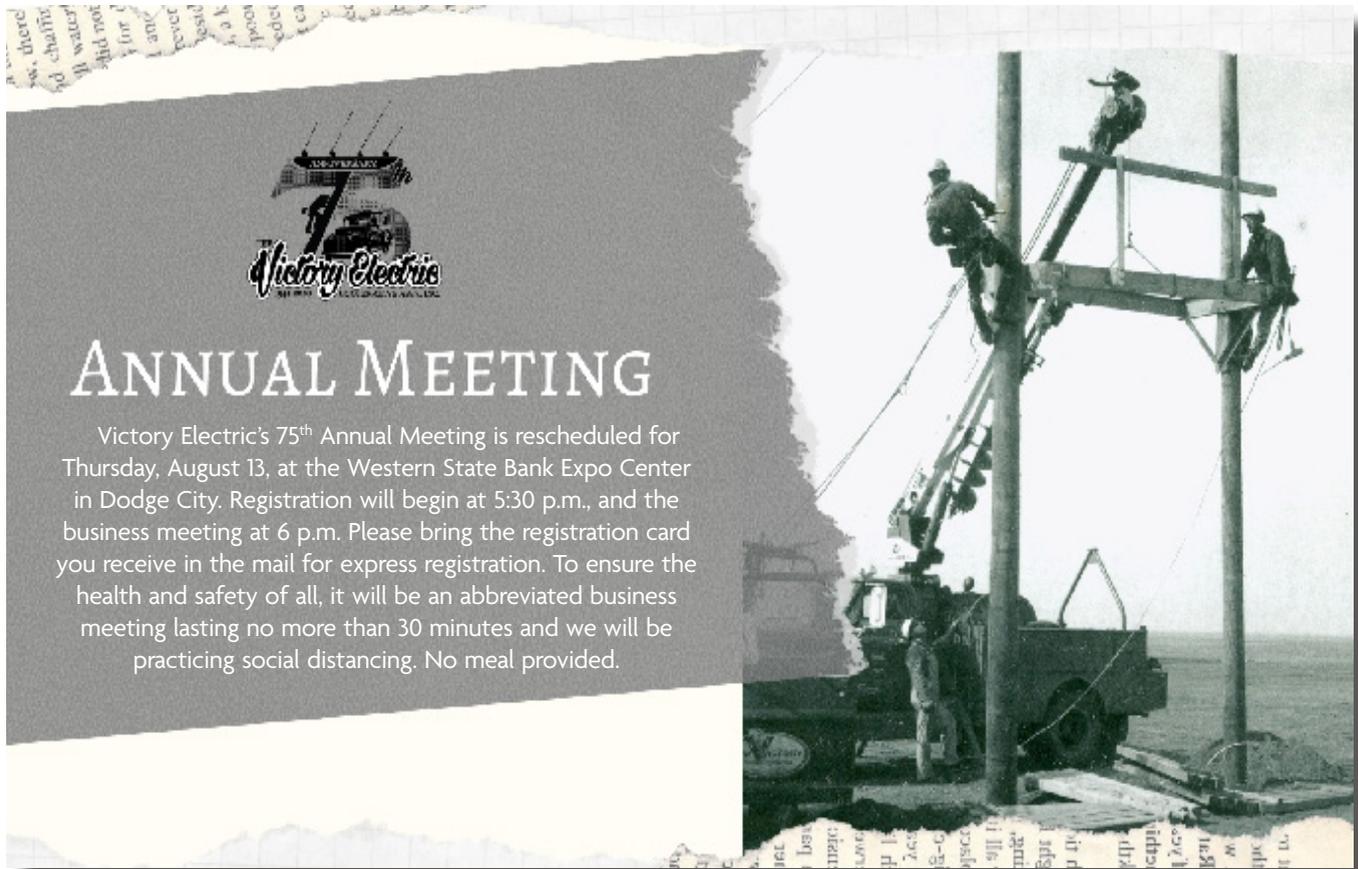
"To win a Spotlight on Excellence Award is a huge honor considering the immense talent and valuable contributions of cooperative communicators across the country," Whitley said. "I'm proud of my team at Victory Electric and the Spotlight Awards continue to be a source of encouragement and inspiration to be more creative, more engaging, and to always do our best."

