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# Electronews

## The Victory Electric Cooperative Assn., Inc.

### Board of Trustees

- |   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| <b>Pat Morse</b><br>President               | <b>John Leis</b><br>Trustee     |
| <b>Daryl Tieben</b><br>Vice President       | <b>James Ochs</b><br>Trustee    |
| <b>Cedric Drewes</b><br>Secretary/Treasurer | <b>Randy Quint</b><br>Trustee   |
| <b>Megan Evans</b><br>Trustee               | <b>Ken Schulte</b><br>Trustee   |
| <b>Jim Imel</b><br>Trustee                  | <b>Kenny Wehkamp</b><br>Trustee |
| <b>Terri Larson</b><br>Trustee              |                                 |

### Staff

- Shane Laws**  
CEO
- Angela Unruh**  
CFO
- Denzil McGill**  
CIO
- Amy Grasser**  
Vice President of Corporate Services
- Rob Henry**  
Vice President of Engineering
- Ryan Miller**  
Vice President of Operations
- Kyndell Penick**  
Vice President of Safety & Key Accounts
- Chanda Schulte**  
Vice President of Communications

### FROM THE CEO

## Committed to Safety in May — and Every Day

We all know how frustrating it is when a home appliance stops working and needs to be repaired or replaced. But if an appliance or electrical malfunction causes a house fire, injury or even electrocution, the situation can quickly escalate from an inconvenience to a crisis.

The Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) is a nonprofit organization that promotes electrical safety in the home, school and workplace. ESFI designates each May as National Electrical Safety Month, which is aimed at reducing the number of electricity-related fires, fatalities, injuries and property loss. Electrical failures and

malfunctions are a leading cause of house fires every year. Learning how to identify potential electrical hazards is one of the best ways to prevent fires and other related problems in your home.

Electricity can be dangerous, but thankfully most accidents involving electricity can be prevented. That's why Victory Electric strives to educate our members about electrical safety not



Shane Laws

*Continued on page 12E ▶*

**PLUG INTO ELECTRICAL SAFETY**

**May is Electrical Safety Month**  
 Make Electrical Safety a priority this month and every month.

**TIP** Before planning those outdoor barbecues, make sure patios and pool areas are equipped with ground fault circuit interrupter outlets.

## Gillespie Retires from Board After 11 Years

After selling his business and retiring as a Victory Electric Co-op trustee, **GARY GILLESPIE** looks forward to serving a new Kansas community.

“What I look forward to most about retirement is having more time to do the things we enjoy,” Gillespie said. “It is such a busy time during your working career that it seems like it is hard to devote as much quality time as you would like to the most important things in life, which for us is faith and family. My wife and I have been very blessed over the years and want to give back where we see opportunity, as well as devote more time to our grandchildren, children and parents.”

The Gillespies have found a new home north of Manhattan in their cabin, which was previously built as a fishing and hunting retreat. Their daughter and her family live just down the road, and Kelly’s mother lives close by in Manhattan. They will also be closer to their son and his family in Hutchinson.

“We have purchased land in this area over the past several years, and we have some livestock and cropland so there is always plenty to do,” he said.

The Gillespies look forward to spending more time with their grandchildren. “They are all very active with various sports, 4-H, livestock showing, etc., and we will now be able to attend more of their activities,” Gillespie said. They have seven grandchildren ages 2 to 11.

Before joining the board, Gillespie worked for ADM for 20 years and served as director of ADM Grain Western Region,



Gary Gillespie (second from left) recently retired from the Victory Electric Board of Trustees. Pictured (from left) are Victory Electric Board of Trustees President Pat Morse, Gary Gillespie, Kelly Gillespie and Victory Electric CEO Shane Laws.

comprising country elevators and agronomy assets. When ADM sold its agronomy division to Agrium, he decided to make a change as well. In 2007, he joined a good friend in his crop insurance agency and worked in the industry for 15 years.

Gillespie values developing relationships with Victory members while representing District 5 in the Copeland and Montezuma areas.

“There are so many great people at Victory and in the Copeland area that I have developed lifelong friendships with, and we will continue to stay in touch,” he said.

Pat Morse, Victory board president, has valued the experience Gillespie has brought to the board. “For 11 years Gary has been a well-regarded member of the Victory Board of Directors. His business background and insight has been invaluable as the board and Victory continue to provide our member-owners with safe, reliable and affordable power,” Morse said. “We wish Gary only the best in the future.”

Gillespie said he is thankful for the opportunity to have served as a trustee for Victory Electric and noted the dedication and determination of his fellow trustees and Victory Electric’s management team.

“Shane [Laws] has done a great job leading Victory and has the foresight to make sure the organization is well positioned for changes that are always on the horizon,” Gillespie said. “The leadership team he has assembled are some of the best in the industry at what they do.”

