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Electronews

THE VICTORY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ASSN., INC.

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FROM THE CEO

Victory Electric: Powering the Future



Shane Laws

The Victory Electric Cooperative Association, Inc. was founded in 1945 by its original members and trustees as a not-for-profit electric cooperative under Kansas law. The lights turned on throughout rural Kansas because electric co-ops like Victory Electric connected homes and farms to power lines. Just like those early members who received service from Victory Electric, you are also a cooperative member-owner.

Cooperative membership means you

have voting rights and a voice in the direction of Victory Electric's operations. We encourage you to exercise those privileges by attending the 2026 Victory Electric Annual Meeting, which will be held April 14 at the Boot Hill Casino & Resort Conference Center in Dodge City. Registration begins at 5:30 p.m., and the meeting will follow at 6 p.m. Victory Electric employees will again offer golf cart rides for members who would like a ride from their vehicle to the building entrance.

The annual meeting provides key updates on the cooperative's operations, finances and future plans as we work to provide safe, affordable, reliable energy.

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➔ Watch Your Mailbox! ➔

In the April issue of *Kansas Country Living* Magazine you will find:

- ▶ The official notice for the 2026 annual meeting to be held April 14 at Boot Hill Casino Resort and Conference Center. Registration begins at 5:30 p.m., followed by the meeting at 6 p.m. No meal will be provided.
- ▶ Your registration card for easy check-in at the annual meeting.
- ▶ The Victory Electric Annual Report for 2025.

- ▶ Trustee election ballots and envelopes for Victory Electric members in:

- ▶ **DISTRICT 2** — **JOHN LEIS** and **CHARLES NICHOLSON**
- ▶ **DISTRICT 4** — **JIM IMEL** and **LUCAS KNOWLES**
- ▶ **DISTRICT 6** — **KENNY WEHKAMP**
- ▶ **DISTRICT 10** — **RANDY QUINT**



Nominating Committee Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the nominating committee of The Victory Electric Cooperative Association Inc. was held Thursday, Jan. 22, 2026, at the office of the cooperative on North 14th Avenue, Dodge City, Kansas.

THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE WERE PRESENT IN PERSON:

Kent Bartlett and Greg Hainer, representing District 2; Jack Ellis and Linda Martin, representing District 4; Kashly Van Petten and Tim Gleason, representing District 6; and Jim Lembright and Tom Stanley, representing District 10.

Also present were David Snapp, attorney for Victory Electric; Shane Laws, CEO; Daryl Tieben, board president; Chanda Schulte, director of communications; and TJ Ackerman, executive assistant/human resources coordinator.

David Snapp called the meeting to order at 1:59 p.m. and went over qualifications and eligibility requirements for election as a trustee, as set forth in the bylaws of the

cooperative, to determine whether each potential nominee was eligible for election based upon the information available.

Greg Hainer was elected as chairperson of the nominating committee and inspector of elections. He asked for nominations from Districts 2, 4, 6 and 10.

Thereupon, motions duly made, seconded and adopted, the following persons were nominated to stand for election as candidates for trustee of the cooperative for a three-year term:

DISTRICT 2

- ▶ JOHN LEIS
- ▶ CHARLES NICHOLSON

DISTRICT 4

- ▶ JIM IMEL
- ▶ LUCAS KNOWLES

DISTRICT 6

- ▶ KENNY WEHKAMP

DISTRICT 10

- ▶ RANDY QUINT

There being no further business to come before the meeting of the nominating committee, the meeting was adjourned at 2:09 p.m.