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Spending more time at home? Try an online energy audit to assess the overall efficiency of your home. Visit www.energys-tar.gov, then enter "home energy yardstick" in the search box to get started.

Source: energy.gov





ANNUAL MEETING

Victory Electric's 75th Annual Meeting is rescheduled for Thursday, August 13, at the Western State Bank Expo Center in Dodge City. Registration will begin at 5:30 p.m., and the business meeting at 6 p.m. Please bring the registration card you receive in the mail for express registration. To ensure the health and safety of all, it will be an abbreviated business meeting lasting no more than 30 minutes and we will be practicing social distancing. No meal provided.

CoBank Sharing Success Grant Deadline Approaching

One of Victory Electric's most unique and exciting community programs is the CoBank Sharing Success program, a matching grant opportunity, capped at \$15,000, open to local nonprofit organizations. Aimed at supporting local communities and people, the grant is made possible by Victory Electric's governing board of trustees, in partnership with CoBank – a national nonprofit cooperative bank owned by the rural American cooperatives it services.

"Rural communities and cooperatives like Victory Electric are lucky to have the generous support of CoBank and we are thankful for the contributions enabling us to help make our communities a better place to live and work," said Jerri Whitley, Victory Electric vice president of communications. "In the last eight years, Victory Electric awarded \$85k in Sharing Success grants and we are excited to offer the program again this year."

CoBank's \$4 million Sharing Success fund matches charitable contributions made by its cooperative members to local nonprofits in their individual communities. The matching grant program is designed to celebrate the vital role



that cooperatives play in individual communities across the country. Since its inception in 2012, the program has generated more than \$36 million in charitable donations, primarily in rural areas across the country.

In early 2019, CoBank announced the board of directors increased the size of the bank's annual Sharing Success charitable giving program from \$3 million to \$4 million per year and raised the maximum matching amount from \$5,000 (\$10,000 total grant) to a \$7,500 (\$15,000 total grant).

2020 will be the ninth year for Victory Electric to award a Sharing Success grant. Last year, the Ingalls Recreation received the grant for updates to the Ingalls community swimming pool.

Any organization interested in applying for the 2020 CoBank Sharing Success grant must be a federally recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit. The grant application is available on our website and due to Victory Electric's office no later than 5 p.m. on July 24.



SIX FOOT SERVICE

Local students give back during COVID-19 crisis

Compassion and service doesn't stay six feet away.

That was the mindset of local Dodge City students Lauren Gleason and Elise Helfrich when they discovered their summer plans to attend a service-oriented retreat was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recent graduate Helfrich, and Gleason, who is an upcoming senior, are just two of the many high school students across the state whose school year was affected by the virus. Education and classes moved online and events such as prom and graduation ceremonies were cancelled.

During previous summer breaks, Gleason and Helfrich attended the Prayer and Action retreat and they refused to let the crisis take away their opportunity to serve others again this summer. According to the organization website, Prayer and Action is "a program that fosters a lifestyle of

charity by combining the head, the heart and the hands. College students, high school students, and adult chaperones grow together as they scrape, paint, and pray throughout southwest Kansas."

Fear of contracting the virus may have hindered some from helping others during the pandemic, but despite the number of cases rising in Ford County, they were determined to give people a reason to smile amidst all the stress and sadness.

"When I heard the news Prayer and Action wasn't happening this year, I knew we had to do something," Gleason said. "Elise and I chose this time to serve others because we wanted to bring joy and light to the world during the pandemic."

Acknowledging concerns and the need for safety precautions such as wearing masks and keeping a safe distance, Gleason and



Beau Foster holds a bag open for Ty Vilaysing to discard weeds. The Dodge City High School students helped with six projects involving yard work for Dodge City residents.

(Far left) Ty Vilaysing, Elise Helfrich, Chidara Okoro, Beau Foster and Lauren Gleason pose for a photo with Dorthy Hansen, who the group assisted with yard work.



Elise Helfrich working on yard cleanup. Helfrich enjoyed being able to give back to the community, disconnect from her phone, and spend quality time with others while working towards a great cause.



Lauren Gleason pulls weeds from a yard. Gleason initiated the coordinating of service projects when their original plans were interrupted due to COVID-19.

Helfrich's faith motivated them to continue to move forward with the project.

