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# Electronews



## FROM THE CEO

### Preparedness Requires Cooperation



Shane Laws

Emergencies can be unpredictable and catch us off guard, but we can take actions today to be better prepared for emergencies that may happen later. For more than 20

years, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other agencies have promoted National Preparedness Month every September. The purpose is to encourage Americans to plan ahead, gather supplies, and prepare for disasters and emergencies that could happen at any time of year.

Preparedness is extremely important to Victory Electric, too. Providing safe, reliable, affordable energy is our core mission, and we must stay prepared and plan ahead to accomplish that. With a network of partners, Victory Electric follows multiple plans and procedures

to prepare for severe weather and any energy emergencies that may occur.

#### OUR PARTNERS

Victory Electric distributes electricity to homes, schools and businesses in its service area and is a member-owner of Sunflower Electric Power Corporation, a generation and transmission electric cooperative based in Hays. Sunflower generates or purchases power and delivers it to Victory Electric and other cooperatives via high-voltage transmission lines. Victory Electric then reduces the voltage and transmits power on distribution lines directly to cooperative members like you.

Sunflower is part of the Southwest Power Pool (SPP), a regional transmission organization based in Little Rock, Arkansas. SPP acts like an air traffic controller as it directs the flow of electricity for the power providers in its 14-state network. Victory, Sunflower and SPP work together to provide energy, and they all

*Continued on page 12G ►*

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# Colorado Camp Empow

**BLAIRE BRADFORD** and **KYNLEE FRINK** represented Victory Electric at the 48th Annual Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp (CYLC) held July 11-17 near scenic Steamboat Springs, Colorado. The camp brought together 77 high school student leaders from Kansas, Oklahoma, Colorado and Wyoming, sponsored by 45 electric and agriculture cooperatives.

Last fall, these student leaders submitted an application, résumé and a short video about energy safety. They also interviewed with a panel of judges at Victory Electric as part of the selection process.

## HANDS-ON LEARNING AT LEADERSHIP CAMP

“At Victory Electric, we want to empower young leaders,” said Vice President of Communications Chanda Schulte. “Sponsoring youth trips like CYLC gives students the chance to step up and make a real impact in their community.”

Throughout the weeklong camp, students gained hands-on experience in cooperative business operations by forming and managing a mock candy cooperative. They elected a board of directors, appointed a general manager, created committees and held daily membership meetings, mirroring the real-world structure of member-owned cooperatives. Highlights included electric safety demonstrations by cooperative linemen, a live raptor presentation from HawkQuest, and a tour of the Craig Power Station. Educational sessions covered leadership development, conflict resolution, and co-op career opportunities.

## ADVENTURES, FRIENDSHIPS AND LASTING LESSONS

“The highlight of my camp experience has been the



**Blaire Bradford (left) and Kynlee Frink represented Victory Electric at CYLC in July.**

opportunity to listen to our guest speakers Craig Zablocki and Craig Hillier,” Frink said. “These presentations provided me with a different way of viewing stressful situations and being able to handle conflict.”

CYLC offered more than just professional growth opportunities; it also fostered a sense of camaraderie and adventure. Students explored the natural beauty of Mount Werner, experienced the charm of downtown Steamboat Springs and braved the rapids of the Colorado River on a rafting trip. Recreational highlights included a volleyball tournament, swimming, a talent show and a dance.

“The friends I’ve made at this camp inspired me,” Bradford



**LEFT:** Campers rode the gondola up Mount Werner in Steamboat Springs, Colorado. **RIGHT:** Campers leaving the glen where activities were held outside in a tent.





# ers Young Leaders

said. “Making real friends that care about me and like being around the real me inspired me to look for the best in people and know there are good people out there who won’t take advantage of me. I will forever be grateful for this opportunity that gave me such amazing friends.”

Victory Electric sponsors four youth trips each year — two to CYLC and two to the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. Applications for 2026 trips will open this fall. Visit [www.victoryelectric.net/youth-tour-leadership-camp](http://www.victoryelectric.net/youth-tour-leadership-camp) to learn more.

## FARM FAMILY RAISES STUDENT LEADERS

**ARCH** and **MICHELLE FRINK** of Cimarron, who farm in Victory Electric’s service area, are well acquainted with cooperative youth leadership programs. Over the years, all four of their children applied for and were selected to represent Victory Electric on youth trips.

