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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Electronews

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FROM THE CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

Cybersecurity Fundamentals Help You Keep Your Data Safe

Ten years ago, cybersecurity professionals were telling consumers to focus primarily on email, user passwords and physical security. Those aspects are still critically important. But as consumer technology evolves, so do the techniques cybercriminals attempt in order to gain access to your information.

Looking back to 2013, do you think you could get all your current photos, videos and apps onto your phone from 10 years ago? For many of us, that is a hard “no.” It is very likely you are using your phone for many more things than you did back then. The apps on your phone have certainly changed. They now use artificial intelligence (AI) to help you navigate, choose a restaurant and create an SMS message with just your voice — and the progression will only continue.

The bad news for the consumer is that cybercriminals are also adapting to the changing times and using AI to help them as well. Just as AI is used to help you drive your car “hands-free,” malicious actors are using AI to help automate and attack even more accounts than would be possible otherwise. AI has made them faster and smarter at deceiving people.

One of the many characteristics of spam and phishing emails has been the “tell” that they are being generated in massive numbers by people who may not have the best grasp of American



Denzil McGill

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LABOR Day
Office Closing

In observance of Labor Day,
 our office will be closed on
MONDAY, SEPT. 4.

Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp *Empowers* Local Students



KARLA GARCIA SEPULVEDA and **KALE NAGEL** attended the 46th Annual Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp (CYLC) from July 14-20, 2023. **ADRIANA TIPTON**, Victory Electric communications and design coordinator, also attended the camp as a chaperone. The leadership camp was held near Steamboat Springs, Colorado, and hosted 43 student leaders from Kansas, Oklahoma, Colorado and Wyoming, sponsored by 25 participating cooperatives.

Victory Electric selected Garcia Sepulveda, Dodge City, and Nagel, Bucklin, based on the leadership skills, academic achievements, extracurricular activities and character demonstrated in their application materials.

During the camp, students learned how an electric cooperative is organized and operated by developing a model-cooperative with their fellow students, empowering the campers to elect a board of directors, appoint a general

manager, establish committees and attend daily membership meetings. Camp participants also attended educational seminars on leadership, online reputation management, conflict management, and co-op careers, in addition to presentations on high voltage electricity, raptors and avian protection with HawkQuest, and a tour of the Craig Power Station.

Along with its professional development programs, CYLC included a visit to Mount Werner and downtown



FAR LEFT: Students tour the Craig Power Station — a favorite among the campers.

LEFT: Karla Garcia Sepulveda flies high as she learns how to indoor skydive in Denver en route to Steamboat Springs.

Steamboat Springs, whitewater rafting on the Colorado River and other fun activities such as a volleyball tournament, swimming, talent show and a dance.

Nagel was appointed the general manager of the model cooperative. He said he enjoyed the camp experience much more than he imagined he would and that serving as the general manager enabled him to start getting to know other students right away.

“The ambassadors and other campers inspired me,” Nagel said. “They showed that it is easier to talk to people than you think.”

Garcia Sepulveda said camp made her think more about communications and leadership. “The thing that inspired me was getting to know people who are different from me,” she said. “It made me realize and inspired me to get to know people and talk to them — to not give up at all and try your best.”

Tipton said she was proud of how the students challenged and encouraged one another as they developed group unity through the week. “My favorite part of camp was seeing campers blossom outside of their comfort zones. A lot of them were apprehensive, but before the week was over they were forming connections and friendships while having a great time. It was awesome to witness! It was fun to see the campers press through uncertainty and step into leadership positions while taking initiative for themselves and their peers.”



Kale Nagel poses with a bald eagle during the HawkQuest presentation.

Victory Electric sponsors four students each year to attend CYLC in Colorado or the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. Applications for 2024 student leadership opportunities will open this fall. For more information, visit www.victoryelectric.net/youth-tour-cooperative-leadership-camp.

You're invited to our annual
PUMPKIN FESTIVAL

Save the Date
OCTOBER 28

Coming Soon

Personalized Energy Analysis Just for You

Ever wonder where your energy dollars are going? This fall, you will be able to learn how you can take control of your energy bills with Victory Electric's personalized energy analysis videos, alerts and applications.

If we have your current email address, you will start receiving personalized energy analysis videos if your bill increases by \$40. You can also opt-in for alerts about your current energy use midway through



the billing cycle, while you still have time to take action and save money before your final bill arrives. Our new energy analysis tools use our actual weather data, your energy use and rates to give you the information you need to save energy and money.

Available Soon to Victory Electric Members:

- ▶ Personalized videos explaining why your bill has changed;
- ▶ Video reports summarizing your annual energy use;
- ▶ Energy alerts that tell you when your energy cost reaches a set amount; and
- ▶ Special energy use calculators that explain specific energy savings tips.