"To find projects, we reached out on Facebook to ask for recommendations of people who needed help," Helfrich said. "Ideas came from family, friends and community members."

From May 20-23, the duo, with the help of their friends, completed a total of six projects in four days. The projects ranged from painting house trim, mowing lawns, picking up trash, and cleaning and pulling a lot of weeds.

"We also helped pot flowers for Hospice of the Prairie, which were then delivered to many of their patients," Helfrich said.

Not only did the service projects benefit those volunteering, but also those who received the fruits of their labor. All the while, it was providing opportunities for the students to get to know their local community.

"One of the things I took away from this experience was that a small act of kindness can bring so much joy to so many hearts. I think the homeowners we served were so thankful. Every time we had a conversation, they always had a smile from ear-to-ear. They were happy to have a face-to-face conversation with another person rather than talking through a phone. I know I sure loved every conversation with each and every homeowner," Gleason said.

"We were so happy to have an opportunity to be a witness of the love of God and bring some good to an unfortunate situation. If anyone wants to serve or give back during this time but is afraid to do so, I would tell them it is a very rewarding and worthwhile experience," Helfrich expressed.

Gleason added, "The reward is way more valuable than any kind of money. Serving others feels so good for the soul."

PowerMyWay: Tome control de tu futuro energético

No deposito. No tarifas. No fechas de vencimiento. No facturas mensuales. Usted escoge cuando y cuanta electricidad compra. PowerMyWay está cambiando la manera en cual los miembros pagan por su electricidad. Le da la flexibilidad de manejar su presupuesto en haciendo pagos pequeños y más frecuentes en los días que son adecuados para usted, en lugar de un solo, pago grande en una fecha fija. Piense en PowerMyWay como hechándole gasolina a su carro. Su vehículo tiene un medidor que le permite a usted monitoria cuando necesite llenarlo. Usted puede escoger en comprar cantidades pequeñas cada cuantos días o “llenar” el tanque y no preocuparse por varias semanas. Entre más electricidad usted utilice, lo más rápido que tendrá que recargar su cuenta.

En unificando PowerMyWay con SmartHub, nuestro sistema de pago por internet, puede ver su uso eléctrico ese día, semana, o mes, y también saber cuánto ha usado en ese tiempo, y

más importante donde puede ahorrar. SmartHub les permite a los miembros la flexibilidad para que puedan revisar su saldo de su cuenta, hacer un pago, y evaluar el uso de energía a cualquier hora y donde sea desde su teléfono, tableta o computadora.

¿La mejor parte? No hay costo adicional o tarifas con el plan de PowerMyWay. Costos, incluyendo los cargos de energía, impuestos, impuestos de franquicia, el cobro de habilidad de servicio, y el costo del ajuste de energía son exactamente igual que las cuentas en un plan residencial estándar, pero el miembro NO es requerido pagar un deposito de seguridad y no hay recargos tardes.

¿Quién puede participar?

Cualquier nuevo o existente miembro residencial de Victory Electric puede tomar ventaja de PowerMyWay. Cuentas residenciales con sistema de infraestructura de medición avanzada (AMI) son ilegibles para PowerMyWay. Acceso a SmartHub es requerido para

participar en PowerMyWay. El miembro es responsable en crear su cuenta por SmartHub y/o actualizando su cuenta con un correo electrónico valido o número de teléfono para garantizar notificaciones de PowerMyWay.

¿Cómo puedo empezar?

Al inscribirse, los nuevos miembros tienen que comprar al menos \$50 hacia su futuro costo de energía. Miembros existentes tiene que tener su cuenta convencionalmente pagada en su totalidad, incluyendo uso eléctrico aun sin factura, antes de cambiar a PowerMyWay. Miembros existentes que pagaron un deposito pueden aplicarlo al cobro de \$50 necesario para empezar servicios con PowerMyWay, puede ser aplicado a su balance en una cuenta convencional, transferir el deposito a una cuenta de PowerMyWay, o tener el deposito reembolsado. Para aprender más, por favor visite nuestra página web en victoryelectric.net/powermyway o llame a la oficina al 620-227-2139.

¿Qué es PowerMyWay?

PowerMyWay es un programa de factura que te pone en control de su uso de energía y de su fecha de dar un pago.



¿Cómo funciona?