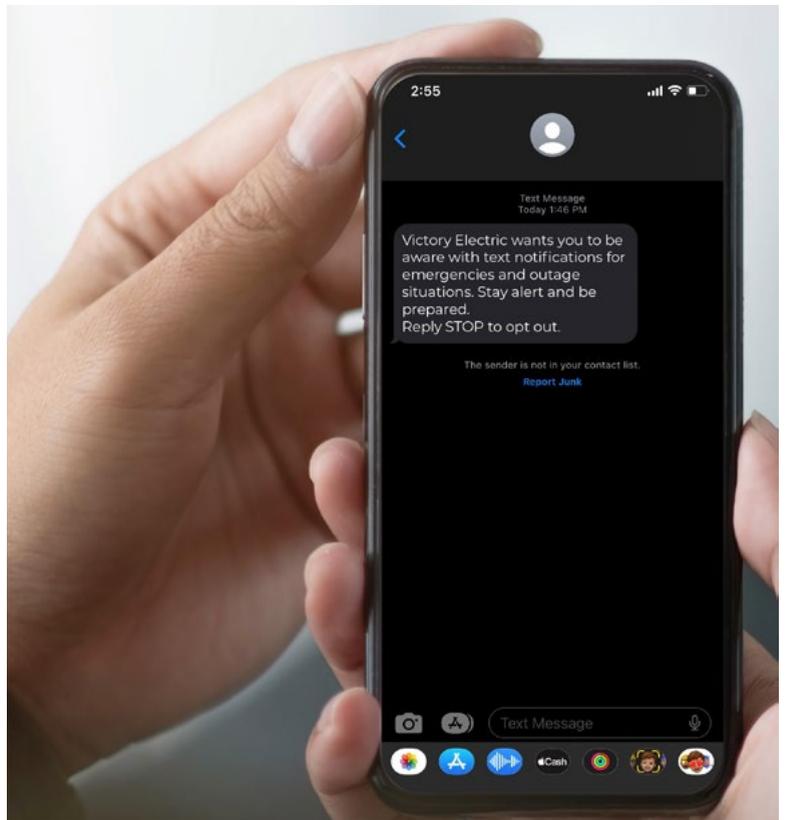
Stay in the Know with Smart Notifications

Victory Electric knows how much our members value fast, dependable communication. When you visit our office in person, call us, or visit our website or social media pages, we want you to be in the know and easily find the information you need. With Victory Electric's smart notifications, useful information goes right to your phone or email Inbox.

SmartHub is a useful app that gives you the power to take control of the notifications you receive from Victory Electric about billing due dates, receipt of payment, major weather events, outages, emergencies and more. To receive updates by text or email, log in to your SmartHub account and click Settings, Manage Notifications, then select your notification preferences.

Please make sure Victory Electric always has your current contact information so we can reach you regarding emergencies, planned outages or other important updates. You may verify that we have the correct contact information on file for your account at SmartHub under Settings, Contact Methods, or call us at 620-227-2139.

If you have any questions about SmartHub or require assistance selecting your notification preferences, please call Victory Electric or visit <https://victoryelectric.net/smarthub>.



Victory Electric: Powering the Future

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Your perspective matters, and participating in trustee elections and the annual meeting are valuable ways to share your views. We encourage you to participate in the following important decision-making processes and engage with cooperative leaders and fellow members.

ELECT TRUSTEES

Trustees serve three-year terms of office, and elections for the Victory Electric Board of Trustees are held each year on a rotating basis. This year, candidates for four districts are up for election: District 2: **JOHN LEIS** and **CHARLES NICHOLSON**; District 4: **JIM IMEL** and **LUCAS KNOWLES**; District 6: **KENNY WEHKAMP**; and District 10: **RANDY QUINT**.

In March, all Victory Electric members will receive a copy of the 2025 annual report inside the April edition of *Kansas Country Living* magazine, along with a registration card for the annual meeting. If you reside in one of the districts with a trustee position up for election this year, you will also receive a ballot and return envelope. Ballots must be mailed to Victory Electric and received by 5 p.m. on April 13. Please note that due to trustee election requirements, we cannot accept ballots dropped off at our office or at the annual meeting; ballots must be mailed to Victory Electric, PO Box 1335, Dodge City, KS 67801. The results of the election will be announced at the annual meeting April 14.

VOTE ON BYLAWS

The Victory Electric Board of Trustees has proposed several updates to the bylaws in 2026. All proposed changes to the bylaws will be included in the April issue of *Kansas Country Living* and posted on our website for your review. Victory Electric members will have the opportunity to vote on these proposed policy revisions during the annual meeting.

VOICE YOUR QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

Do you wonder how national electric industry trends like the increase in data centers and energy demand affect you in southwest Kansas? The annual meeting gives you an opportunity to speak personally to your district's trustee as well as Victory Electric management and employees. We will share progress updates on programs, services and initiatives that benefit you as a member-owner and our plans for powering the future.

MAKE CONNECTIONS

The meeting of members brings you and your friends and neighbors together to connect in person. The sense of community and shared ownership is one of the most enjoyable aspects of attending the annual meeting. We encourage you to take this opportunity to chat with other people from the community.

GET A \$20 BILL CREDIT AND MORE

Victory Electric members who register at the annual meeting will receive a \$20 bill credit for attending in person (one credit per member account). Registration will begin at 5:30 p.m. Please bring the registration card you will receive by mail for faster check-in, but you do not need the card to register.