Our Online Home Energy Calculator Will Include:

- ▶ Detailed analysis based on your home profile;
- ▶ Energy Forecaster that shows the weather and energy costs for each day;
- ▶ Personalized energy saving tips based on your home profile; and
- ▶ Specialized calculators that explain how appliances, EVs and other products use energy.

Watch for more details about our personalized energy analysis content coming soon. Call Victory Electric at 620-227-2139 to add or update your email address in our account records.

Victory Electric is committed to helping you save energy and money, take the surprise out of your energy bills — and start saving today. Visit www.victoryelectric.net and follow us on Facebook (facebook.com/victoryelectric) and Instagram (instagram.com/victoryelectric2022) to learn even more ways to save.

SHARE IN THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF SOLAR POWER WITHOUT THE COST OF INSTALLING ROOFTOP PANELS

- AN AFFORDABLE ALTERNATIVE TO OWNING AND MAINTAINING A SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEM
- NO ROOF DAMAGE
- NO LARGE, UPFRONT INVESTMENT
- SIMPLE SIGN-UP AND BILLING
- AVAILABLE TO OWNERS AND RENTERS
- EASY WAY TO SUPPORT RENEWABLE ENERGY

We're removing barriers to solar energy

COMING SOON!

Solar Made Easy!

Victory Electric Cooperative Assn., Inc. **COMMUNITY SOLAR**



Shares are limited to no more than the average of your previous 12-month electric use. If your 12-month average = 1,000 kWh, then a max of 8 shares is allowed.

3. On your electric bill, every month you will receive a solar adjustment for your solar shares, which is based on the revenues derived from the power sold into the energy market.

CONTACT US TO LEARN MORE:



VICTORYELECTRIC.NET



620.227.2139 OR 800.279.7915



ROOFTOP SOLAR VS. COMMUNITY SOLAR

ROOFTOP SOLAR

COMMUNITY SOLAR

Panels are installed on your property

Power is produced at an off-site solar farm

Homeowner owns or leases solar panels and equipment

Member purchases shares in the energy produced at the Johnson Corner solar farm

Homeowner may qualify for solar energy rebates

Member is not eligible for energy rebates

Cost can range from \$10,000-\$30,000 or more

Subscription cost is \$5 per share (125 kWh or two solar panels) per month

System stays with the house if a homeowner moves

If member moves within Victory's service territory, the shares move too

May not be an option in heavily shaded areas or if you rent or own a condo

Member may still support renewable energy even if rooftop solar is not an option

Homeowner is responsible for the costs of installing and maintaining the solar system

Sunflower Electric maintains system at solar farm

Long-term contractual commitment is often required

No long-term commitment required

Energy produced helps offset energy usage in your home

Member receives a credit or a charge on electric bill based on the market conditions when their share's generated energy is sold



Victory Employees Celebrate Community

Summer is a busy time in Dodge City and the surrounding areas! Victory Electric employees and their families joined in the fun during several local community events this summer. As a cooperative, we're proud to be powered by our community.

Our members drive the mission of our cooperative and in return allow us to invest in the communities we live in and serve. We appreciate the Spearville City of Windmills (COW) Festival, the Ford County Fair and Dodge City Days organizers for including us in their summer celebrations.

Dodge City Days Parade



Brent Nau and several family members pose for a photo before joining Victory Electric's procession during the Dodge City Days Western Parade.



Chantz Brungardt hands out candy to parade attendees.



Victory Electric employees and family members hand out candy and other Victory Electric swag during the parade.



While waiting for the parade to begin, members of the Dodge City Community College football team take a closer look at Victory Electric's bucket truck.

Ford County Fair



Mike Clark drives a "train" during the Ford County Fair's Just 4 Kids event.



Paul Schmidt welcomes kids aboard the Victory Express train.

Spearville COW Festival



Several Victory Electric employees and their children prepare to hand out popsicles and glow sticks during the Spearville City of Windmills (COW) Festival parade.

Avoid Electrical Dangers on the Farm or Ranch

Farmers and ranchers face many safety hazards while raising livestock and growing and harvesting crops. The potential for encountering overhead power lines and other electrical dangers on the farm and in the field makes it critical for farmers and ranchers to follow safety precautions and not take shortcuts to save time when working long hours.

Every person working on a farm or ranch should beware of overhead power lines, keep farm equipment safely away and know what to do if accidental contact is made with power lines.

National Farm Safety and Health Week is Sept. 17-23. The following electrical safety tips for farmers and ranchers will help keep agricultural workers safe and healthy while they are providing food, fuel and fiber for the world.

Farm managers are encouraged to start the day's work by reviewing any jobs that will take place near power lines and making a plan for keeping workers safe. If you don't already have a farm safety plan, then assess potential hazards and develop emergency procedures and communication methods for your operation and all workers.