PowerMyWay es un programa auto gestionado, paga como vas. Usted es responsable de decidir cuánta electricidad comprara-suficiente para durar un día, una semana, un mes o más.

- » Para empezar, compre por lo menos \$50 de energía. No hay depósito.
- » Reciba una notificación de texto, correo electrónico o teléfono cuando su saldo sea igual o inferior a \$25.
- » ¡Añada dinero a su cuenta en su propio horario!



Opciones de pagos y notificaciones



Recordatorios son enviados cuando su balance empieza bajar.

- Reciba avisos de su cuenta por
- » Texto o llamada
 - » Correo electrónico
 - » Aplicación móvil de SmartHub

Usted tiene el control



- » Diga no a depósitos, fianzas tardes y cargos de reconexión.
- » Compra electricidad en cualquier monto que se ajuste a su presupuesto cuando usted guste.
- » Acceso de 24 horas los 7 días de la semana para monitorear su uso de energía y su balance de cuenta.
- » ¡Energía a su manera!

POWER My WAY TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR ENERGY FUTURE

Your Victory Electric Payment Options

Victory Electric has several convenient payment options available for our members. We realize one method of payment does not fit every member's need, so we have multiple payment choices so you can choose what works best for you.

1. Mail



Victory Electric's monthly bill comes complete with a return envelope you can insert your check and mail to us at P.O. Box 1335 or P.O. Box 1398 Dodge City, KS 67801. ** Please note, ALL mail goes to Wichita to be sorted, so please allow additional time if using USPS. Payments must be received in our office on or prior to the due date. We DO NOT use the mailing post date.

2. Drop boxes



A drop box is available for your convenience just west of Victory Electric's main entrance. Payments left after 7:30 a.m., Monday - Friday are posted the next business day. The other drop box is in downtown Dodge City by the City of Dodge City building at **806 N. 2nd Avenue**. Payments left after 8:30 a.m., Monday - Friday are posted the next business day. **PLEASE DO NOT PUT CASH IN THE DROP BOXES** **Victory Electric is not liable for lost or stolen payments.

3. Phone



Members can call **866-999-8494** and pay over the phone 24/7 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 and to comply with Federal Red Flag Rules, Victory Electric employees cannot accept payments over the phone.

FREE Service | No Fees

5. Online bill pay through SmartHub



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 go directly victoryelectric.smarthub.coop. Members can also download the "Smart Hub" app from the Apple or Android marketplaces on any mobile device.

FREE Service | No Fees

6. SmartHub Quick Bill Pay



Don't have time to create a SmartHub account but you want to pay online, click the Quick Bill Pay button at the top of Victory Electric's website or go directly <https://victoryelectric.smarthub.coop/PayNow.html>.

FREE Service | No Fees

7. PowerMyWay



PowerMyWay is a self-managed pay-as-you-go billing plan with no deposits, no late fees, no disconnect or reconnect charges. Just pay \$50 dollars toward future electricity and after that, you can pay as much or as little as you want on an as-needed basis. Every day your balance will adjust based on how much electricity you used the previous day and when you have less than \$25 left in your account, you will receive a text message, email or phone call reminder that you need to make a payment. Your account information and balance is available 24/7 on SmartHub.

FREE Service | No Fees

8. Budget Billing



Victory Electric also has budget billing (also referred to as even-pay) for those members who prefer to pay the same amount each month. Payments are set at your 12-month average, making it easy to budget. An accurate 12-month history of your current residence electric use helps determine payments. This monthly average and billing amount is updated each year based on the previous year's average electricity use.

9. AutoPay



Paying your bill doesn't have to be hard to take a lot of your time. With AutoPay, your electric bill payment can be automatically withdrawn from a bank account or credit/debit card each month. Sign-up is available through SmartHub. Auto-payments are automatically withdrawn on the due date of the bill, and no action is required from you. It can take up to 30 days to initiate the automatic withdraws on your account/card. Check your electric bill to ensure it reflects "bank draft" status. You will continue to receive a monthly bill, unless you opt to go paperless and receive your statement by email.

10. Group invoice billing



If you have multiple Victory Electric accounts, you can sign up for group invoice billing and only receive one bill in the mail. All individual account statements will still be included, but a summary statement will also accompany the individual statements that lists each electric account number, the corresponding amount due for each account, and a combined total of the individual accounts/bills at the bottom on the payment slip.

