

P.O. Box 1335, 3230 N. 14th Ave.
Dodge City, KS 67801
620-227-2139
victoryelectric.net
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Electronews



FROM THE CEO

Grant Funds to Boost Grid Resiliency



Shane Laws

Victory Electric trustees, staff and employees stay informed about trends affecting the electric utility industry and seek innovative strategies to meet our current and

future energy needs. The cooperative prioritizes decisions that align with the interests of the local communities we serve while providing reliable, affordable energy to the region.

Researching and applying for grants is one strategy we use to reach that goal. Grant funding allows us to avoid long-term debt and its associated interest expense. This helps the cooperative save money and maintain lower rates for our members.

In 2024, Victory Electric was approved for a grid resiliency grant to improve infrastructure in Dodge City. The U.S. Department of Energy, the Kansas Corporation Commission and the Build Kansas Fund are jointly investing over \$2.1 million in this project, which involves the installation of approximately 225 TripSaver devices on single-phase taps throughout the Dodge City area.

DEVICES WILL REDUCE OUTAGES

Up to 80% of the faults on a power

system are temporary problems caused by weather, wildlife or vegetation. A fuse is a single-use device that protects a section of power line and prevents the outage from affecting many other services upstream. When a problem on the line occurs and blows a fuse, the line loses power until a worker is able to travel to the location and replace it.

A TripSaver device acts as a programmable smart fuse that protects the system from faults and prevents longer outages. If a problem occurs on a line with a TripSaver installed, the device will de-energize the line for a brief period of time, then re-energize it. This resolves the temporary fault and keeps the power flowing, and members experience a blink in power rather than an outage.

TripSaver devices have been shown to reduce the total number and length of outages. Victory Electric anticipates a large decrease in outages with these devices, which will improve infrastructure resiliency and reliability, especially in south Dodge City. The devices will be especially useful when trees get into power lines or high winds cause lines to slap together. In addition to the

A TripSaver device acts as a programmable smart fuse that protects the system from faults and prevents longer outages.

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Student Leaders Connect in Washington, D.C.

BECCA DURLER and **BAILEE BRADFORD** received an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., for the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour this summer. The two area students traveled with 27 other delegates from Kansas and four from Hawaii on an action-packed trip June 14-20. Victory Electric Business Intelligence Analyst **BRENT NAU** and his wife, **DESIREE**, also accompanied the group as chaperones.

Brent said he was impressed by the way the students shared more about themselves with other youth and made meaningful connections during their travels together. "Seeing the monuments and memorials was great, but the best part for me was seeing how the kids meshed together. The real memories were the friendships that were forged by the kids," he said.

Making connections with other youth is key to the annual Youth Tour's success. Since the late 1950s, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Youth Tour has been developing young leaders by bringing high school students from around the country to Washington, D.C. More than 2,000 youth delegates, chaperones and staff from 44 states visited the nation's capital this year.

"Something that inspired me on this trip was all the other delegates," Bradford said of her experience. "I love all of them, and they have all inspired me to become a better person, live life to the fullest and be a leader. Most of all, I have learned

I was so impacted by the Holocaust Memorial Museum. The heartache that I feel when I learn about those events makes me want to make the world better.

BECCA DURLER



Becca Durler (left) and Bailee Bradford pose near the U.S. Capitol.

that no one is perfect and we all have flaws that make us special."

The Hawaii-Kansas delegation learned about historical figures and events during tours of Arlington National Cemetery, which included the Changing of the Guard ceremony; national monuments and memorials; the National Portrait Gallery and other Smithsonian museums; and a new educational museum, The People's House: A White House Experience. Students had the opportunity to speak to a Holocaust survivor while touring the U.S. Holocaust Museum. They also had a dinner cruise on

the Potomac River, watched a Washington Nationals baseball game, and attended a production of "Les Misérables" at John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

Kansas Youth Tour delegates met with U.S. Sen. Roger Marshall and Jason Morganti, a legislative assistant for U.S. Rep. Ron Estes, at the U.S. Capitol. Before traveling to Washington, D.C., Kansas delegates also toured the Kansas State Capitol in Topeka with State Treasurer Steven Johnson and Kansas Rep. Kyle Hoffman, both Youth Tour alumni.