When you register, you will be entered to win one of four \$200 bill credits and other prizes provided by generous sponsors. Winners will be announced at the conclusion of the meeting. No meal will be served, but we will have tea and water available as well as giveaways and promotional items featuring our new logo.

We can't wait to see you April 14! If you are unable to make it, watch for Victory Electric employees at member appreciation events and pop-ups this year throughout our service territory in the communities we serve.

**THANKS,
SHANE**

Top 10 Reasons to Attend the Annual Meeting

- 1 Get a chance to win one of four \$200 bill credits and other great prizes!
- 2 Receive a \$20 credit on your electric bill just for attending.
- 3 Score awesome giveaways and swag featuring our brand-new logo.
- 4 Exercise your cooperative ownership rights by voting on proposed bylaw changes.
- 5 Learn how Victory Electric is powering the future of our community.
- 6 Be one of the first to know the 2026 trustee election results.
- 7 Share your voice with Victory Electric trustees and leadership.
- 8 Meet and mingle with employees and your neighbors.
- 9 Hear one of our talented linemen perform the National Anthem.
- 10 Show your support for your co-op — and have some fun while you're at it!

Spring Weather Requires Extra Safety Precautions

Spring storms and seasonal weather fluctuations can disrupt your plans and daily routines. They sometimes affect the operations of an electric cooperative, too. Warm temperatures, dry conditions and high winds can increase the risk of fire danger. During these periods, Victory Electric must take extra precautions to safeguard the community and our electrical infrastructure.

Victory Electric employees monitor weather conditions and have multiple safety processes in place. Our tree trimming team removes tree branches and limbs to keep them away from power lines and prevent faults. Lineworkers and other technicians regularly inspect power lines and use smart grid technology to monitor the electrical system so they can prevent problems and address outages promptly. Crews remain ready to implement enhanced safety measures, such as adjusting system settings to address potential hazards that may be caused by volatile weather.

A recloser is an automated, high-voltage electric switch used throughout a power distribution system that is similar to your home's circuit breaker. When an electrical issue in your home trips your circuit breaker and interrupts power, you must manually reset the breaker on your electrical panel to bring power back to the affected circuit.

Unlike your home's circuit breaker, however, reclosers are

"multi-shot" devices. This means they can operate a certain number of times before they stay open and result in an outage. Victory Electric typically sets reclosers for multi-shot operation. If a tree limb or other obstruction contacts the power lines and causes a fault, the recloser senses it and opens, creating a blink in power.

In multi-shot operation, the recloser pauses briefly, then recloses to try and complete the circuit. If the fault is still there, it opens again and creates another blink. If the fault remains after a third attempt, the recloser will stay open. The affected cooperative members will then experience a power outage until the fault is resolved by lineworkers.

When our area faces sustained winds of 50 miles per hour or more and extreme fire danger, Victory Electric can set its system for non-reclose, or one-shot, operation. This means the recloser will try to clear a fault in the power line only once. The one-shot setting may result in more outages for rural cooperative members than the usual multi-shot operation, but this important precaution helps prevent lines from sparking.

Victory Electric appreciates our cooperative members' patience and understanding on the occasions when this important safety measure is necessary. We understand that outages can be frustrating, but doing everything we can to help mitigate the risk of wildfires is worth the effort.

Big Data, Bigger Demands

Companies are choosing rural areas for their data centers because of available land, low energy costs and economic incentives. Data centers require significant amounts of electricity to operate, presenting new opportunities and challenges for electric co-ops.

- 1 **HVAC:** Constant cooling is needed to ensure the servers function properly.
- 2 **SERVERS:** Servers run applications and process data 24/7.
- 3 **INFRASTRUCTURE:** Data centers often require new electrical infrastructure to meet their power needs.
- 4 **WATER SOURCE:** Many large data centers are deploying evaporative cooling, which is more efficient than compressor-based systems.
- 5 **BACKUP POWER:** On-site generators keep data centers running during power outages and can also help lower demand when electricity use spikes.



READ THE ARTICLE "POWERING PROGRESS RESPONSIBLY" IN THE FEBRUARY 2026 ISSUE OF KANSAS COUNTRY LIVING TO LEARN MORE.

IRRIGATION MEMBERS:

Horsepower Charges Renew on April 1

Victory Electric member-owners are reminded that annual horsepower charges for irrigation services are automatically renewed on April 1 each year. To avoid being billed for wells or horsepower you no longer need in 2026, please review your irrigation services before March 31, 2026, and let us know if you would like to:

- ▶ Disconnect any irrigation services that will not be used during the season.
- ▶ Increase or decrease horsepower on any services.
- ▶ Transfer or keep services in your name if you are leasing the ground. Please notify Victory Electric at 620-227-2139 before **MARCH 31** if you need to make any changes or if you have questions.