If you are interested or have any questions about any of the above payment methods or programs, more information can be found on our website at victoryelectric.net or by calling Victory Electric's office at 620-227-2139 or 800-279-7915.

**We do not accept starter/counter checks for bill payment.*



Help! My Lights Won't Stop Flickering!

An occasional light flicker in your home is normal. But if you've noticed flickering that is happening regularly or is severe, you need to investigate.

Flickering or blinking lights are usually caused by one of four things:

- ▶ Problem with the bulb such as not in tight enough or it's wrong bulb type for a dimmer switch.
- ▶ Loose light plug
- ▶ Faulty light or fixture switch
- ▶ Appliance pulling large amount of current on startup, causing voltage to drop

Or there may also be a bigger electrical issue at play:

- ▶ Sensory overload on a circuit
- ▶ Voltage fluctuations
- ▶ Loose or outdated wiring
- ▶ Problem with the utility service
- ▶ Problem with the meter box or main service cable connection

Let's take a look at each.

Problem with the Bulb

If the flickering is only in one light, first check to make sure the bulb is screwed in tightly. This may seem obvious, but bulbs can come loose over time and lose their connection with the socket. If that doesn't work, you may try replacing it.

Fluorescent bulbs have a tendency to flicker, especially as they power up or in cold temperatures. If your fluorescent lights flicker occasionally, it's probably nothing to worry about.

The most common cause of LED bulbs flickering has to do with dimmer switches. Dimmers are made to handle higher electrical loads and don't always play well with lower-voltage LEDs.

Loose Light Plug

Is the flickering problem only with one lamp? The problem could be a loose connection between the plug and outlet. Check to see if the lamp's plug is firmly in the wall socket. If not, try unplugging it, adjusting the metal prongs, and plugging back in again.

Faulty Light or Fixture Switch

A poor connection between the light or fixture switch and the bulb can cause flickering. Try gently wiggling the switch to see if this causes a flicker. If it does, you've found the problem. If your light is already flickering, try toggling the switch on and off and see if this fixes the problem. If it does, the switch is the culprit and should be replaced.

Overloaded Circuit

Have you noticed the lights start flickering, blinking or dimming when a major electrical appliance (such as the air conditioner or washing machine) comes on? The issue may be an overloaded circuit—meaning these appliances are pulling more electrical current than the circuit can handle.

Large electrical appliances draw more current as they start up. If the flickering happens consistently, is severe and/or doesn't stop right away, there is a problem. The issue might be with the appliance itself. Call an electrician to find the source of the problem.

Voltage Fluctuation

Fluctuating voltage is another cause of flickering lights. Signs include:

- ▶ Lights consistently flicker when you turn on a large appliance
- ▶ Flickering continues after the appliance has stopped running
- ▶ Unpredictable or unexpected dimming
- ▶ Light bulbs burn out frequently

Slight fluctuations are normal, but your

home should always register between 115 and 125 volts. An electrician can find the best solution to resolve your home voltage problem.

Electrical Use from Neighbors

Your home shares a transformer with surrounding homes, so their use of electricity impacts your electrical supply. A neighbor's heavy electrical use could cause your flickering lights. If the problem doesn't resolve, an electrician is your best resource for locating the issue.

If lights are flickering at your neighbors' houses, too, there might be a utility problem. Please call our office so we can investigate the problem.

Loose Wiring Connections

Loose wiring can not only cause flickering lights, but it is also a leading cause of house fires. Old and outdated wiring, breakers, switches and connectors are always cause for concern. Outdated wiring is a top cause of house fires.

Loose connections in an outlet, light or switch box can cause arcing—where electrical current “jumps” over gaps in the connection, sometimes causing electrical fires. A single, loose connection endangers your entire system.

Lights Flickering Throughout the House

This likely means there is a problem at the meter connection or main service cable connection. Please call Victory Electric and do not touch the meter. These are high capacity wires and could be a fire hazard.

Bottom line: You should never ignore a problem with flickering lights. It may be a simple fix, like a new bulb or fixture switch, but can be a symptom of a larger electrical problem.

If you find yourself in need of a local, licensed electrician, you can find a list on our website at victoryelectric.net/document-library and click 'Service Assistance'.