Congratulations on your retirement, Gary!



Victory Electric CEO Shane Laws (left) presents an award to Gary Gillespie in recognition of his 11 years of service to District 5.

# Evans Joins Victory Electric Board of Trustees

**MEGAN EVANS**, the new Victory Electric trustee for District 5, was raised in Montezuma where her third-generation farm family lives. She graduated from South Gray High School and initially dreamed of moving to a big city after completing her education at Kansas State University.

However, the benefits of a small-town community and her rural heritage drew Evans back to southwest Kansas.

"I really love the people," Evans said.

Evans and her husband, Scott, have three sons, ages 11, 10 and 6. Scott farms and they also run a local crop insurance agency in Copeland that provides insurance to crop and livestock producers in southwest Kansas and the Oklahoma Panhandle.

"I get to work with all of the area and local farmers, and they're some of the best of the best," Evans said.

One of her goals as a trustee is advocating for more education so that the younger generation can understand how power grids work and learn about the complexity of electricity. Many kids and even adults don't think about electricity beyond simply flipping on a light switch and having power. "Even from a very young age in the schools, they need to understand how your power gets there," Evans said.

"The Victory Board is excited to have Megan Evans as our newest board member," Pat Morse, Victory Electric Cooperative Board of Trustees president said. "Megan is a lifelong southwest Kansas resident, owns her own business and is involved in rural agriculture through their family farm. She will bring new perspectives and ideas to the board as Victory moves into the future."

The board of trustees will benefit from Evans' perspective as a small business owner. She said she is excited to see how a company as large as Victory Electric operates and eager to learn how the different departments in the organization work together as a team.

Evans believes it's important for everyone to serve on a board or committee at some point and get involved, so she jumped at the opportunity to serve on Victory Electric's Board of Trustees.

"I feel like it's what we're here to do — to serve," she said. "It takes a big group of people to run committees and different things in the community."

Evans was appointed by the board of trustees and will serve the remainder of Gary Gillespie's three-year term of office. She is representing and advocating for the Copeland and Montezuma areas and will be eligible for election by cooperative members in 2025.

According to Gillespie, Evans is well known and respected in the community, which will serve her well on the board.

"Megan is a great young lady, and her character and integrity are two of the reasons I sold her the business and believed that she would be a great trustee for District 5. But more than that, she is just a good person," he said. "She understands that doing the right thing is always the right thing to do."



Megan Evans

Annual Meeting  
RECAP

APRIL 11, 2023

SCAN TO ACCESS RECORDING

ATTENDEES **171**

MEETING LENGTH  
**33 MINUTES**

DOOR PRIZE WINNERS **5**

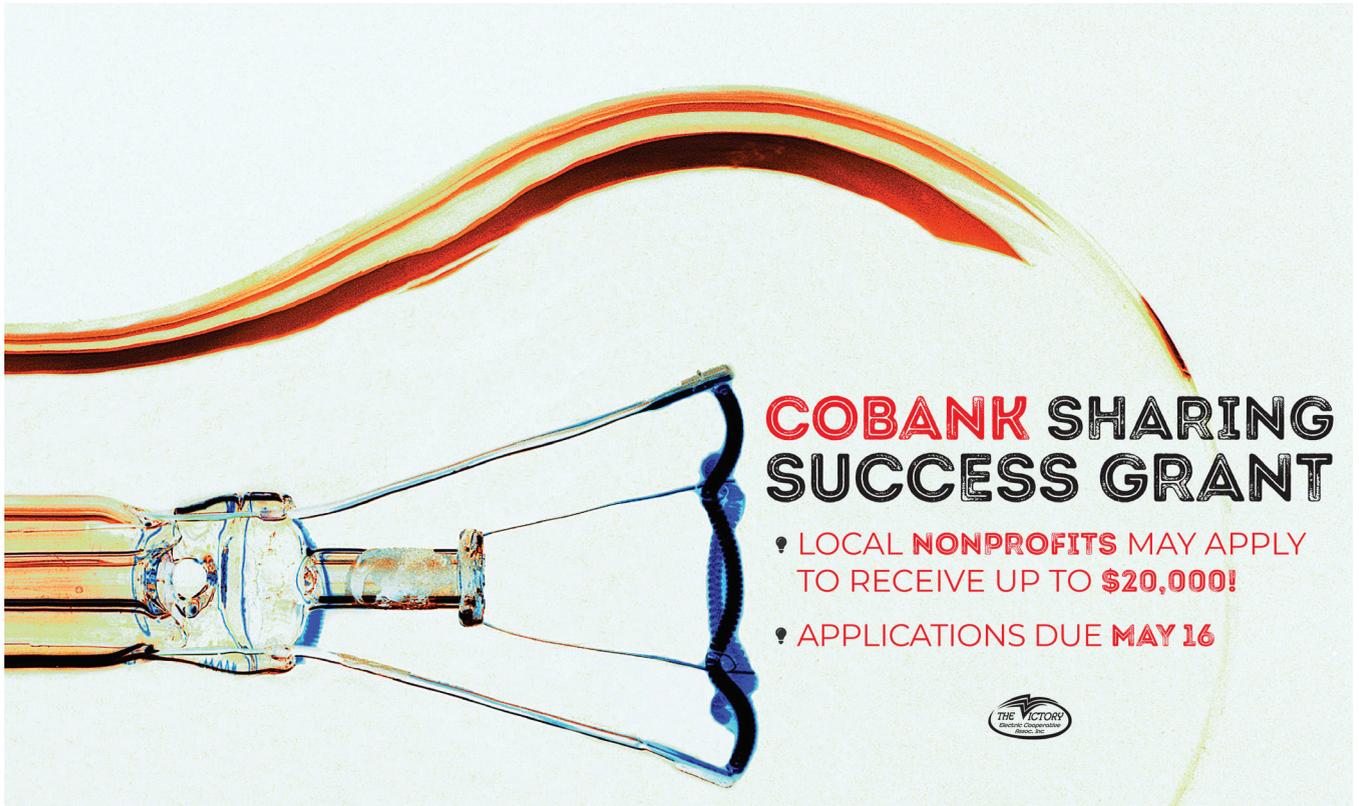
EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERS  
**32**

