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Electronews



THE VICTORY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ASSN., INC.

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FROM THE CEO

Stay Cool and Efficient This Summer

The days are getting longer and the weather is getting warmer. This is the season of backyard barbecues, family road trips, gardening and camping, but you likely want to cool off as quickly as possible when you go back inside your home after enjoying the outdoors. As summer approaches and spring's milder temperatures begin to climb, our energy bills tend to increase as well. At Victory Electric, we know you want to save as much money as possible on your monthly electric bills while also keeping cool this summer.

COOLING YOUR HOME

Heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems account for around half of the average American household's energy consumption. The greater the difference between the outdoor temperature and your desired indoor

temperature, the more energy your heater or air conditioner consumes. That's why in extreme temperatures, your system needs to work harder and run longer to maintain a comfortable indoor temperature. That increased energy usage leads to higher bills — even if you didn't touch the thermostat.



Shane Laws

HERE ARE A FEW TIPS TO HELP YOU BEAT THE HEAT WITHOUT BREAKING THE BANK:

- Schedule an annual service with a qualified HVAC technician to check refrigerant levels and inspect your system to make sure everything is working properly and help prevent costly emergency repairs later.

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10 Lightner Community Spirit Scholarship Winners Selected

Ten area students have been selected to receive a \$1,000 Lightner Community Spirit Scholarship. Since 2016, Victory Electric's annual scholarship program has recognized area students who have demonstrated academic success and a commitment to improving their community.

An external panel of judges reviewed the submissions of 48 eligible applicants to select the 2025 winners. Students were evaluated based on their commitment to community, ideas expressed, academic achievement, voice and writing skills.

Victory Electric congratulates the following 2025 Lightner Community Spirit Scholarship winners:

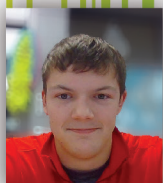
- ▶ **AIDEN HASKELL**, the son of Nathan and Missi Haskell, Dodge City, and a senior at Bucklin High School.
- ▶ **ALLERIS GRANADOS**, the daughter of Jose and Jan Granados, Fowler, and a junior at University of Arkansas.
- ▶ **BRECK AVERHOFF**, the son of Kyle and Michelle Averhoff, Garden City, and a senior at Ingalls High School.
- ▶ **FAITH ACKERMAN**, the daughter of Cory and Audrey Ackerman, Spearville, and a senior at Spearville High School.
- ▶ **HALLE METTLING**, the daughter of Randall and Michelle Mettling, Spearville, and a senior at Spearville High School.
- ▶ **HARLEE TILLEY**, the daughter of Slade and Shana Tilley, Bucklin, and a senior at Bucklin High School.
- ▶ **JACELYN HUELSKAMP**, the daughter of Tom and Janet Huelskamp, Fowler, and a senior at South Gray High School.
- ▶ **JOSIE ROBINSON**, the daughter of Dave Robinson and Debra Schartz-Robinson, Dodge City, and a senior at Dodge City High School.
- ▶ **ROCELYN MILLER**, the daughter of Ryan and Lora Miller, Dodge City, and a graduate student at Washburn University.
- ▶ **TANA MCDONALD**, the daughter of Darren and Amy McDonald, Mullinville, and a senior at Bucklin High School.

Victory Electric's scholarship program honors the Lightner family of Plymell, Kansas. Richard Lightner served on the Victory Electric Board of Trustees for 36 years after his father, George, served on the board for 31 years. The Lightners strongly supported Victory Electric's community and youth programs during their extensive service to cooperative members.

For more information about the Lightner Community Spirit Scholarship, visit www.victoryelectric.net/lightner-community-spirit-scholarship.

LIGHTNER COMMUNITY SPIRIT SCHOLARSHIP

2025 WINNERS



**AIDEN
HASKELL**



**ALLERIS
GRANADOS**



**BRECK
AVERHOFF**



**FAITH
ACKERMAN**



**HALLE
METTLING**



**HARLEE
TILLEY**



**JACELYN
HUELSKAMP**



**JOSIE
ROBINSON**



**ROCELYN
MILLER**



**TANA
MCDONALD**

Grant Winners Make a Difference

Applications for the 2025 CoBank Sharing Success Grant are now open through May 16. Local nonprofits may apply to receive a grant of up to \$30,000 at www.victoryelectric.net/cobank-sharing-success-grant. Please share this opportunity with nonprofits in our community!

Learn more about the work that previous Sharing Success winners have done in Victory Electric's service area:

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS POST 1714 (2024) used grant funding to upgrade facilities and improve accessibility at the Howard Gotschall Hall in Dodge City to better accommodate the veterans it serves.

THE PERFECT FIT FOUNDATION OF SWK (2023) operates the Perfect Fit Therapy Clinic, a behavioral health facility that provides applied behavioral analysis therapy to children with autism.

THE FORD COUNTY FAIR ASSOCIATION (2022) used grant funds to complete much-needed repairs and updates to the floor of the fair building in Dodge City.

THE COPELAND AMERICAN LEGION (2022) used grant funds to make improvements to the Post No. 369 Legion building, which serves Gray County.

