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Electronews

THE VICTORY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ASSN., INC.

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FROM THE CEO

Assessing the Cooperative's Financial Health



Shane Laws

If you want to increase your personal health, eating a balanced diet of healthy foods, exercising regularly, getting enough sleep and staying hydrated are a few of the steps you might take to reach that goal. Scheduling regular checkups with a healthcare provider and completing any recommended medical tests or procedures are also critical to a healthy lifestyle.

Maintaining Victory Electric's financial health and stability is a primary responsibility of the Victory Electric

Board of Trustees and management team. Board members regularly monitor financial reports and make strategic decisions as part of their fiduciary duty to the cooperative. To ensure fiscal responsibility, Victory Electric also hires independent financial experts and advisors to conduct annual audits and other evaluations.

Just as your doctor might check vital signs and examine test results to ensure you are functioning well and in good health, these standard financial checkups detect potential problems and guide decisions that will keep the organization strong and resilient for members.

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REMEMBER AND HONOR
MEMORIAL DAY

Our office will be closed, Monday, May 25,
in observance of Memorial Day.

VICTORY WELCOMES NEW LINEMAN



Uriel Ortiz-Ochoa

URIEL ORTIZ-OCHOA joined the cooperative as a groundman in March and recently moved to Dodge City from his hometown, Ulysses.

He graduated from Pratt Community College's electrical

power technology program and completed an internship at Pioneer Electric Cooperative, which is based in Ulysses. Before joining Victory Electric, he worked as a welder and mechanic assistant for Cactus Feeders in Ulysses.

"I've always heard to go to cooperatives because they treat you better and you get good benefits," Ortiz-Ochoa said, adding that Victory caught his eye while considering several other co-ops.

He looks forward to getting more experience in overhead line work and learning how to set up transformers. He's also eager to see Victory Electric's system and how it works.

"I'm a very curious person and ask lots of questions," he said. "People might think I keep to myself a lot, but I can be a big extrovert once I get comfortable."

Ortiz-Ochoa said he is most inspired by his mom and his late father, who showed him how to work hard and achieve his goals.

In his free time, he enjoys playing saxophone and listening to music, especially the corridos norteños genre. He also likes hip-hop and rap, going to the gym and playing sports of all kinds. He is a fan of Texas-based teams, especially the Cowboys, Longhorns and Chargers.

WELCOME TO VICTORY, URIEL!

Victory Announces Job Transitions, Certifications

Victory Electric is pleased to announce several promotions and job changes at the cooperative:

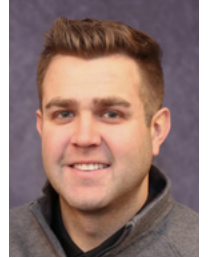
- ▶ **CHRISTY GRANLUND**, who joined Victory in 2019, has been promoted from accounting/payroll administrator to accountant.
- ▶ **BRENDAN WENZL**, who joined Victory in 2023, has been promoted from plant accountant to manager of plant accounting and material control.
- ▶ **MELISSA RUIZ**, who joined Victory in 2004, has moved to accountant and enterprise resource planning (ERP) coordinator from accountant.
- ▶ **LUIS DEL REAL**, who joined Victory in 2024, has moved from his position as warehouse clerk to the operations team as a groundman.

Lead Substation Technician **RICHARD TORRES** and Relay Technician **CRAIG RENICK** were recently recognized for earning substation lineman certifications.

Congratulations to Christy, Brendan, Melissa, Luis, Richard and Craig! We appreciate your continued dedication to Victory Electric.



Christy Granlund



Brendan Wenzl



Melissa Ruiz



Luis Del Real



Pictured (from left) are Richard Torres, Vice President of Engineering Rob Henry and Craig Renick.



Victory Thanks Terri Larson for 14 Years of Service

TERRI LARSON retired in April after nearly 14 years of dedicated service to the Victory Electric Board of Trustees. A District 10 trustee since 2012, Larson most recently served as the board secretary/treasurer. She and her husband, Kirk, moved to Houston, Texas, after living in Dodge City and serving the community for 38 years.

The call to serve her community originally sparked Larson's interest in becoming a trustee. She was intrigued when she noticed a call for Victory Electric board nominations in *Kansas Country Living* magazine. At the time, her three children were young adults, and she was at a point in life when she had more time available to serve where there was a need. She decided to apply for a trustee position to represent Dodge City on the board.

"I went out and campaigned door to door and asked for people's vote, and by the grace of God I was selected," she said.

Larson earned the Credentialed Cooperative Director certificate from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) in 2012 and later the Director Gold certification.

