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Electronews



FROM THE CEO

Reliability Remains a Top Priority for Electric Co-ops

As I have discussed previously in this column, demand for electricity is increasing while unrealistic regulations and other factors put the supply of always-available power sources at risk. Smart energy policies that strengthen reliability and the resilience of the power grid are crucial in such a rapidly changing era for the electric industry.

Victory Electric and our network of partners at the state and national level are committed to advocating for safe, reliable, affordable power on behalf of our member-owners. We aim to keep members up to date about challenges facing co-ops and opportunities for growth.

Co-op leaders stay aware of trends and current developments that affect how we power our local communities. We have much work to do as we address the challenge of meeting rising demand, but several recent developments signal positive changes ahead for reliability.

SPP ISSUES SUMMER FORECAST

The Southwest Power Pool (SPP) coordinates electric reliability in a 14-state region in the central United States. In the organization's summer reliability forecast, SPP shared it expects to have enough generation to meet energy demand this summer despite fore-

casts for higher regional temperatures.

SPP conducts an assessment each year to identify and mitigate threats to energy reliability during the summer season from June to September.

The analysis considers historical and predicted future electricity use, weather forecasts, the variability of available wind energy, drought conditions and generation and transmission outages.

SPP said it would continue working with its member utilities to monitor the grid and implement contingency plans if needed. This collaboration helps SPP prioritize reliability for the 18 million people its utilities serve if extreme weather, unexpected outages or other circumstances affect our region.



Shane Laws

EPA REVIEWS POWER PLANT REGULATIONS

Recent actions announced by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) may alleviate reliability challenges for electric co-ops across the U.S. as well. The EPA recently announced proposed rules to repeal the greenhouse gas emissions rule and some mercury and air standards for power plants and

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THE VICTORY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ASSN., INC.

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WEHKAMP ELECTED AS SUNFLOWER BOARD CHAIR



Kenny Wehkamp

The Victory Electric Board of Trustees is elected by member-owners like you. Trustees are cooperative members who live in the districts they serve, and they often take on other service roles in their community.

KENNY WEHKAMP, District 6 trustee, was recently elected as chairman of the Sunflower Electric Board of Directors. He previously served as vice chairman of the Sunflower board.

Sunflower is a member-controlled generation and transmission (G&T) cooperative governed by a democratically elected board of directors. Each of the six Sunflower member-owners — Lane-Scott, Pioneer, Prairie Land, Victory, Western and Wheatland — has two representatives, who are elected by their fellow distribution cooperative members. The 12-member board establishes rates and develops policies that are in the best interest of their local co-ops, fellow members and Sunflower. Victory Electric's other Sunflower director is CEO Shane Laws.

Wehkamp joined Victory's board as a trustee in 1997 and previously served as board president. He is a farmer and lives in Cimarron with his wife, Ivy. District 6 includes members in the Cimarron, Ingalls and Plymell areas. Wehkamp maintains the Director Gold Certification through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

Victory Employees Recognized for Professional Achievements

Several Victory Electric employees received additional professional credentials and qualifications recently.

BRAD ACKERMAN, cybersecurity analyst, recently received a Certified in Cybersecurity (CC) credential from the International Information System Security Certification Consortium (ISC2), the leading member association for cybersecurity professionals. The CC training and exam cover security principles; business continuity; disaster recovery and incident response; access controls; network security and security operations.

CORBAN GARCIA, geographic information system (GIS) analyst, earned a Bachelor of Science in geosciences with an emphasis in GIS from Fort Hays State University this spring.

ROB HENRY, vice president of engineering, recently completed the High Impact Leadership Academy (HILA) training. Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. coordinates with FMR Leadership Solutions to conduct the academy, which blends best practices from military leadership and civilian management principles to empower leaders and develop their skills.

Continuing education contributes to our employees' professional and personal development and strengthens the cooperative. Congratulations, Brad, Corban and Rob!