THE CRISIS CENTER OF DODGE CITY (2021) completed bathroom renovations, purchased waterproof mattress covers and linens, and installed playground equipment for its safe shelter.

THE SALVATION ARMY OF DODGE CITY (2020) received grant funding toward the purchase of a new headquarters at the former High Plains Journal building on Wyatt Earp Boulevard.



**NONPROFITS:
APPLY FOR UP TO
\$30K IN FUNDING!**

New this year!

**COBANK
SHARING
SUCCESS
GRANT**

- Applications open from **MARCH 17-MAY 16**
- Apply at **VICTORYELECTRIC.NET**

NEW CHANCE, INC. (2020), a drug rehabilitation program in Dodge City, purchased computers to better manage health records for its residential and outpatient substance abuse treatment services.

THE INGALLS RECREATION COMMISSION (2019) replaced a cracked, leaking liner in the city pool with a new fiberglass liner.

THE FORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE (2018) received grant funding to make security enhancements for the county.

THE FORD COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY (2017) made improvements to the Home of Stone Museum (Mueller Schmidt House) in Dodge City.

THE DEPOT THEATER (2016) in Dodge

City used grant funding to upgrade technical equipment at the dinner theater, which is connected to the historic Santa Fe Depot and Harvey Hotel.

THE MANNA HOUSE (2015) is a local emergency shelter and food bank in Dodge City. Grant funds were used to repair and improve their facilities.

THE STAUTH MEMORIAL MUSEUM (2014) in Montezuma used the grant to bring a traveling exhibit, "Suited for Space," to the museum.

KANSAS MISSION OF MERCY (2013) was awarded grant funding for its dental clinic held in Dodge City in 2014.

THE BUCKLIN LIBRARY (2012) used the grant to help fund the construction of a new library building.

Victory Announces New Roles and Certifications

Victory Electric congratulates employees who recently received promotions or achieved certifications.

TAYLOR HOBBS was recently promoted from senior system analyst to manager of information technology. He joined Victory as an IT analyst in July 2020. In his new role, Hobbs is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the IT department, including the help desk, network operations, software support and voice communications.

CHANTZ BRUNGARDT, who joined Victory in October 2020, was promoted from second class lineman to journeyman lineman. **RYAN STEPHENSON**, who joined Victory in 2022, previously attained journeyman lineman status and recently completed Victory Electric's certification program, too.

CONGRATULATIONS, TAYLOR, CHANTZ AND RYAN!



Taylor Hobbs



Chantz Brungardt



Ryan Stephenson



Ryan Stephenson (left) and Chantz Brungardt (right) display their certifications presented by Eric Speer, manager of operations (center).

MORSE REPRESENTS VICTORY AND KANSAS AT NATIONAL CONFERENCE



PAT MORSE, a Victory Electric trustee for District 10 in Dodge City, recently traveled to Atlanta, Georgia, to attend the PowerXchange conference, the annual meeting of National Rural Electric Cooperatives Association (NRECA) members. He serves as the Kansas delegate on the NRECA Board of Directors and previously served as president of the Victory Electric Board of Trustees.

Victory Electric and NRECA board member Pat Morse (center) at PowerXchange with Landry George (left), NRECA staff assistant and former Kansas Youth Leadership Council Representative; and Isabelle Jones (right), 2024 Kansas Youth Leadership Council Representative.

Restoring Power Safely and Reliably

Victory Electric provides power to more than 13,600 members throughout our service area. Our teams work hard to maintain and improve the reliability and safety of Victory's electric system, which covers 3,249 miles of power lines across multiple counties. Although we take proactive measures to keep the lights on, outages still sometimes happen. Thankfully, most outages affecting Victory Electric member-owners last for only a short time.

Severe weather events, equipment failure, trees and vegetation, wildlife interference, high energy demand during extremely hot or cold weather, vehicle accidents and other unintentional contacts are some of the causes of power outages. Power restoration efforts are focused first on issues affecting the highest number of customers, and they proceed in a particular order:

1. High-voltage transmission lines;
2. Distribution substations;
3. Main distribution lines;
4. Tap lines; and
5. Individual homes and businesses.

Sometimes problems happen on high-voltage transmission lines or other equipment on our power supplier's side, and those issues must be addressed before Victory crews can complete any needed repairs on the distribution side. We communicate with our transmission provider throughout the power restoration process so that we can pass along more information to our customers as it is available. Linemen may need to shelter in place until severe weather or hazardous road conditions improve and it is safe to proceed.

Because there are so many variables that determine how long it takes to restore power, it is often not possible to provide an estimate of what time your power will be back on. During a large outage, Victory Electric posts updates about the location and restoration progress on our Facebook page. We also have an outage center and map at <https://victoryelectric.net/outage-center-0>.

We understand that extended power outages can be frustrating, and Victory Electric's employees don't want them any more than you do. Please stay weather-aware and prepared for the possibility of extended outages by following these suggestions when inclement weather is in the forecast:

- ▶ Make sure nonperishable food, flashlights, weather radios and emergency kits are on hand and easily accessible.
- ▶ Keep devices charged, and turn on emergency alerts on your phone.