To stop or adjust your annual irrigation service charges, we must be notified of any necessary changes before irrigation services are renewed on April 1. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter, which helps us efficiently manage your account services. We appreciate our irrigation service members and look forward to serving you in the coming year.



AFTER A FLOOD: Electrical Safety **FIRST**

Water and electricity are a deadly mix. If your home or basement has flooded, **TAKE THESE PRECAUTIONS BEFORE USING ANY ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT.**

STAY AWAY UNTIL IT'S SAFE

- ▶ Do not enter a flooded area until power has been disconnected by your utility or a licensed electrician.
- ▶ Never enter water that could be in contact with electrical outlets or cords.
- ▶ When in doubt, have your utility or an electrician confirm it's safe before restoring electricity. Restoring power too soon can cause fires, shocks or further damage.

GET A PROFESSIONAL INSPECTION

- ▶ Have a licensed electrician inspect your wiring, outlets and service panel before restoring power.
- ▶ Replace or check appliances, furnaces and water heaters that have been submerged.
- ▶ Don't attempt to dry out and reuse electronics, extension cords or appliances that have been wet.

USE CAUTION WITH GENERATORS

- ▶ Run portable generators outdoors only, away from windows, doorways and vents.
- ▶ Plug appliances directly into the generator, never into a wall outlet.



REMEMBER: "DRY" DOESN'T MEAN SAFE

Even if items look dry, hidden corrosion can make them dangerous. Always replace or have electrical devices inspected before use.

Victory Electric Welcomes Member Services Rep

Dodge City native **MARLENE DE LA TORRE** joined Victory Electric as a member services representative (MSR) in February. She previously served in administrative roles at Reflection Living, Western Plains Medical Center and USD 443.

Vice President of Corporate Services Amy Grasser said, "We are excited to welcome Marlene to our team. She brings strong customer service and communication skills and is a great fit for our team culture. Her experience and approach will be a valuable asset to both our team and our members."

As an MSR, De La Torre will take phone calls and assist members who visit the office in person to answer questions or help resolve account issues. MSRs provide assistance with billing and energy usage history, setting up new electric service, and informing members about SmartHub, payment options, and other account services.

"I feel like this is a well-known job, and it's a good opportunity to get established for a long time," she said.

As a mom to four kids, she does not have much free time for hobbies, but she enjoys listening to music of all kinds and plays violin. De La Torre's

family members inspire her, and her family has deep roots in the Dodge City community.

"I want to raise my kids the same way that I was raised with good morals, values and belief in God. They're good kids!" she said.

De La Torre is active in sports, especially soccer. She coaches volleyball and soccer and runs a co-ed volleyball league. She also helps her family as time allows in operating the Rancho Santa Fe Complex wedding venue, Airbnb rentals and gym at the former Youthville facility.

One of her brothers owns the Dodge City Toros Football Club. Another plays semi-professional soccer in California, and the whole family recently traveled together to Kansas City to watch him play there.

She cheers for the Kansas City Chiefs and has been a fan of Manchester United and the Chivas for many years.

Welcome to Victory, Marlene!



Marlene De La Torre

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

As spring arrives, take advantage of milder temperatures to save energy at home. Open windows on pleasant days to bring in fresh air instead of running your HVAC system. It's also a great time to replace dirty air filters, which helps your system run more efficiently and improves indoor air quality. As daylight increases, turn off unnecessary lights and rely on natural sunlight when possible. Small seasonal adjustments like these can reduce energy use, lower monthly bills, and help keep your home comfortable as winter transitions into spring.

SOURCE: NRECA



Spring Forward
DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME
SET YOUR CLOCKS AHEAD ONE HOUR

*** Sunday, March 8, 2026 ***

Dylan Ratts Honored as Ambassador of the Year

Congratulations to Victory Electric Key Accounts Coordinator **DYLAN RATTS** for being named Chamber Ambassador of the Year by the Dodge City Area Chamber of Commerce! Ratts was recognized at the Dodge City Chamber Banquet Feb. 20 at the Boot Hill Casino and Resort Conference Center. Ratts joined Victory Electric in April 2023 and has served as a chamber ambassador since September 2023.