All of the Frink siblings developed leadership skills while participating in school, church and community groups and on sports teams. Curt won a trip to Washington, D.C., for the 2016 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour; Cody was selected for the 2018 Youth Tour; Clay was named a 2020 Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp winner, though the camp was later canceled; and Kynlee recently attended the 2025 CYLC in Colorado.

“When we reflect on the experiences our children enjoyed during their time attending the youth leadership trips, we are reminded of the lifelong friendships they forged with other student leaders from across the country,” said Arch and Michelle. “Our son Cody actually lived with one of the friends he made on the trip during his time at Kansas State University, and he was the best man in his wedding.”

“Along with the friendships made, they were also able to gain a greater understanding of how our electrical cooperatives function. They were able to visit some amazing destinations and explore new things with other student leaders,” they added.

### CURT

“Seeing all of the memorials and historic buildings had a profound impact on me, and it made me really appreciate everything that has happened in American history that has formed

our country to being what it is today,” said Curt following his trip to Washington, D.C., in 2016.

Shana Read, director of education and training for Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., coordinates the state’s cooperative youth programs.

“Some of the 2016 delegates were able to see the Dalai Lama as he walked by us during our U.S. Capitol Tour,” she said. Read noted that while in D.C., the Kansas-Hawaii group also watched the Washington Nationals baseball team play the Chicago Cubs, who went on to win the World Series that year.

### CODY

“During this trip I was completely in awe. I could not believe I was able to stand where many of our founding fathers stood. Seeing the places I had only previously seen in textbooks was really a dream come true. I also gained a better understanding of our local cooperatives and the inner workings of one similar to Victory Electric,” Cody said after his Youth Tour trip in 2018.

“One of the unique experiences that Cody got to do was to help paint the community mural in Topeka at the Brown v. Board of Education Historic Site,” Read said.



Curt Frink (left) attended the 2016 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, and Cody Frink (right) attended the same trip in 2018.

### CLAY

Victory Electric selected Clay as a 2020 CYLC winner, but both the camp and D.C. trip were later canceled that year because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Clay and the other three 2020 winners received \$1,000 scholarships from Victory since they were not able to take the youth development trips they won because of their excellent academic and leadership abilities.

### KYNLEE

“On this trip, I saw many different personalities and a lot of people stepping out of their comfort zone. Seeing this has inspired me to be more outgoing and live for myself and not others,” Kynlee said. Blaire Bradford, Kynlee’s fellow Victory camper this year, also has a sibling connection to co-op youth programs. Blaire’s twin sister, Bailee, attended the 2025 Youth Tour in June.

Arch and Michelle said they encourage juniors in Victory Electric’s service area to apply for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. “We’re confident they will make fond memories that will last a lifetime,” they said.



# Victory Electric Welcomes

Victory Electric is growing! The cooperative welcomed the following new employees in July and August to our operations, information technology and engineering teams.

## OPERATIONS



**Angel Munoz**



**Erubiel Duron**



**Jake Buoncristiani**

"Because of heavy workloads and more projects being planned, we added a crew to help us keep up with pole replacements and other work," said Vice President of Operations **RYAN MILLER**. Three new linemen recently joined the operations team.

**ANGEL MUNOZ** joined Victory Electric as a lineman in July. The Satanta native was previously a groundman for Drisco and worked on transmission foundations for IBEW Local 304. He interned for J&J Powerline after receiving his electrical powerline technology certification from Pratt Community College's Dodge City location.

He enjoys hanging out with friends and family in his free time.

"My father inspires me with my work ethic," Munoz said. "I've also had many older people in this industry who have pushed me through the process of what I do and what I need to get done."

**ERUBIEL DURON**, a Dodge City native, joined Victory Electric as a lineman in August. He previously worked as an apprentice lineman for CMS Electric Cooperative in Meade and completed an internship at Southern Pioneer Electric Company. After playing baseball at Dodge City Community College, Duron completed his associate degree in electrical power line technology from Pratt Community College at its Dodge City location.

Duron has three dogs and enjoys golfing, spending time with his girlfriend and family, and anything outdoors. He's a fan of the Kansas City Royals, Kansas City Chiefs and the Kansas State Wildcats.

"My dad inspires me with his work ethic, grit and determination," Duron said. "He's always wanted to be 10% better every day."