Brad Ackerman



Corban Garcia



Rob Henry (center) receives a certificate from instructor **Brandon Rhinehart (left)** and Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. CEO **Lee Tafanelli (right)**. Henry was one of 23 electric cooperative professionals who participated in the first HILA cohort and graduated in a May ceremony.

SAVE ON SUMMER BILLS WITH ENERGY ADVISOR



Are you concerned about high electric bills this summer? Victory Electric's Energy Advisor is a personalized energy analysis tool to help members understand and manage their energy bills.

Enter information about your home's size, location, heating and cooling system, appliances, and other related details, and Energy Advisor will provide customized energy-saving tips and forecasts based on your home profile and weather data. With an email address on file, you will also receive alerts and videos explaining changes in your bills.

Visit www.victoryelectric.net and click Energy Resources for more information and tips for staying cool this summer.



Scan to start saving!



Tanner Eiland

Victory Electric Welcomes New Tech Support Analyst Tanner Eiland

TANNER EILAND recently joined Victory Electric as a technical support analyst. He was born in Texas and his family moved to Hays, where he graduated

from Fort Hays State University in 2023 with a bachelor's degree in computer science. Before joining Victory's information technology (IT) team in June, Eiland worked as a support engineer for Dodge City Community College.

"Dodge City is a good community. I'm interested in new learning opportunities, and being surrounded by people that actively want to advance society is good," Eiland said.

In his new position, Eiland will play a key role in monitoring and improving Victory's IT systems. He will perform technical support for employees, troubleshoot complex issues and help ensure that our IT infrastructure is reliable and secure.

"We're happy to have Tanner on board. He has an opportu-

nity to grow here at the cooperative while helping us achieve great things," said Manager of IT Taylor Hobbs.

Eiland has diverse interests that he pursues when he isn't working. He plays guitar and has taken tap dancing lessons. He also enjoys playing strategy-based video games and card games, especially Hearthstone and Magic: The Gathering. He qualified for regional championship tournaments for Magic: The Gathering in Dallas, Atlanta and Washington, D.C., and he enjoys traveling when he has the opportunity.

"I think people in general inspire me — the family aspect of the way that people work together or learn to work together," he said.

Eiland's family is important to him. His older sister recently married and lives in Garden City, and his younger brother lives at home in Hays with his parents.

Welcome to the Victory team, Tanner!

MEET VICTORY'S SUMMER INTERNS

Three interns are getting hands-on experience at Victory Electric this summer. **RYAN RENNER** is back after completing an internship in Victory's engineering department last summer. **COOPER SPEER** and **BRYAN MELIA** are working on lineman crews in our operations department.

COOPER SPEER

LINEMAN INTERN

- ▶ **HOMETOWN:** Dodge City
- ▶ **SCHOOL:** Graduated from Dodge City High School
- ▶ **INTERESTS:** Going to the lake with family

RYAN RENNER

SECOND-YEAR ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING INTERN

- ▶ **HOMETOWN:** Dodge City
- ▶ **SCHOOL:** Current engineering student at Kansas State University
- ▶ **INTERESTS:** Hunting, fishing and golf

BRYAN MELIA

LINEMAN INTERN

- ▶ **HOMETOWN:** Dodge City
- ▶ **SCHOOL:** Completed electrical power technology program at Pratt Community College
- ▶ **INTERESTS:** Building cars

From left: Cooper Speer, Ryan Renner and Bryan Melia are Victory Electric's summer interns.



LOVE THE OUTDOORS? BE **SAFE** OUT THERE.



Two-thirds of lightning fatalities are associated with outdoor recreational activities.



Do not use generators in enclosed areas. The same goes for grills, camping stoves or other small appliances that produce carbon monoxide.



Pay attention to weather forecasts before you go canoeing or boating. Get off the open water as soon as you hear thunder.

Going for a hike? If you hear thunder or see lightning, do not seek shelter under a tree.



Look up for power lines while fishing or sailing. Fishing is the most common outdoor activity associated with lightning-related deaths.



X

Tent camping? Plan ahead and seek shelter in a hardtop vehicle or four-sided building during a storm or at the first sight of lightning.