Youth Day brought all the state delegations together to connect with other students, hear motivational speakers and learn about electric cooperatives and careers in the electric industry. The Kansas and Hawaii delegations also joined their peers from Colorado and Wyoming for a leadership workshop and learned about U.S. flag etiquette from Sgt. 1st Class Phillip Reddick with the U.S. Coast Guard.

"I was inspired by Sgt. 1st Class Reddick's motivation and passion for serving our country. I was inspired by his devotion to protecting people who he has never met. He inspired me to do more for others because it is the right thing to do," Durler said.

BUILDING LEADERS

Durler and Bradford are active leaders in their schools, and the student athletes also excel in academics, extracurricular activities and community service. A Victory Electric panel selected them for this honor after the students submitted an application, résumé and video and completed an in-person interview in January. They will both receive \$500 scholarships following their graduation next spring.

Durler will be a senior at Bucklin High School this fall. She was recently elected Southwest District FFA president and previously served as the district FFA treasurer. She has also served as president of the Wright Wonder Workers 4-H Club and vice president of the Bucklin Student Council.

Bradford will be a senior at Hodgeman County High School. In

addition to serving on a subcommittee for Kansas youth and as the education director for her school's RESIST group for tobacco use prevention, she is an entrepreneur. She founded Bailee's Tiny Tumblers and is a tumbling coach.

Applications for next year's Youth Tour will open later this fall. Learn more about the youth programs Victory Electric supports at www.victoryelectric.net under My Community.



Bailee Bradford takes a seat behind a reproduction of the Resolute Desk at the The People's House museum.



Bailee Bradford (left), Becca Durler (second from left) and other Youth Tour delegates visit the Lincoln Memorial.

The thing that had the most impact on me was the speech by [Olympic medalist] Mike Schlappi. It was very motivational and moving. I learned a lot, and it changed my perspective on how to live life.

BAILEE BRADFORD



LEFT: Business Intelligence Analyst Brent Nau and his wife, Desiree, also accompanied the Kansas-Hawaii Youth Tour delegates as chaperones. RIGHT: Students learned about flag etiquette from Sgt. 1st Class Phillip Reddick with the U.S. Coast Guard.



Meadowlark House, SKDC 10-33 Foundation Receive CoBank Funding

Victory Electric congratulates Meadowlark House Child Advocacy Center and the Southwest Kansas-Dodge City 10-33 Foundation for each winning a 2025 CoBank Sharing Success grant.

After evaluating the applications of 21 nonprofit organizations from our service area, the Victory Electric Board of Trustees selected **MEADOWLARK HOUSE** to receive a \$23,000 grant and the **SKDC 10-33 FOUNDATION** to receive a \$7,000 grant, based on the amounts the organizations requested in their grant proposals.

This annual grant opportunity is made possible by Victory Electric in partnership with CoBank, whose \$6 million Sharing Success fund matches customer donations to charities across rural America. CoBank's maximum grant award was raised to \$15,000 per year in 2025 and is matched by Victory Electric for a total of \$30,000 available to one or more selected recipients.

MEADOWLARK HOUSE

Meadowlark House Child Advocacy Center provides a supportive, child-friendly sanctuary for kids who have experienced abuse and neglect. Meadowlark House's services help reduce the trauma children face when sharing their abuse experiences with advocates and other professionals.

"We work closely with law enforcement, social services, medical personnel, and mental health professionals to create a coordinated response that

prioritizes the well-being of the child," Jill Henrichs, coordinator, noted in the grant application.

Meadowlark House coordinates with outside agencies to conduct forensic interviews that are tailored to children's age and developmental level. The coordinated services help protect children from further harm and ensure those responsible for hurting them can be held accountable. Meadowlark House also provides legal advocacy, locates safe housing when needed, and offers referrals for medical providers and mental health therapists who specialize in treating trauma.

CoBank Sharing Success Grant funding will be used to obtain and implement the Guardify Systems platform for conducting secure forensic interviews and to better coordinate Meadowlark House's child advocacy services while ensuring compliance with state and federal regulations. The system will streamline case management, improve data security, and enable seamless collaboration among child welfare professionals, law enforcement and legal entities.

There is a pressing need for Meadowlark House's services. In 2023 and 2024, the organization served 133 children across nine counties.

The grant will enable Meadowlark House to



Meadowlark House Child Advocacy Center received a \$23,000 grant for a case management platform for conducting secure forensic interviews and coordinating support and advocacy services it and other agencies provide to abused children.

continue caring for neglected and abused children's physical and emotional well-being and helping them to heal.