WESTERN STATE BANK EXPO CENTER  
11333 U.S. HIGHWAY 283 IN DODGE CITY

WE WILL BE  
**CLOSED**  
FOR  
**MEMORIAL DAY**

Monday, May 29

I get to work with all of the area and local farmers, and they're some of the best of the best.



## COBANK SHARING SUCCESS GRANT

- LOCAL **NONPROFITS** MAY APPLY TO RECEIVE UP TO **\$20,000!**
- APPLICATIONS DUE **MAY 16**



## LIGHTNER COMMUNITY SPIRIT SCHOLARSHIP

2023 WINNERS












## Committed to Safety in May — and Every Day Continued from page 12A ▶

only during electrical safety month but also year-round — and we take that mission very seriously.

Victory Electric's commitment to safety begins with our own employees. Safety is integral to our training of lineworkers and other cooperative employees. At Victory Electric, we have a responsibility to ensure our employees' safety. Daily checks, monthly safety meetings and annual pole top rescue simulations are a few of the ways Victory makes sure our linemen and other technicians can safely provide electricity to our members.

You may not work around power lines regularly like a lineman, but that doesn't mean you are immune from electrical dangers in the workplace. A recent study conducted by ESFI found that contact with or exposure to electricity remains one of the leading causes of workplace fatalities and injuries in the United States. You may be surprised to learn that 69% of the fatalities between 2011 and 2021 happened to workers in non-electrical occupations, according to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Our lineworkers provide electrical safety presentations at workplaces to help minimize those dangers throughout the community. Our team customizes safety demonstrations to different workplaces, whether you work on a farm or ranch, at a construction site, in an office or for a fire department. We also conduct high voltage demonstrations for various

community events, schools and other organizations. Victory Electric can cover topics such as how an electrical arc can happen, what causes your lights to blink, what an electrical contact can look like and what to do if you are in a car accident or other emergency that involves power lines. Knowing what to do — and what not to do — could save your life or that of a loved one.

We tailor presentations for children to teach them about outdoor and at-home electrical hazards. Our linemen use active, engaging demonstrations to help kids understand the dangers of electricity, how electricity works and what they can do if they find themselves in a dangerous situation.

Victory Electric regularly shares electrical safety tips and videos on our Facebook and Instagram pages, too. We encourage you to follow us for safety tips for the whole family. We also have electrical safety articles and videos in the Power 101 section of our website, [www.victoryelectric.net](http://www.victoryelectric.net). Follow us at [Facebook.com/VictoryElectric](https://www.facebook.com/VictoryElectric) and [Instagram.com/victoryelectric2022](https://www.instagram.com/victoryelectric2022).

To schedule an electrical safety demonstration or presentation at your workplace, school or civic organization, call Victory Electric at 620-227-2139 or complete the form online at [www.victoryelectric.net/form/request-a-victory-electric-speak](http://www.victoryelectric.net/form/request-a-victory-electric-speak).

**THANKS, SHANE**

# WORKING ON THE Line

Victory Electric recently recognized **AUSTIN GOODER, MANUEL BANUELOS** and **TYLER TRENT** for completing their journeyman lineman certifications.

Pictured (from left) are Victory Electric Manager of Operations Eric Speer, Austin Gooder, Manuel Banuelos, Tyler Trent and Vice President of Operations Ryan Miller. Congratulations on your promotions!



# POWER My WAY

## Sign up



Visit [victoryelectric.net](http://victoryelectric.net) or stop by our office for information on how to get started.

## Charge account



Put money in your account via the SmartHub app and other payment methods.

## Check balance



Get updates and low account balance reminders by text, email or phone.

## Recharge



Online at [victoryelectric.smarthub.coop](http://victoryelectric.smarthub.coop) or via your SmartHub app on your mobile device.

## Take charge of your energy future

No deposit. No late fees. No due date. No monthly statements. You choose when and how much electricity to purchase.

Victory Electric's PowerMyWay program is changing the way members pay for their electricity. PowerMyWay gives you

the flexibility to better manage your budget by making smaller, more frequent payments on days it's right for you, instead of a single, larger payment on a fixed due date. Or maybe you want to continue making one payment per month but have the flexibility of choosing your payment date, and that's OK, too.

Since you are paying as you go, PowerMyWay makes you more aware of your energy consumption. The more electricity you use, the quicker you will have to recharge your account. By tying PowerMyWay to SmartHub, you will be able to see your electric use for that day, week or month and also know how much you spent in that time frame and where you can save. SmartHub also allows flexibility for members to review account balances, make a payment and evaluate energy use anytime and anywhere from a phone, tablet or computer.

There are no additional costs or fees to take advantage of the PowerMyWay billing plan. Rates, including energy

**Since you are paying as you go, PowerMyWay makes you more aware of your energy consumption.**

charges, taxes, franchise taxes, the service availability charge and the energy charge adjustment, are the same as accounts on a standard residential billing plan (some charges are prorated daily). However, the member is NOT required to make a security deposit and there are no disconnect, reconnect or late fees. Only residential members are eligible for PowerMyWay.

Upon enrollment, members purchase at least \$50 toward future energy costs. Existing members must have their conventional account paid-in-full, including unbilled electric use, before switching to PowerMyWay. Those existing members who paid a deposit may apply it to the \$50 needed to open a PowerMyWay account, apply to any outstanding balance on a conventional account, transfer the deposit to a PowerMyWay account, or request to have the deposit refunded.

For more information on PowerMyWay, visit our website at [www.victoryelectric.net](http://www.victoryelectric.net) or call our office at 620-227-2139.

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Pay-as-you-go for your electricity with Victory Electric's PowerMyWay easy, convenient billing option.



**9 in 10**  
adults own a  
mobile device

PowerMyWay gives you greater control and easy access to your energy use information and bill due date from your smartphone, mobile device or online through the SmartHub portal.

**5 HOURS**

is the average amount  
of time Americans spend  
on their phones each day



You are already on your phone, use it to effectively manage your bill and make payments when you want and in the amount you choose.



**No deposit**

**No hidden fees**



**Payment flexibility**

**Pay what you want**



**Visit our office today to sign up!**

## How to Control a Controlled Burn

Controlled burns (also known as prescribed fires) can often get out of hand and quickly accelerate. When planning controlled burns, follow these safety tips:

- ▶ Do your research before you begin. There are many safety considerations; check with local authorities and fully research all aspects of a controlled burn before implementing one.
- ▶ Be sure to acquire any necessary safety permits and follow any local ordinances related to controlled burns.
- ▶ Notify your local fire department and neighbors about the controlled burn ahead of time.
- ▶ Check the forecast for weather conditions, such as wind direction and speed, as well as humidity (generally, relative humidity should be 40 percent or higher). Be sure to look at the forecast for before and after your burning period. Embers can reignite if weather conditions are right in the days following a burn.
- ▶ Do not initiate a controlled burn during a Red Flag Warning, Fire Weather Watch or any other fire ban.
- ▶ Clear all vegetation and weeds at least 4 feet around the base of any electric utility pole in the affected area, then wet the base of the poles with water before beginning your burn.
- ▶ If your fire gets out of control, gets too close to a power pole or if the pole catches on fire, call 911 and Victory Electric Co-op at 620-227-2139.
- ▶ Once a fire breaks out, never spray water near the pole, power lines or any other utility equipment.
- ▶ After any controlled burn, be sure to inspect the electric utility poles for damage. Fire damage is usually evident by blackening or scorch marks; however, even slight discoloration can indicate a serious problem. Sometimes, the poles burn from the inside out, and the damage is not immediately apparent.

To inquire about controlled burns near power lines and poles, contact Victory Electric Co-op at 620-227-2139.

For more information about electrical safety, go to [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org).