SOURCE: WWW.SAFELECTRICITY.ORG

JULY 11
FRIDAY
GREEN-STREET PARK
SPEARVILLE KANSAS



5 P.M.-7 P.M. FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED
SPEARVILLE C.O.W. FESTIVAL
HAMBURGER & HOT DOG FEED

SPEARVILLE
MEMBER
APPRECIATION

To connect with the communities we serve and express our gratitude to all our members, Victory Electric is hosting Community Appreciation Events throughout our service area. We hope you join the fun as we celebrate Spearville!



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

As member-owners,
your voice **matters**.



We want to hear about our performance and how we can better meet your needs. Your feedback on our member satisfaction survey will help us improve our service and plan for the future of the cooperative. This confidential survey will only take 5-10 minutes to complete. Thank you for your participation.

Scan the QR code to start the survey.

Keep Your Devices Charged When You're off the Grid

Spending time outdoors is important. It's also important to stay connected while you're camping, hiking, or on the water so you can track weather conditions and handle emergencies.

Without easy access to outlets, keeping your electronics charged requires planning. Here are ways to extend battery life and stay powered up and safe outdoors.

CHARGE BEFORE YOU GO

Fully charge your phone, camera, GPS, or other devices before you hit the road. Don't forget extra batteries for flashlights or headlamps.

Keep chargers in your car, but only charge devices while the engine is running to avoid draining the car battery. Hide cords and chargers from view if you leave your car unattended.

PACK SMART

When you're camping, everything you pack needs to be worth its weight in gold, or at least double as a backup battery. Bring lightweight power banks and multi-use gear like solar lanterns with USB ports. Emergency radios and portable speakers often offer charging jacks, too.

OPTIMIZE BATTERY LIFE

Switch to airplane mode to prevent your phone from searching for a cell signal. This also helps you fully unplug without the distraction of text messages or Instagram notifications.

Turn off Bluetooth, Wi-Fi and GPS when not in use. Dim

QUICK TIPS

- ▶ Bring power banks and a solar charger for backup power in the wilderness.
- ▶ Keep chargers in your car to recharge while on the road.
- ▶ Use airplane mode, dim screen brightness, or simply turn off your phone to save battery life.
- ▶ Make sure you pack flashlights and extra batteries.

screen brightness or enable power saving mode — or simply turn your phone off when not in use. Save your battery for essential tasks such as navigation or emergencies.

CHOOSE CAMPSITES WITH POWER

Look for campgrounds with electric hookups to make charging simple and stress-free. Bring an outdoor-rated extension cord to charge multiple devices at once.

HARNESS ALTERNATIVE ENERGY

Flexible solar panel chargers are perfect for sunny days outdoors. Hook one up directly to your phone or power bank. For overcast conditions, hand-crank chargers can offer enough power for an emergency phone call, while wind, water and fire-powered options provide additional backup.

PROTECT YOUR DEVICES

Keeping your devices safe and functional is just as important as keeping them charged.

Use waterproof cases to guard against rain or spills.

Avoid extreme temperatures, as batteries drain faster in hot or cold weather. During cold weather, keep electronics close to your body for prolonged battery life.

Store devices securely to prevent damage from falls or dirt exposure.

With these tips, you'll stay safe and connected while you recharge in the great outdoors, ready for any adventure!

FREE AND EASY Ways to Save Energy

- 1** Close or lower window coverings during the heat of the day.



- 2** Set your thermostat a few degrees higher than normal.



- 3** Take cooler showers (this is better in the summer anyway!)



- 4** Use countertop appliances or a microwave instead of an oven.



- 5** Better yet, grill or smoke food outdoors.



- 6** Unplug that extra fridge, especially older, inefficient models (they have to work even harder in a hot garage).



- 7** Optimize your programmable thermostat's features (around 40% of homeowners never program them).



- 8** Check the airflow around windows and doors (add weatherstripping if needed).



- 9** Unplug all chargers and electronics before leaving the house.



- 10** Shut the front door (don't air-condition the outdoors).