GUIDING THROUGH GROWTH

She has witnessed a great deal of growth and change in the electric industry during her time on the board. Trustees have an important role in the governance and strategic direction of Victory Electric. Trustees are responsible for directing the business and affairs of the cooperative and advocate for the needs of members who live in their respective districts while making decisions on their behalf.

Larson said one of the most significant decisions the board made while serving as a trustee was selecting Shane Laws as CEO, following the retirement of Terry Janson in fall 2013.

"Under Shane's leadership, Victory has really become one of the top cooperatives in the state," she said. The industry has experienced rapid change over the past decade, presenting opportunities and challenges for electric cooperatives.

Winter Storm Uri was especially challenging for cooperatives, Larson noted. The widespread, catastrophic winter storm and ice storm Feb. 13-17, 2021, affected over 170 million Americans. The weather led to many power blackouts and even fatalities, especially in Texas.

"It really stretched everybody to get the electricity back on — and it wasn't just our area. It was terrible," Larson said.

She applauded the improvements the cooperative has made to strengthen the system and prepare for the future. In addition to her commitment to the cooperative's progress while on the board, Larson brought professional experience and academic achievement to her role.

Before moving to Dodge City, Larson worked as a logistics engineer at General Dynamics in Fort Worth, Texas, which



Victory Electric Board of Trustees President Daryl Tieben (left) and CEO Shane Laws (right) present a plaque to Terri Larson in recognition of her 14 years of service to the cooperative.

built F-16 planes. She completed an MBA from Fort Hays State University and a master's in education. She was the Comanche Middle School librarian and taught entrepreneurship and accounting classes at Dodge City High School. She stepped back from full-time teaching and began substitute teaching after her grandchildren were born.

"My first love is my family, and then everything else happens," she said.

The Larsons have both served the community for decades. Her husband provided the benediction for Victory Electric's annual meetings for many years. He founded Grace Community Church in Dodge City in 1998 and served as senior pastor until his recent retirement.

They look forward to spending more time with their children and four grandkids. Their son and one daughter live in the same neighborhood as the Larsons' home in Texas. Their other daughter is moving to Florida, so they have plans to travel more as well as find opportunities to serve in their new community.

"I'm a person that jumps into things, so I probably won't sit around very long," Larson said. "It's a wonderful life with lots of opportunities. If there's an opportunity, just grab it and go! Put everything you can into it and do your best."

During a retirement presentation during the March board meeting, Laws thanked Larson for her years of service to the cooperative. "Terri was the first female elected to the board. She is one of the reasons why Victory is where it is today," he said.

Larson expressed her appreciation for Victory Electric staff and members. "It's a fantastic group, and I'm so thankful. It's been a pleasure to be a Dodge City trustee for the past 14 years, and I want to thank everyone for all the support and help they've given to me," she said.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to serving our members, Terri! We appreciate everything you have done for the cooperative.

Victory Electric Celebrates Members

Victory Electric has multiple member appreciation events planned in 2026 throughout our service area. Watch our Facebook page for announcements about pop-up events in your area!

BLUE HEREFORD IN FORD

Victory Electric sponsored a member appreciation pop-up event at the Blue Hereford restaurant in Ford in February. We bought lunch for members and had drawings for bill credits, a gift basket and a valentine bundle.



Members have lunch at the Blue Hereford in Ford, Kansas, during a member appreciation pop-up event.

STAYCATION GIVEAWAY

For our March member appreciation event, Victory Electric gave away five “staycation” gift baskets during spring break. The themed gift baskets featured local gift cards and other goodies. Thank you to the Dodge City Area Chamber of Commerce, Mariah Hills Golf Course and The Vintage Belle Boutique for donating gift cards. Congratulations to our winners: **ANA MENDOZA, STEPHANIE HAMPTON, CHRISTINA VELASQUEZ, DIEGO COCA** and **KASSI ROY!**



Christina Velasquez



Diego Coca



Stephanie Hampton



Kassi Roy



Ana Mendoza (left)

Assessing the Cooperative's Financial Health Continued from page 12A ▶

WHAT IS A COST-OF-SERVICE STUDY?

Power System Engineering (PSE) has been conducting an independent, comprehensive cost-of-service study (COSS) for Victory Electric. After initiating the study in 2023, PSE has been thoroughly examining the cooperative's finances using industry-standard methods.

A COSS is a fundamental tool for evaluating how and why costs are incurred. Residential and commercial rate classes have unique load and service characteristics that affect costs for those classes. The consultants apply standard regulatory methods to analyze service costs for each Victory Electric rate class. The consultants also determine the cooperative's revenue requirements for paying expenses and having adequate margins, then provide impartial recommendations based on their findings. These guidelines help the board allocate costs fairly to each rate class and make any rate or policy changes as needed.