- ▶ Always use a spotter when operating large machinery near power lines. Keep equipment at least 20 feet from lines — at all times and in all directions.
- ▶ Use care when raising augers or the bed of grain trucks around power lines, which may be closer than they look.

- ▶ Inspect the height of all farm equipment to determine clearance, including higher antennas and other extensions.
- ▶ Always lower equipment extensions, portable augers or elevators to their lowest possible level, under 14 feet, before moving or transporting them.
- ▶ Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance. If a power line is sagging or low, call the Victory Electric office immediately.
- ▶ If your equipment does hit a power line, do not leave the cab. Immediately call 911, warn others to stay away and wait for the lineworkers to de-energize the line. If you must get out because of fire, jump clear of the vehicle with both feet together and do not touch the vehicle/equipment and the ground at the same time. Hop with your feet close together to a safe distance — don't run.
- ▶ Don't use metal poles when breaking up bridged grain inside and around bins.
- ▶ Take care not to raise any equipment such as ladders, poles or rods into power lines. Non-metallic materials such as lumber, tree limbs, tires, ropes and hay will still conduct electricity, depending on dampness and dust and dirt contamination. Carry equipment horizontally to not contact a line.
- ▶ Use qualified electricians for work on drying equipment and other farm electrical systems.

DRAWINGS WILL BE HELD EACH MONDAY THROUGHOUT THE MONTH OF OCTOBER.

ENTER TO WIN ON OUR WEBSITE!
www.victoryelectric.net/co-ops-love-local

Co-ops Love Local will benefit
50 locally owned businesses
& **50 community members**
through a giveaway of
50 gift certificates
in the amount of **\$50 each!**

Victory Electric is celebrating
National Co-op Month in October
with our *Co-ops Love Local* campaign.



Cybersecurity Fundamentals Help You Keep Your Data Safe

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culture or the English language. Often, you may get a phishing email and be able to tell that something is not right with it — a word may be used incorrectly or is misspelled. AI can learn to prevent these simple language mistakes, making phishing emails even harder to detect for the ordinary user.

You may have recognized that time you once spent on a computer or laptop is being replaced by time on your smartphone. As phones become more powerful and easier to use, why wouldn't you use them more? That is exactly what the hackers are seeing too. They are increasingly targeting their scamming efforts to people on their phones rather than their computers. The smaller screen makes it easier to miss clues. The more distracted you are, the easier it is for them to slip things past you that you might otherwise catch. For example, one trick of scammers is to disguise a malicious message to look like a legitimate alert you might get on your phone and entice you to click it.

There is no way to ignore radio, TV and online commercials for 5G networks. Every major carrier is rolling out the latest in super-fast data speeds. 5G networks are phenomenally fast at downloading webpages, songs and videos, but do not be fooled — bad guys are taking full advantage of 5G technology too.

An ever-expanding feature of 5G is the interconnectivity of devices with one another. This technology is called the Internet of Things (IoT), and it is incredibly easy to connect a device to your phone and instantly begin exchanging information.

A person could easily become overwhelmed with the onslaught of attacks against their privacy and start to believe they would be better off without

technology, but there's hope. The same principles that have kept consumers safe for the past 20-plus years are still useful today. Even though technology is changing, the fundamentals of cybersecurity have not changed.

Here are several cybersecurity tips you can put into practice:

- ▶ Keep your phone up-to-date with the latest operating system. Manufacturers regularly patch software to fix the latest vulnerabilities discovered and exploited by hackers. Out-of-date software remains vulnerable to attacks.
- ▶ Learn the features of your phone, especially the ones that make it easier to share files, photos and locations. Hackers will take advantage of the fact users do not fully understand a feature, which may leave opportunities open for them to exploit.
- ▶ Do not leave connection technologies, like Wi-Fi and Bluetooth, unnecessarily turned on when you are not using them. As prevalent as IoT is becoming, you could unknowingly connect to a device designed to collect data about you if it has been compromised.
- ▶ Keep your passwords strong and private. Resist the urge to use the same password across multiple platforms. Whenever possible, supplement your identity verification with multi-factor authentication.

These simple steps are not fool-proof, but they will go a long way toward keeping malicious actors at bay. In October, watch for more tips during Cybersecurity Awareness Month, a collaborative effort of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity Infrastructure Security Agency and the National Cybersecurity Alliance.

THANKS, DENZIL

Working on the Line Summer Storm Damage



From left: Kirk Konrade, Jeremy Elling and Jason Rohr work to replace a broken pole caused by the storms on July 17.



Jeremy Elling (left) and Jason Rohr move damaged equipment before crews bring in new poles.



Tyler Trent (left) and Cory Edmunds assemble parts to replace a broken pole.



Eddie Ruiz removes tangled wires caused by high winds.