Pole, Line Inspections Continue on the Ground and in the Air

Victory Electric is now conducting pole inspections in parts of our service territory. Areas near Fort Dodge, north of Montezuma, south of Ensign and east of Ford are being assessed by third-party contractor crews this summer.

By regularly testing and inspecting electric pole integrity and strength, Victory Electric lowers total risk and increases the reliability and safety of our electric system. Pole inspection also helps us address any problems before poles break.

Power poles are treated to resist decay, but over time wooden poles may deteriorate and need to be replaced. Soil type, moisture levels, temperatures and other factors affect the rate of decay. Inspectors evaluate poles visually and by drilling into the pole below the ground line. Poles and other infrastructure identified with deficiencies during the inspection process will then be repaired or replaced.

SUNFLOWER ELECTRIC TO INSPECT HIGH-VOLTAGE LINES

Sunflower Electric Power Corporation, Victory's generation and transmission (G&T) power provider, will also be conducting aerial inspections of its high-voltage lines through the summer. Sunflower's power lines located near Dodge City and Spearville and continuing east toward Hutchinson are scheduled to be evaluated in late July.

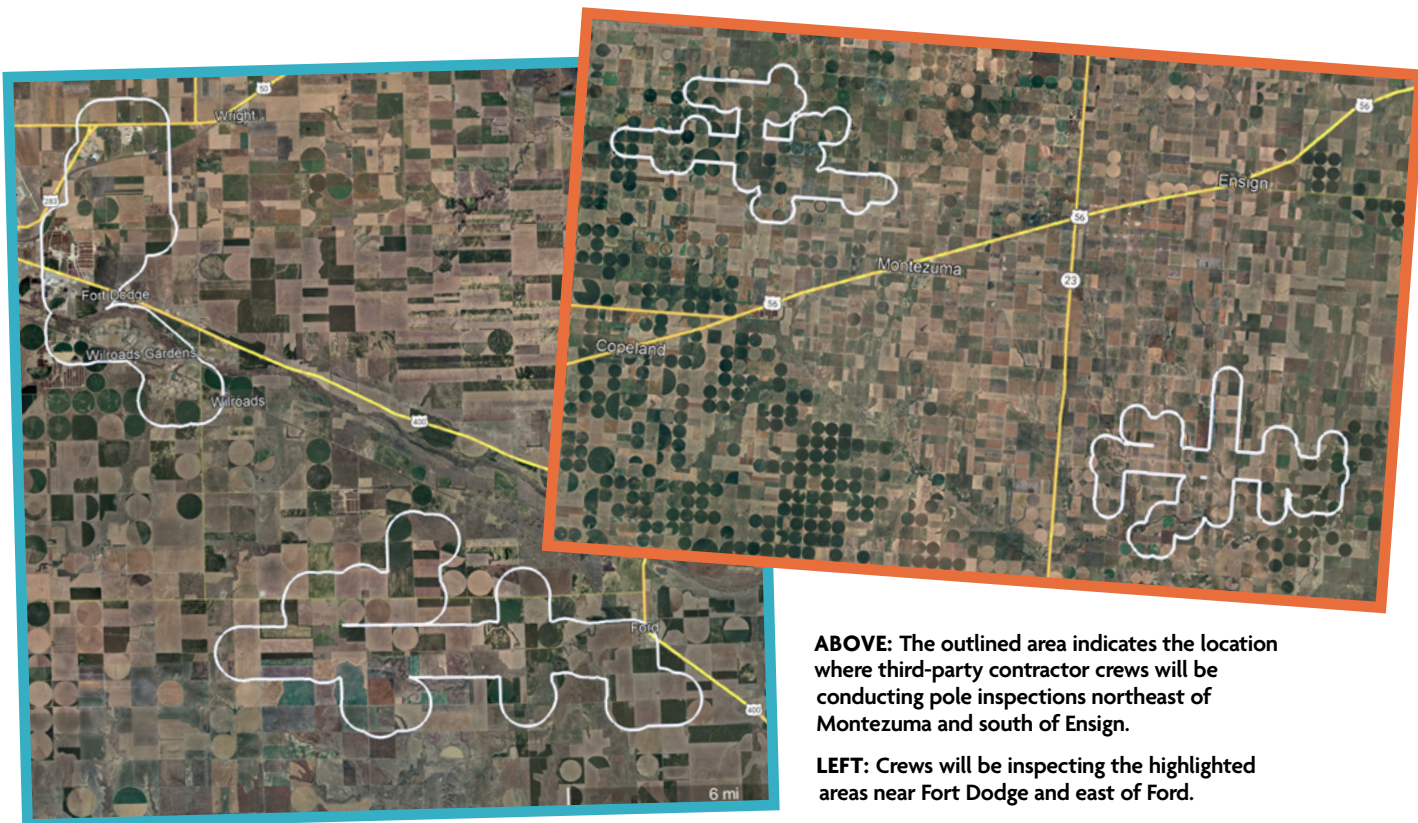
Sunflower crews will be working with an independent