As a not-for-profit cooperative,

Victory Electric exists to serve member-owners with safe, reliable and affordable power. Unlike investor-owned utility companies, which are accountable to outside investors, electric cooperatives are accountable to their member-owners. As a self-regulated utility, Victory Electric's trustees are responsible for setting reasonable, equitable rates and establishing fair electric service policies for the cooperative.

The board sets rates to generate enough revenue to pay operating costs, make payments on loans and provide an emergency reserve. If revenue exceeds operating costs, the difference is considered "margins." Any margins are invested into the cooperative as operating capital for a period of time, then allocated to members in the form of capital credits.

Victory Electric has been experiencing extensive growth, and the costs associated with adding substations, inflation and the need for more employees and contractors must be incorporated into the COSS. Some

of these costs are offset by additional margins generated by new loads.

The rate study process can be lengthy, and revisions take time because decisions about rates are based on actual usage and costs plus assumptions that account for future needs. A COSS requires a lot of detailed data that needs to be reviewed carefully and validated.

Just as keeping tabs on your personal health requires an ongoing commitment, maintaining the financial well-being of Victory Electric requires continuous attention and planning. By regularly evaluating financial indicators and conducting thorough studies by outside professionals, the trustees and management team ensure the cooperative will remain strong, resilient and prepared to meet the evolving needs of its member-owners for years to come. These practices safeguard the cooperative's vitality, much like regular checkups and healthy habits preserve your own health.

**THANKS,
SHANE**

ARE YOU RECEIVING MULTIPLE COPIES OF THIS MAGAZINE?

Because you are a member-owner of Victory Electric Cooperative, you receive a subscription to *Kansas Country Living* magazine. Every month, we send members this informative publication designed to educate Kansas electric cooperative members about topics that affect rural electrification: legislation, news updates, energy efficiency tips, emerging technology and electrical safety.

The magazine also includes personalized centerspread pages with news, updates and legal notices and announcements specific to Victory Electric members. Digital versions of Victory Electric's monthly ElectroNews newsletter may be found at www.victoryelectric.net/kansas-country-living-magazine-and-electronews-newsletter.

If you have multiple Victory Electric accounts and are receiving unwanted duplicates of the magazine, please contact our office at 620-227-2139 to let us know which account(s) should not be sent a magazine.

NOTE: All member accounts receive the April issue, regardless of opt-out status, as it contains the previous year's annual report and a registration ticket for the annual meeting. Members whose trustee is up for election also receive a voting ballot in their April issue.

To advertise in *Kansas Country Living* or submit an event to be published in the magazine's "Things to Do Around Kansas" calendar, please visit www.KCLonline.com.



Victory Electric in the *Community*

DC NIGHT IN TOPEKA



On March 3, (from left) Victory Electric Lead Construction Coordinator Daniel Pogue, who also serves as the Dodge City mayor; Project Manager Danna Pogue; Director of Communications Chanda Schulte; and Key Accounts Coordinator Dylan Ratts attended Dodge City Night in Topeka. The annual event brings Dodge City organizations and community leaders together with Kansas legislators to showcase the city's major initiatives, upcoming projects and priorities. Victory Electric shared information with legislators about the cooperative's approach to reliably serving large electrical loads while protecting the interests of all members.

BEESON ELEMENTARY



Carlos Garcia Rojas gives Beeson Elementary second graders a closer look at a work truck and a lineman's tools of the trade. These visits help teach students about careers, the valuable work employees do at Victory and the importance of electrical safety.

FARM BUREAU DAY AT THE FARM



Dustin Forsyth shows students the results of electrifying a grapefruit during a safety demonstration.



From left: Kevin Freeman, Jacob Gleason, Marlon Hernandez and Dustin Forsyth present an electrical safety demonstration to Dodge City-area fourth graders.

POWERXCHANGE



Representing Kansas as delegates at the National Rural Electric Cooperatives Association (NRECA) PowerXchange conference were Dominic Hernandez (left), NRECA Youth Leadership Council, and Pat Morse, NRECA Board of Directors. Hernandez was sponsored by Midwest Energy, and Morse represents District 10 on the Victory Electric Board of Trustees. The 2026 PowerXchange, NRECA's annual meeting, took place March 6-11 in Nashville, Tennessee. Victory Electric CEO Shane Laws and District 10 Trustee Randy Quint also attended.

READ ACROSS AMERICA



Member Service Representative Dania Blatnick reads to students during Read Across America Week. Victory Electric employees volunteered to read books to students at Miller and Central elementary schools in Dodge City in March.