**JAKE BUONCRISTIANI** also joined Victory as a lineman in August. Originally from Chino Hills, California, he previously worked

as a second-step apprentice lineman at McNabb Enterprises Electrical Powerline Company and as a groundman for American Heavy Moving and Rigging. He completed the lineman program at Northwest Lineman College in Meridian, Idaho.

Buoncristiani enjoys hanging out with family and friends, hunting and fishing and watching war and action movies. He also likes to cheer on the San Francisco 49ers, the Texas Rangers and the LA Dodgers.

Buoncristiani said he takes pride in being able to get power turned back on for people, and he finds inspiration in the look on their faces and their happiness when the job is done.

"Since I've moved, I love it here — the company and the guys," he said.



**Danna Pogue**

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

**DANNA POGUE**, a Dodge City native, joined Victory Electric as project manager, a new position in the information technology department. Pogue received a bachelor's degree in education from Newman University and a master's degree in building leadership from Fort Hays State University. Before joining the cooperative, she worked as

an instructional coach for Dodge City Public Schools. She also previously taught middle school in Dodge City and third grade in Minneola.

Pogue said she looks forward to professional growth at Victory. Although her new role at Victory is a big transition from the education field, being an instructional coordinator also requires strong organizational skills and the ability to work with diverse groups of people.

"It's similar to project management," Pogue said. "It's a lot of learning and working with different groups of stakeholders, regardless if it's parents, teachers or adults in general."

Pogue has two children, Summer, 15, and Brody, 12. She enjoys gardening, bowling and spending time with her kids, her significant other, Evan, and his two children. Pogue also works at Hutchinson Speedway and the Dodge City Raceway Park in her free time and is a fan of the Kansas Jayhawks and the Arkansas Razorbacks.

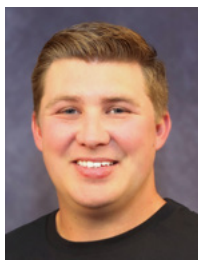
She is active in the Dodge City community and appreciates that the cooperative has a community focus, too.

"I love learning and change and being part of an organiza-

# New Employees

tion that's community-focused," Pogue said. "Community connection — I'm really about that."

## ENGINEERING



Colin Regan

### COLIN REGAN

is Victory's new construction coordinator. He joins the co-op world after working as a commercial banking assistant at Landmark Bank for several

years. Regan also previously worked as a project manager for an industrial flooring company. He has an associate degree in business administration from Butler County Community College and a bachelor's degree in business from

Fort Hays State University. He attended high school at Otis-Bison and considers Albert, Kansas, home. His brother is a lineman at Wheatland Electric in Great Bend.

Regan said he looks forward to the opportunity to get away from the desk and into the field. The variety of work he will do in his new role at Victory also appeals to him.

In his free time, Regan enjoys hunting, fishing and going to the lake. He and his wife have three yellow labs and spend time outdoors whenever they can. He's a fan of the Kansas City Chiefs and the Kansas City Royals.

"I think seeing others achieve success inspires me to try my best to do the same," Regan said.

Welcome to the Victory team, Angel, Erubiel, Jake, Danna and Colin!

## SAFETY TIP

**MAKE A PLAN.** Talk with your family about where you will go and how you will stay in touch during an emergency.

**BUILD AN EMERGENCY SUPPLY KIT.** Gather supplies like water, non-perishable food, flashlights, batteries, medications and first-aid supplies.

**STAY INFORMED.** Sign up for local weather alerts and updates from your cooperative.



## 6 ESSENTIAL TIPS

### Keep Your Phone Charged During an Outage

Our phones have become lifelines to the world — use these quick tips to keep them powered up during an outage:

- **CHARGE AHEAD:** Fully charge your phone before predicted storms or outages.
- **USE YOUR CAR:** Keep a car charger handy, but only charge devices when the engine is running to avoid draining your car battery.
- **EMERGENCY GEAR:** Keep a charged portable power bank ready for emergencies. Look for emergency radios and portable speakers that double as charging jacks.
- **LAPTOP BACKUP:** Use your laptop's USB port to charge your phone (Note: This will drain the laptop battery.)
- **CONSERVE BATTERY:** Turn off Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, GPS, dim your screen, and use airplane mode or power down to save energy.
- **ALTERNATIVE CHARGERS:** Use solar-powered or hand-crank chargers for emergency calls.

## OPERATIONS TEAM ANNOUNCES JOB MOVES

**JEREMY ELLING** has been promoted to crew chief. He served as a firefighter for 15 years with the Dodge City Fire Department before joining Victory in August 2011. He started as a journeyman tree trimmer, then moved to the line crew in 2013. Elling earned his journeyman lineman certification in 2017. He and his wife, Erica, have two sons: Landon, a lineman at Victory, and Layton, a freshman at Dodge City High School. Elling enjoys camping at the lake, hunting and fishing in his free time.



Jeremy Elling



Shea Ricke

**SHEA RICKE** recently took a position on Victory Electric's service crew. Ricke began his career with Victory in October 2004 as a warehouse clerk. He moved to the line crew as a groundman in 2007, earned his journeyman certificate in 2013 and was promoted to crew chief in 2016. He and his wife, Samantha, have two children, Taylor and Lawson. Ricke enjoys working on his race car and coyote hunting in his free time.

*Congratulations, Jeremy and Shea!*



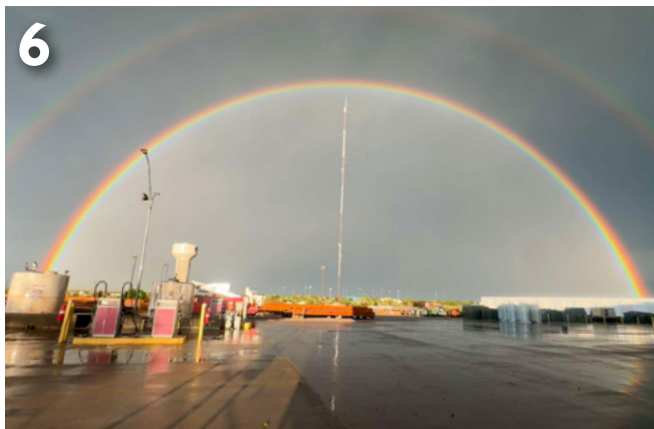
# Severe Storms Strike Region

Thunderstorms moved through southwest Kansas July 16, resulting in high winds, hail and flash flooding. Victory Electric crews battled the elements to resolve outages caused by broken poles and trees in power lines.

A second round of powerful storms the evening of Aug. 3 swept across Victory Electric's territory, causing 33 broken poles, trees tangled in lines and over 1,300 outages at its peak. The storm caused damage and outages from Haggard to Bucklin (west to east) and Jetmore to the South Waste Water Treatment Plant (north to south). The National Weather Service in Dodge City reported wind gusts of 85 miles per hour at the Dodge City airport that day — the highest recorded wind gust in Dodge City since recording began in 1874.



1. Storms broke many poles and lines during an Aug. 3 storm.
2. Landon Elling (left) and Weston Pfeifer work to replace a pole after severe weather July 16.
3. Victory Electric's system had 33 broken poles and more than 1,300 outages after a summer storm Aug. 3.
4. Dustin Forsyth poses next to a large tree ripped apart by August storms.
5. Linemen bury a replacement pole.
6. Dustin Forsyth captured this view of a double rainbow at Victory Electric after storms Aug. 3.
7. A storm left behind this row of broken poles in rural Ford County.



LINEMAN KEVIN FREEMAN

# Preparedness Requires Cooperation Continued from page 12A ►

have a different role to play in keeping the vast, interconnected electric grid humming.

SPP monitors grid conditions across its multi-state territory and issues advisories and alerts to its member utilities as needed. Its advisories indicate when normal operations are in effect and current power generation is sufficient to meet demand and available reserves, when extreme weather or heavy load is expected and could cause significant outages, or when SPP determines that conservation operations are in order because of weather, environmental, operational or other events. Its member utilities follow appropriate procedures according to SPP's guidance.

Sunflower and Victory Electric receive these advisories to stay informed and prepared for emergency alerts should they occur so that we can communicate about them with members.