Sunflower Electric will be inspecting high-voltage transmission lines in the area this summer. A helicopter pilot will perform flyby and hover patrols of lines.

contractor using a gray N500RM helicopter to perform both flyby and hover patrols at low altitudes. These inspections are part of Sunflower's maintenance program and help ensure continued reliability.

Do not be alarmed if you see inspection crews checking poles or high-voltage power lines on or near your property in the coming weeks. Contact our office at 620-227-2139 if you have any questions. Thank you for your cooperation with this important maintenance work.



ABOVE: The outlined area indicates the location where third-party contractor crews will be conducting pole inspections northeast of Montezuma and south of Ensign.

LEFT: Crews will be inspecting the highlighted areas near Fort Dodge and east of Ford.

Reliability Remains a Top Priority Continued from page 12A ►

review other energy-related rules on ozone transport, power plant wastewater and coal ash.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) is a national trade association that represents electric cooperatives. CEO Jim Matheson met with EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin to discuss these issues and share a policy road map recommending ways the EPA could address harmful regulations for electric co-ops while ensuring reliable, affordable power and protecting the environment.

CO-OP LEADERS ADVOCATE FOR MEMBERS

NRECA held its annual legislative conference in Washington, D.C., in April. Coop-

erative leaders from all over the country met with members of Congress to discuss important energy trends and how they affect our members at home. Our mission during this exchange of ideas was to advocate for reliable, affordable power and stress to key policymakers that electric reliability is non-negotiable as they consider legislation that affects energy.

Co-op leaders at the conference spoke in support of programs that bolster energy infrastructure projects that would help meet the needs of our individual communities. Some of these important initiatives include the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service electric loan program and the New Empowering Rural America co-op loan and grant pro-

gram, energy tax credits with an elective (direct) pay option for co-ops, and recently funded Department of Energy infrastructure programs.

Co-op leaders attending the NRECA legislative conference also stressed to lawmakers the importance of passing permitting reform, repealing the EPA power plant rule, protecting hydropower and defending against wildfires.

With our partners, we will continue to collaborate with the current administration and legislators to implement smart energy policies, address problems and protect reliability. Co-ops are essential partners in planning for America's energy future.

Thanks, Shane



JOIN OUR
TEAM!

WE ARE HIRING

Are you a safety-minded, experienced **journeyman lineman** who is qualified to perform all aspects of line work without supervision, a good problem-solver and a team player? **Victory Electric is now hiring journeyman linemen to:**

- Maintain and repair overhead and underground electrical distribution lines.
- Operate equipment involved in the construction, operation and maintenance of the cooperative's electrical system.
- Perform other duties associated with the maintenance and restoration of electric service.

victoryelectric.net



CELEBRATING

80 *years*



Adriana Tipton (left), communications coordinator, and Dylan Ratts, key accounts coordinator, serve cake to members to celebrate the co-op's 80th anniversary.

Victory Electric hosted a reception on May 28 to celebrate our 80th anniversary. Member-owners had a piece of cake and learned about the cooperative's history. Victory was founded in June 1945.

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.