To learn more about Meadowlark House, visit www.meadowlarkhouse.org.

SKDC 10-33 FOUNDATION

The Southwest Kansas-Dodge City 10-33 Foundation provides crisis support, training and education to first responders, military personnel, communities and their families in rural Kansas. Law enforcement officers and other first responders experience a significant number of traumatic events during their careers. The group's mission is to serve those who protect others when they need support themselves.

Staffed by current and former first responders, military members and their family members, the group of "first responders to first responders" took its name from the radio code for "officer in distress." The 10-33 Foundation was formed in 2012, and the local team launched in 2023.

The SKDC 10-33 Foundation will use grant funds for crisis training, including a three-day Critical Incident Stress Management course in the fall for area first responders, school personnel and community volunteers to learn strategies for responding to trauma and critical incidents.

"At the 10-33 Foundation, we are dedicated to giving back and building communities that are strong, resilient and never alone. This grant plays a crucial role in making that vision a reality," said SKDC 10-33 Peer Support Team Lead Summer Rhodes.

The demand for the group to provide community mass briefings, critical incident defusings, debriefings and one-on-one crisis interventions continues to grow in the region.



The Southwest Kansas-Dodge City 10-33 Foundation received a \$7,000 CoBank Sharing Success grant to provide crisis support and training for first responders.

"Your generous support empowers the 10-33 Foundation to continue providing essential peer support, crisis response and mental health resources to first responders and community members when they need it most," Rhodes said.

For more information, visit www.1033foundation.org.

COBANK AND VICTORY ELECTRIC

In partnership with CoBank, Victory Electric has awarded \$215,000 in Sharing Success grants to nonprofit organizations in its service area since 2012. The program is designed to celebrate the vital role that cooperatives play in individual communities across the country.

To learn more about the CoBank Sharing Success grant, visit www.victoryelectric.net/cobank-sharing-success-grant or email askcommunications@victoryelectric.net.

GRANT FUNDS TO BOOST GRID RESILIENCY *Continued from page 12A ►*

improvement in Dodge City's quality of electric service, the grant-funded resiliency project will reduce the overall cost associated with repairing outages by decreasing the number of service calls required to investigate a single-phase outage and/or replace a blown fuse.

PROJECT DEPLOYMENT BEGINS SOON

Installation of the first batch of TripSaver devices is expected to begin this summer. Victory Electric estimates the project will be completed by fall 2028. The installation will be completed in stages and include several structural re-

placements, further increasing resiliency throughout the project area. We have been working with Sunflower Electric Power Corporation for cost analysis and other research to determine the best device placement, equipment coordination and optimal programming settings.

We're excited about this resiliency grant and how the project will benefit our member-owners and the Dodge City region. The project and the funds awarded will improve the resilience of our local energy infrastructure, enabling us to provide a more reliable and stable system for the entire community.

Resilient electrical systems recover

more quickly from disruptions that might diminish the quality or continuity of electricity supply. Improving grid resiliency ensures that the communities Victory Electric serves will remain powered when problems occur. It also boosts the economic stability of regions by preventing prolonged power outages that disrupt businesses. Electric service improvements also increase the quality of life for Dodge City residents and the greater southwest Kansas region. To learn more, visit www.victoryelectric.net/project-dc-resiliency.

Thanks, Shane

We Appreciate YOU!


Victory Electric is holding events throughout our service area this year to show our member-owners how much we appreciate them.

On June 11, Victory Electric cheered on the Dodge City A's baseball team at Spark at the Park. Employees handed out free meal vouchers, served ice cream in baseball helmet bowls, and gave away several prizes and other goodies to those attending the game.

On June 17, Victory hosted a pop-up member appreciation event at Spike's Café in Ingalls. We gave away door prizes and bought lunch for diners.



FREEMAN JOINS SERVICE CREW



Journeyman **KEVIN FREEMAN** recently moved to Victory Electric's service department. He began his career with Victory in February 2017 as a second-class lineman and earned his journeyman certification in 2018. He attended lineman school at Manhattan Technical College and worked for J&J Powerline before joining Victory. In his new role on the service crew Freeman will troubleshoot and work on outages, respond to service calls from member-owners, make light repairs and assist other crews in restoring power as needed. Congratulations, Kevin!

IT'S 'SHOWTIME' FOR 4-H MEMBERS



Victory Electric provided T-shirts for 4-H members in our service area to wear while competing at their county fairs. Youth showed livestock and exhibited other projects at the following fairs:

HODGEMAN COUNTY FAIR	FORD COUNTY FAIR	GRAY COUNTY FAIR
JULY 12-19 IN JETMORE	JULY 17-21 IN DODGE CITY	JULY 21-24 IN CIMARRON

We appreciate the 4-H youth, parents, leaders and extension agents in our area and hope you all had a great fair!

Program Cultivates Community Leaders

Local leaders who are knowledgeable about their community's particular strengths, challenges and resources inspire trust and encourage collaboration to create positive change. The Dodge City Area Chamber of Commerce aims to cultivate effective local leaders in the region's workforce and promote civic engagement through its Leadership Dodge program, which launched in 1987.

Victory Electric Manager of IT **TAYLOR HOBBS** and Member Services Representative **BRENDA HERTEL** graduated from the 2025 Leadership Dodge cohort June 26. The professional development program provides education about leadership principles and introduces participants to area leaders, agencies and community initiatives through a combination of tours, panel discussions and classroom activities.

"The program's success is truly rooted in the unique fabric of Dodge City. Our community is incredibly diverse and interconnected, which means effective leadership here requires a deeper level of engagement and relationship-building. Leadership Dodge not only explores various leadership theories and professional development tools, but it also fosters genuine connections that translate into long-term community impact," said Dodge City Chamber President and CEO Karla Lees, who co-teaches Leadership Dodge with Dr. Karen Ackerman.

During monthly sessions from February through June, participants met with local leaders and decision-makers and learned how local agencies, businesses and schools work collaboratively to improve opportunities for growth and community development. Hertel and Hobbs expressed that they appreciated how collaboration between different agencies and other groups makes the community better.

"The most memorable thing I learned was how the different groups, such as school, city and county officials, sheriff's office, police department, and small businesses, are all work-



In March, Leadership Dodge members attended Dodge City Night in Topeka to connect with state legislators and promote community initiatives.

ing together toward one goal: improving the quality of life for everyone in the community. It was eye-opening to see how much collaboration and care happens behind the scenes to keep Dodge City a great place to live," Hobbs said.

"Leadership Dodge reminded me that positive change is possible when we invest in people and community. When you see firsthand how growth and transformation can happen, it reinforces the belief that every interaction matters. You're not just solving problems or answering questions. You're building trust and loyalty and showing that you care," Hertel said.

Hobbs said he enjoyed the tours and that he was especially impressed by Dodge City High School's career and technical education program and the industry certifications offered to students. "It's impressive to see how many real-world opportunities students have to discover their passion and develop valuable skills," he said.

Chief Information Officer Denzil McGill and Vice President of Corporate Services Amy Grasser attended the 2025 graduation ceremony.

"Amy and I both went to the Leadership Dodge 2025 graduation ceremony to see Taylor and Brenda graduate. Each graduate was asked to say a few words about their



For its community project, the 2025 group distributed over 1,000 pounds of food to local food pantries after collecting donations during its Fun Day Food Drive at the Main Street Festival, including Dodge City Community College's "Conq Care Cabinet" student food pantry.

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Program Cultivates Community Leaders Continued from page 12G ►



The 2025 cohort of Leadership Dodge graduated in June.

experience before they received their diploma. I couldn't have been more proud of how well Taylor and Brenda represented themselves and Victory as they spoke. Each one did a fantastic job!" McGill said.

Current Victory Electric employees who previously completed the Leadership Dodge program are Manager of Metering and Substations Heith Konecny, Manager of Operations Eric Speer, System Operator Jarod Scheve and Vice President of Engineering Rob Henry.

"This experience has truly been unforgettable. I've gained not only knowledge but lifelong friendships. Each class offered something new and eye-opening. I discovered more about my hometown, my community, those around me and even myself. I was reminded of the strength of our community and the progress being made to make it a better and safer place to live in," Hertel said.

To learn more, visit www.dodgechamber.com/leadership-dodge.



Karla Lees (left) and Dr. Karen Ackerman (right) present Brenda Hertel with her certificate.



Karla Lees (left) and Dr. Karen Ackerman (right) present Taylor Hobbs with his certificate.

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.