High winds and wet snow on March 19 led to more than 8,000 outages in Victory Electric's service area.



Victory Electric crews faced challenging weather and road conditions.



Winter weather blasted the region with blizzard conditions and high winds, causing many outages March 19.

SUMMER IS COMING

PREPARE YOUR HOME NOW

Don't Let Summer Heat Up Your Utility Bill



Seal cracks around the house with weather stripping or caulk to keep warm air out.



Change the air filter on your cooling unit.



Wash your outdoor AC unit and have your HVAC unit inspected.



Clear the air vents throughout your house.



Install a programmable thermostat. Leave it on a higher temperature when you are away, and set it to cool the house half an hour before you return home.



Update your insulation to keep cool air in your home and warm air out.

SOURCE: WWW.SAFELECTRICITY.ORG

Stay Cool and Efficient This Summer

Continued from page 12A ►

Maintaining your cooling system keeps it running efficiently and extends its lifespan.

- Clean or replace filters as recommended, generally every 1-3 months.
- The location of your thermostat can affect your HVAC system's ability to maintain an ideal indoor temperature. For the best accuracy, thermostats should be placed in the center of the home, away from air vents, plumbing pipes and exterior doors. Avoid placing items like lamps and televisions near your thermostat or installing thermostats in rooms that tend to feel warmer or colder than the rest of the home.
- Raise the thermostat to the highest setting for your comfort, and increase it several degrees more when you're away from home. Programmable thermostats make it easy to automate changing the temperature based on your daily routine.
- Make sure vents are not obstructed by furniture or other items that may affect air circulation.

- Check for drafts around windows, doors and other areas where there may be air leaks. Replace any worn-out stripping and use caulk to seal cracks.
- Window coverings can help keep rooms cooler in the summer.
- Use ceiling fans. Remember that fans cool people, not rooms, so turn them off when you leave the room.

ENERGY ADVISOR

Victory Electric also offers several free digital tools that allow you to better manage your electric bills all year long. Member-owners who provide an email address may receive personalized videos explaining bill changes, reports summarizing their annual energy use, tips on saving energy and mid-month usage alerts. The Energy Advisor tool offers a detailed analysis of home energy usage and provides suggestions for saving energy and money. Visit www.victoryelectric.net/energy-resources and click the Energy Advisor button to start using the Energy Advisor today.

THANKS, SHANE



Post Office Changes May Cause Mailing Delays

The U.S. Postal Service stopped evening pickups for mail and packages at most post offices on April 1. As a result, First-Class mail originating from about 75% of rural and smaller U.S. post offices will be held overnight and picked up in the morning, potentially causing delays.



Victory Electric member-owners who pay their monthly electric bills by mail should adjust their mailing schedules by at least one day to ensure that payments are received by the due date. Members may securely pay their bills online via SmartHub. Paperless billing and AutoPay payment options are also available for your convenience.

This change is part of the USPS Regional Transportation Optimization (RTO) initiative. The RTO plan, which has been met with controversy in rural areas of the country, projects a \$36 billion savings over the next 10 years by canceling evening truck pickup routes at post offices over 50 miles from a mega-processing center.

For more information about SmartHub and Victory Electric's payment options, visit www.victoryelectric.net/payment-choices or call 620-227-2139.

A graphic with a blue background. At the top is a megaphone icon. Below it, the word "Attention!" is written in a large, red, cursive font, followed by "Changes are here." in a white, serif font. Underneath, the text "Evening mail pickups ended at most post offices starting April 1." is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. At the bottom right is a faint circular postmark that says "POST OFFICE".

ELECTRICITY 101

To stay safe around electricity, start with these **SEVEN** basic tips:



1.

DON'T OVERLOAD OUTLETS OR CIRCUITS

Plugging in too many items or drawing too much power on a circuit can cause overheating, fire and damage to devices.



2.

DON'T USE FAULTY ELECTRICAL CORDS OR PLUGS

Do not use cords that look frayed, worn or cracked. Do not use broken plugs. Never remove the grounding pin from a three-pronged plug.



3.

HAVE YOUR ELECTRICIAN'S NUMBER IN YOUR PHONE

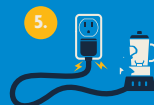
Most electrical repairs or installations are not DIY projects. Hire an expert to avoid serious injury or wiring problems.



4.

BE CAREFUL AROUND H₂O

Never use electricity while standing in damp or wet conditions. Keep all electrical devices away from water, including cellphones that are charging.



5.

EVALUATE YOUR APPLIANCES

Do not use appliances in disrepair. Older or broken appliances can overheat, start a fire, and cause serious injuries.



6.

TEST YOUR GFCIS

Outlets near a water source should be equipped with GFCIs, which help prevent shock and electrocution caused by ground faults. Test monthly to make sure they are working.



7.

MAKE SURE YOUR HOME IS UP TO CODE

Your home should be properly wired and electrically sound. Contact a reputable electrician to evaluate your home.

SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG

Looking Back on

80 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.

1st annual
meeting =

Arthur Gerth
Chief A & R Division

Washington D.C.
Speaker,