Chamber ambassadors serve as goodwill representatives for the organization in the community and help recruit and retain chamber members. As an ambassador, Ratts serves as a liaison between area businesses and the chamber, regularly attending ribbon cuttings, monthly chamber coffees and Business Made Social events. He is also involved in the chamber's young professionals group and serves on Victory Electric's young adult member engagement committee.

Ratts said his participation in the chamber ambassadors program aligns well with his responsibilities at Victory Electric, where his focus



Dylan Ratts shares electrical safety information and answers kindergarteners' questions at a presentation about community helpers at Sunnyside Elementary in Dodge City Jan. 30.

is serving the cooperative's business and industrial members. Although he is a native of Dodge City, he has expanded his knowledge of local businesses and opportunities by attending ribbon cuttings and related chamber events. Ratts is also a member of the chamber's current Leadership Dodge cohort.

"Dylan is a true go-getter for both the chamber and our community. He consistently brings strategic ideas to the table and confidently steps up to lead when needed. As a member of our Leadership Dodge class, Dylan is always prepared to help wherever he's called. He is a wonderful example of a young professional who is quickly becoming a pillar of our community, and I have no doubt he will help forge a bright, electrifying future at Victory Electric and in Dodge City," said Dodge City Area Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Karla Lees.

Ratts received an Associate of Arts in general finance from Dodge City Community College and a Bachelor of Business Administration in finance with a concentration in banking from Fort Hays State University. He also earned a Certified Key Account Executive certification from NRECA. Before joining Victory Electric, he was a financial examiner for the State of Kansas in the Office of the State Bank Commissioner.

CONGRATULATIONS, DYLAN!



Dodge City Area Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Karla Lees presents a certificate to Dylan Ratts at Victory Electric, recognizing him as Chamber Ambassador of the Year. He was honored at the 2026 Chamber Banquet Feb. 20.

Tornado Safety and Electrical Hazards

Tornadoes can strike with little warning, leaving behind downed power lines, damaged electrical equipment and dangerous debris. Preparing before a tornado — and knowing how to stay safe afterward — can help prevent electrical shock, fire and injury. Make sure your emergency plan includes electrical safety steps so you and your family are ready to act quickly and safely.

BEFORE A TORNADO:

- ▶ Prepare an emergency kit with water, battery-powered flashlight, radio, extra batteries and portable phone charger.
- ▶ Keep your electric utility's phone number handy in case you need to report an outage or downed line.
- ▶ Fully charge cell phones and backup power banks before severe weather hits so you can use them in an emergency.

DURING A TORNADO:

- ▶ Seek shelter immediately in a basement or a small, interior room with no windows, such as a bathroom or closet.
- ▶ Turn off and unplug appliances and electronics to protect them from power surges. Leave one light on so you'll know when power is restored.
- ▶ Do not stay inside a vehicle or try to outrun a tornado. Exit the vehicle and seek shelter in a sturdy building. If none are available, lie flat in a low-lying area away from the vehicle and power lines.

AFTER A TORNADO:

- ▶ Stay away from downed power lines and

anything they could touch, such as trees, fences or debris. Always assume they are energized.

- ▶ If you see a downed line while driving, do not exit your vehicle. Call 911 and your utility and warn others to stay away.
- ▶ Do not touch anyone who is in contact with a power line. Call 911 immediately and wait for emergency responders.
- ▶ Do not enter damaged buildings until electricity and gas are shut off by professionals. Never attempt to turn off power if you must stand in water to reach the breaker.
- ▶ Avoid flooded areas with electrical outlets, appliances, or cords, and never touch electrical equipment when wet or standing in water.
- ▶ Have all water-damaged electrical systems, appliances and devices inspected by a licensed electrician before use.

POWER OUTAGES AND GENERATOR SAFETY:

- ▶ Never use a generator indoors or in partially enclosed spaces such as garages or porches, or near open windows and doors. Place a generator at least 20 feet away from your home to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.
- ▶ Keep the generator dry by placing it on a tarp or under a canopy and follow all manufacturer's instructions.
- ▶ Never plug a generator directly into a wall outlet. This can inadvertently energize power lines and pose a lethal risk to you, neighbors and utility workers.

Stay informed, stay alert, and share this information to help protect your family and community during severe weather events.

SAFETY TIP

If you're outside during a tornado, get to a sturdy building if possible. Never stay in a vehicle during a tornado or try to outrun it. If no shelter is nearby, lie flat in a ditch or low-lying area away from cars, trees and power lines.

Protect your head with your arms. SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG

