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Electronews



A Touchstone Energy[®] Cooperative

FROM THE CEO

THE VICTORY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ASSN., INC.

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Victory Electric: Powering the Moments That Matter

For 80 years, Victory Electric has been providing electricity and powering the moments that matter most in your daily life. After receiving its charter in 1945, Victory was built by the communities it served — and the cooperative remains focused on community today.

One of our most important community events is our annual meeting, and we want you to join us there and see how your cooperative has been working for you.

This year's annual meeting will be held April 15 at the Boot Hill Casino and Resort Conference Center in Dodge City. We hope you take advantage of this opportunity to share your views, stay informed and exercise your right as a cooperative member-owner to vote on trustees and revisions to the bylaws.

CONNECT WITH VICTORY

The purpose of the annual meeting is to elect trustees, share financial information and make bylaw changes, if needed. The meeting offers cooperative member-owners an opportunity to connect with trustees, the leadership team and their friends and neighbors in the community.



Shane Laws

HERE'S WHY YOU SHOULD ATTEND:

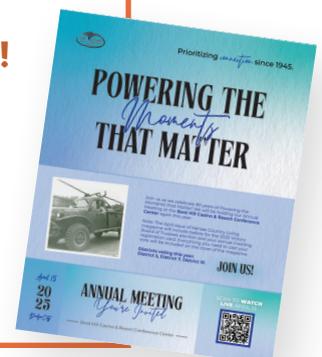
- ▶ **SHARE YOUR CONCERNS.** The annual meeting provides a platform for voicing your thoughts, sharing ideas and discussing the issues important

Continued on page 12F ▶

WATCH THE MAIL FOR YOUR APRIL KANSAS COUNTRY LIVING MAGAZINE!

IT WILL INCLUDE:

- ▶ The official notice for the annual meeting, to be held April 15 at Boot Hill Casino and Resort Conference Center in Dodge City;
- ▶ Your registration card for the annual meeting; and
- ▶ Election ballots for members represented by trustees in District 5: **MEGAN EVANS**; District 7: **JAMES OCHS**; and District 10: **PAT MORSE**.





Sandy Long Retires

After 34 Years at Victory Electric

SANDY LONG, billing supervisor/coordinator, retired from Victory Electric in January after serving in multiple roles over 34 years with the cooperative. She experienced many changes in technology, staff and processes over the course of her career at Victory.

“I’ve changed a lot, too,” she said, noting that she spent nearly half her life employed at the cooperative.

GROWTH AND CHANGE

She graduated from Hutchinson High School and became interested in computers after taking classes at Dodge City Community College. That knowledge led to a job at High Plains Journal and later the Credit Union of Dodge City.

Her former boss at the credit union, Dennis Brauer, took a position at Victory Electric and encouraged her to apply when a data entry clerk job opened. Long got the job and began her career at Victory in January 1991. She performed all tasks related to running the co-op’s only computer at the time and performed upgrades and other technical duties until the cooperative had a dedicated IT department.

She also served as an executive administrative assistant and a member services representative before taking on a billing-focused role in October 2000. Long oversaw all aspects of the member billing process, such as reviewing

member complaints, addressing billing concerns, preparing and analyzing reports, and creating service orders for the metering department.

Long said Victory had a more intimate feeling when there were only 10 office staff and 10 to 12 linemen.

“We would meet outside of work and knew each other’s spouses and kids. Now some of those children are grown up and have kids of their own,” she said. Victory employees had a volleyball team, and Long played softball with some of the linemen’s wives, too.

“We had gatherings outside the company, and we ran around together and our kids ran around together,” she said.

EXPANSION

Long’s specialization in billing was instrumental when Victory Electric acquired the Aquila system in 2007. Not only did the number of staff increase, Victory brought in many new member-owners and expanded its service territory substantially. It was a challenging transition to bring the systems together and incorporate so

FROM TOP

Sandy Long (third from right) retired from Victory Electric’s accounting and payroll team in January.

This photo appeared in the July 1991 issue of Electroneews and included new employees.

Sandy Long (standing at right) retired after 34 years at Victory Electric.

Sandy Long (standing) visits with member-owners who attended the 2016 annual meeting.

much growth into the organization. She said that previously, Victory had around 1,800 members and 4,000 meters, compared with more than 13,600 members and over 20,400 meters now.

She said the co-op went from being relatively small to a “high-paced, moving machine and that was a little overwhelming.”

The cooperative also needed to educate the new member-owners about the differences between an investor-owned utility and a rural electric cooperative.

Long maintained a positive outlook through the challenges and learned that things will work out. “We all have things we worry about, but it will all be fine and we will get through it,” Long said.

After so many years of working at the cooperative, Long said there were lots of highlights.

“In every evolution of time there was something that was cool and interesting, but I can’t really place just one thing,” she said.

FUTURE PLANS

Long looks forward to working on some projects at home and having more time to visit her kids in Topeka and Washington, her mother in Colorado and other family members in Arizona.

“I’ve never not had a job, so it will be a transition, and I’ve talked to retired friends about that,” she said.

She has fond memories of her time at Victory and has maintained friendships with some of her former coworkers who have left the company.

“Victory has been a good place for me and I’ve been very happy,” Long said. “There’s always trials, but it will be hard to leave.”

“Employees like Sandy are such a blessing to a cooperative,” Chief Information Officer Denzil McGill said. “They are more than just an employee — they are the heart and soul of an organization. She’s probably witnessed more change than any retiree before her.”

Congratulations and enjoy your retirement, Sandy!

Nominating Committee Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the nominating committee of The Victory Electric Cooperative Association Inc., was held Wednesday, Jan. 29, 2025, at the office of the cooperative on North 14th Avenue, Dodge City, Kansas.

The following members of the nominating committee were present in person: Garrett Love and Joan Unruh, representing District 5; Nick Cossman and Scott Bradford, representing District 7; and Janet Brock and Robert Carlson, representing District 10.

Also present were David Snapp and Hailey Zimmerman, attorneys for Victory Electric; Shane Laws, CEO; Daryl Tieben, board president; Chanda Schulte, vice president of communications; and TJ Ackerman, executive assistant/human resources coordinator.

Snapp called the meeting to order at 2 p.m. and went over qualifications and eligibility requirements for election as a trustee, as set forth in the bylaws of the cooperative, to determine whether each potential nominee was eligible for election based upon the information available.

Carlson was elected as chairperson of the nominating committee and inspector of elections. He asked for nominations from Districts 5, 7 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: MEGAN EVANS**
- ▶ **DISTRICT 7: JAMES OCHS**
- ▶ **DISTRICT 10: PAT MORSE**

There being no further business to come before the meeting of the nominating committee, the meeting was adjourned at 2:06 p.m.

Vratil Joins Victory

BRADEN VRATIL recently joined Victory Electric’s line crew as a groundsman. He previously worked for PAR Electrical Contractors in Topeka and Wa-Keeney and completed a line technician internship for Sunflower Electric in Great Bend.

Vratil is a Great Bend native and attended Northwest Lineman College in Denton, Texas, before joining Victory. He has been helping his crew replace poles and said he looks forward to learning more about documentation and the process of hooking up transformers.

“This is my first distribution job, so I’ve never done that before,” he said.

In his free time, Vratil enjoys playing guitar, hunting and fishing. Welcome to Victory, Braden!



Braden Vratil

CoBank Sharing Success Grant Applications Open March 17

One of Victory Electric's most notable and exciting community programs is CoBank Sharing Success, a matching grant opportunity open to local nonprofit organizations for up to \$20,000. 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.

"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. Over the last decade, Victory Electric and CoBank have awarded \$185,000 in Sharing Success grants, and we are excited to offer the program again this year."

Applications are available at www.victoryelectric.net and are **DUE MAY 16, 2025**.

CoBank's Sharing Success fund matches charitable contributions made by its cooperative members to local nonprofits in their communities. The matching grant program is designed to celebrate the vital role that cooperatives play in communities across the country. CoBank states that collaborating with customers to support worthy causes they care about is a great way to make a positive difference and fulfill its mission of service to rural America. Since its inception in 2012, the

program has generated more than \$86 million in total charitable donations, primarily in rural areas across the country.

PREVIOUS SHARING SUCCESS GRANT WINNERS INCLUDE:

- ▶ **THE BUCKLIN LIBRARY — 2012**
- ▶ **MISSION OF MERCY DENTAL CLINIC — 2013**
- ▶ **STAUTH MEMORIAL MUSEUM — 2014**
- ▶ **MANNA HOUSE — 2015**
- ▶ **DEPOT THEATER — 2016**
- ▶ **FORD COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY — 2017**
- ▶ **FORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE — 2018**
- ▶ **INGALLS RECREATION — 2019**
- ▶ **DODGE CITY SALVATION ARMY AND NEW CHANCE, INC. — 2020**
- ▶ **CRISIS CENTER OF DODGE CITY — 2021**
- ▶ **FORD COUNTY FAIR ASSOCIATION AND THE COPELAND AMERICAN LEGION — 2022**
- ▶ **PERFECT FIT FOUNDATION OF SWK — 2023**
- ▶ **VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS (VFW) POST 1714 — 2024**

Any organization interested in applying for the 2025 CoBank Sharing Success grant must be a federally recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit. The application will be available on our website at www.victoryelectric.net/content/cobank-sharing-success-grant beginning March 17 and is due to Victory Electric's office no later than **5 P.M. ON MAY 16**.

- LOCAL **NONPROFITS** MAY APPLY!
- APPLICATIONS OPEN **MARCH 17-MAY 16**
- APPLY AT **VICTORYELECTRIC.NET** ▶▶▶▶

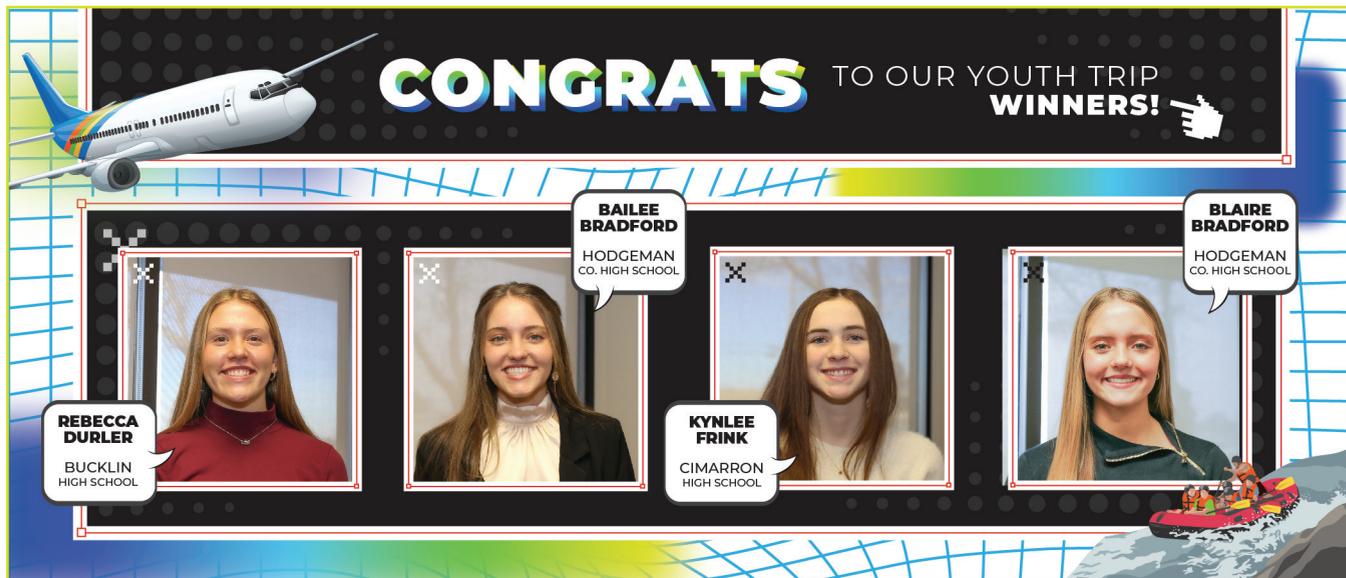


SCAN TO APPLY



COBANK SHARING SUCCESS GRANT

Area Students Selected for Youth Leadership Trips



Victory Electric is pleased to announce the winners of cooperative leadership development trips for youth in 2025: **REBECCA DURLER**, a junior at Bucklin High School; **BAILEE BRADFORD** and **BLAIRE BRADFORD**, both juniors at Hodgeman County High School; and **KYNLEE FRINK**, a junior at Cimarron High School.

Victory Electric believes in developing the potential of today's youth to become tomorrow's leaders. To provide opportunities for building these skills, each year Victory Electric invites juniors from its cooperative service area to apply for all-expenses-paid trips to the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., and the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp (CYLC) near Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

Rebecca and Bailee will attend Youth Tour June 14-20, and Blaire and Kynlee will attend CYLC July 11-17. The four winners will also receive a \$500 scholarship following their high school graduation.

This year, candidates were asked to create a short video sharing electrical safety tips in a creative and engaging way. A panel of judges selected the winners after evaluating the candidates' applications, résumés, videos and in-person interviews.

"We had an outstanding group of students who applied for leadership opportunities this year, and we enjoyed

seeing the creativity and personality they showed in their electrical safety videos," said Vice President of Communications Chanda Schulte. "The annual youth trips reflect Victory's commitment to community and youth development, and we know this year's winners will represent the cooperative well in their travels this summer."

Youth Tour attendees will meet with state and national legislators in the nation's capital and build connections with thousands of high school students from across the country. The educational experience includes tours of Smithsonian museums, visits to the White House and other historic sites and monuments.

CYLC participants will learn about the electric cooperative industry through hands-on sessions, raft on the Colorado River and tour a power plant. Nearly 100 students from electric cooperative communities in Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma and Wyoming are expected to attend the leadership camp this summer.

The contest is held each fall for area high school juniors. For more information about Victory Electric's youth programs and the Lightner Community Spirit Scholarship, visit victoryelectric.net.

CORRECTION: Kynlee Frink's name was misspelled in a graphic that appeared on Page 12F of the February 2025 issue of *Kansas Country Living*. We regret the error.

LANDLORD AUTHORIZATION FORMS AVAILABLE

Victory Electric members who own rental properties have the option to complete a landlord revert form. If a landlord has a Landlord Authorization form on file, then the property's electric service will automatically revert to the landlord's name when a tenant vacates a property and cancels service with Victory Electric. This ensures continuous electric service at the property with no planned interruptions between tenants. Keeping electric service on may prevent frozen pipes or other weather-related damage. The service will remain in the landlord's name until a new tenant requests service or the landlord disconnects it.

If you are interested, please call 620-227-2139 or visit Victory Electric during office hours to learn more about the requirements and set up an authorization.

Victory Electric: Powering the Moments That Matter

Continued from page 12A ▶

to you with Victory trustees, the leadership team and employees.

- ▶ **STAY INFORMED.** Victory Electric will review the cooperative's successes and challenges, financial performance and community outreach initiatives from 2024. Attendees will also learn about what Victory has been doing to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy and to help power the communities we serve.
- ▶ **ELECT BOARD MEMBERS.** The Victory Electric Board of Trustees represents you on important energy issues and policy decisions. Megan Evans, District 5; James Ochs, District 7; and Pat Morse, District 10; are up for reelection this year. Trustees are local members of the districts they represent and have an important role to play in shaping our future — and they rely on members like you to be involved in the cooperative process.

▶ **VOTE ON CHANGES TO THE BYLAWS.**

Because Victory is a not-for-profit, member-owned cooperative, our member-owners help shape our policies. Several proposed revisions to Victory's bylaws will be voted on by member-owners at the 2025 annual meeting.

▶ **GET A \$20 BILL CREDIT AND OTHER GIVEAWAYS.**

Don't miss out on our swag bags and the chance to win a door prize. Member-owners who submit their registration card and attend the meeting in person will also receive a \$20 bill credit. You will find your registration card on the back cover of your April *Kansas Country Living* magazine, which will be mailed at the end of March.

We will keep powering the moments that matter as we provide safe, reliable, affordable energy to our member-owners. We hope to see you April 15!

Going through tough times? Help is available.

Application period
is open until **5 p.m.**
on **March 31, 2025.**

**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.



80 *Looking Back on* years

Eighty years ago, Victory Electric was built by members of the communities it served — and we remain focused on community today. This year we're celebrating our history by sharing some photos of our past. This month features a timeline of Victory Electric logos over the years.



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Prioritizing *connection* since 1945.

POWERING THE *Moments* THAT MATTER



Join us as we celebrate 80 years of Powering the Moments that Matter! We will be holding our annual meeting at the **Boot Hill Casino & Resort Conference Center** again this year.

Note: The April issue of *Kansas Country Living* magazine will include ballots for the 2025 Victory Board of Trustees election and your annual meeting registration card. Everything you need to cast your vote will be included on the cover of the magazine.

Districts voting this year:
District 5, 7 and 10

JOIN US!

April 15
20
25
Dodge City

ANNUAL MEETING
You're Invited

— Boot Hill Casino & Resort Conference Center —

SCAN TO **WATCH**
LIVE APRIL 15