## ENERGY EMERGENCY ALERTS

There are three levels of energy emergency:

- **ENERGY EMERGENCY ALERT LEVEL 1 (EEA-1)** indicates all resources are being used to meet electricity demand and the system is at risk of not meeting its required energy reserves.
- **ENERGY EMERGENCY ALERT LEVEL 2 (EEA-2)** signals that SPP is unable to

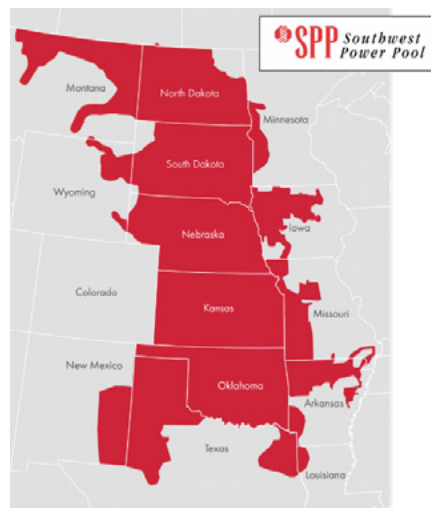
meet its expected energy needs and must implement additional procedures to maintain regional reliability. The public is asked to conserve energy.

- **ENERGY EMERGENCY ALERT LEVEL 3 (EEA-3)** is triggered when operating reserves are insufficient to meet demand. SPP will begin controlled service interruptions, also known as rolling blackouts, to protect the safety of the regional grid and prevent widespread damage to the system.

## CONSERVING ENERGY

During extremely high or low temperatures and other severe conditions, Victory Electric and other utilities may request that members voluntarily conserve energy. That may mean lowering the thermostat in winter, raising the air conditioner temperature a few degrees in the summer or postponing the use of large appliances until a peak demand situation is resolved. Cooperative members working together to conserve energy makes a difference in reducing the power load when needed.

If SPP issues a level EEA-2 or EEA-3, Victory Electric will notify our members on our Facebook page and by text message or email. Please make sure the email address and phone number associated with your Victory Electric account is current so you can receive notifications from us in energy emergencies.



The Southwest Power Pool is a regional transmission organization that directs the flow of electricity for power providers in its 14-state network, shown here.

Understanding SPP's energy emergency alert system is only one part of staying prepared. Preparedness Month is also a great time to assess your family's needs, make an emergency plan and discuss it with your loved ones, coordinate with your support network, and have multiple ways to receive alerts before, during and after a severe weather event or other emergency.

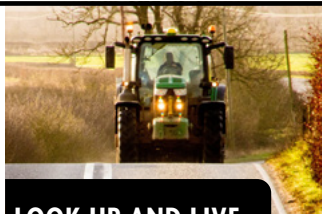
For more tips on preparedness, visit [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) and [www.victoryelectric.net/what-do-emergency](http://www.victoryelectric.net/what-do-emergency).

*Thanks, Shane*

## YOUR SAFETY MATTERS

### BE PREPARED THIS HARVEST SEASON!

Your electric cooperative reminds all farmers and farm workers to have a safe harvest season.



#### LOOK UP AND LIVE

Always be aware of overhead power lines when operating tall equipment like grain augers and combines.



#### KNOW WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY

If your equipment contacts a power line, stay inside the cab and call 911. Only exit if there is immediate danger like a fire. If you must exit, jump clear without touching any part of the equipment, and hop away keeping feet together.



#### KEEP A SAFE DISTANCE

As you work, be aware of overhead power lines. Always maintain at least 20 feet of clearance from power lines and electrical equipment.



## Victory Cares for Community

Victory Electric employees participated in several community events this summer.

1. Employees served hamburgers and hot dogs and had giveaways and prize drawings on the opening night of the **SPEARVILLE CITY OF WINDMILLS (COW) FESTIVAL** July 11-12.
2. Lineman Dustin Forsyth engaged local kids while sharing electrical safety tips during a **TOUCH-A-TRUCK** event at the Dodge City YMCA.
3. Victory Electric joined the **DODGE CITY DAYS WESTERN PARADE** and helped grill over 1,800 beef patties for Hilmar's cheeseburger feed July 26 during the opening weekend of Dodge City Days.



## Upcoming Events

SEPT 26 FRIDAY

VICTORY ELECTRIC  
★ 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 & Montezuma!

FREE ADMISSION ★ GIVEAWAYS ★ DRAWINGS  
SOUTH GRAY VS. SPEARVILLE  
SOUTH GRAY VS. SPEARVILLE

Save The Date

OCT 25

Pumpkin Festival