Executive Administrative Assistant and Human Resources Coordinator TJ Ackerman reads to several students at Miller Elementary. Participating in Read Across America helps Victory connect with community schools.

10 Lightner Community Spirit Scholarship Winners Selected

Victory Electric is pleased to announce that 10 area students have been selected to receive a \$1,000 Lightner Community Spirit Scholarship. The annual scholarship program recognizes students in our service area who have demonstrated academic success as well as a commitment to improving their community.

An external panel of judges reviewed submissions from 44 qualified applicants to select the 2026 winners. The evaluations were based on students' commitment to community, the ideas expressed in their biographical information and essay, academic achievement, voice and writing skills.

Victory Electric congratulates the following 2026 Lightner Community Spirit Scholarship winners:

- ▶ **ISABEL BOWMAN**, the daughter of Craig and LynAnn Bowman, Bucklin, and a senior at Bucklin High School;
- ▶ **REBECCA DURLER**, the daughter of Matt and Lindsay Durler, Wright, and a senior at Bucklin High School;
- ▶ **MCKENZIE MCCLURE**, the daughter of Toni Dome, Bucklin, and a senior at Bucklin High School;
- ▶ **MAKENZIE PREISNER**, the daughter of KC Preisner and Kayla Day, Spearville, and a senior at Spearville High School;

- ▶ **BRECKYN PUTNAM**, the daughter of Jason and Tammy Putnam, Dodge City, and a senior at Dodge City High School;
- ▶ **KEAGAN SHOWALTER**, the daughter of Molly Watson, Ensign, and a senior at South Gray High School;
- ▶ **MAIYA SHELOR**, the daughter of Matthew and Marsha Shelor, Minneola, and a junior at Kansas State University;
- ▶ **ADDISYN TAYLOR**, the daughter of Scott and Ashley Taylor, Dodge City, and a senior at Dodge City High School;
- ▶ **GAVIN WAHL**, the son of John and Jill Wahl, Montezuma, and a senior at South Gray High School; and
- ▶ **LAYSON WHEATON**, the son of Jacob and Ashley Wheaton, Spearville, and a senior at Spearville High School.

Victory Electric's scholarship program honors the Lightner family of Plymell, Kansas. Richard Lightner was a trustee for 36 years, following his father George's 31 years on the board. The Lightners actively supported Victory Electric's community and youth initiatives throughout their service on the board.

For more information about the Lightner Community Spirit Scholarship, visit www.victoryelectric.net/lightner-community-spirit-scholarship.

LIGHTNER COMMUNITY Spirit SCHOLARSHIP

CONGRATULATIONS TO THIS YEAR'S RECIPIENTS!

2026

KEAGAN SHOWALTER **REBECCA DURLER** **MAKENZIE PREISNER** **MAIYA SHELOR** **LAYSON WHEATON**

ADDISYN TAYLOR **BRECKYN PUTNAM** **ISABEL BOWMAN** **GAVIN WAHL** **MCKENZIE MCCLURE**

Victory Electric Helps Teach Life Skills at Reality U

In February, Director of Communications Chanda Schulte, Communications Coordinator Shauna Rumbaugh, Project Manager Danna Pogue, Member Services Representative Dania Blatnick and Key Accounts Coordinator Dylan Ratts helped at Reality U at the Dodge City Civic Center. More than 250 local middle school and high school students participated in the program, which teaches financial literacy and life skills through interactive, real-world simulations.

Based on student surveys submitted to their school coordinators before the event, Reality U participants were assigned a career, salary and family situation. Their real-life classwork, GPA and school attendance influenced a credit score they were assigned for the simulation, during which they imagined life as a 26-year-old adult.

Students had to keep track of income and expenses while making decisions and calculations related to housing, utilities, transportation, food, student loans, childcare, insurance, entertainment and other real-life necessities. If their balance dropped too low, they could add more funds by taking a second job or trading the vehicle they originally chose for a less expensive model. Some students were also given crying baby

dolls to carry while they worked to balance their budget.

“Reality U is an excellent program that gives students a realistic feel for life after school,” Ratts said. “It shows just how costly everyday needs and wants can be, often more than they expect.”

Some students learned a valuable lesson during Reality U by overspending on “wants” instead of accounting for needs.

“I was amazed at how many kids really cared about having money and how some just blew their money on new cars,” Blatnick said.

Victory’s volunteers and other community members guided students through interactive exercises and engaged in conversations about how choices and planning ahead can affect finances.

Sometimes life happens despite the best plans, though. At one of the Reality U stations, students had to roll dice to determine what unexpected life event would change their situation for the better or worse.

“Reality U was a



Danna Pogue “babysits” a doll for a high school student visiting the “Help! I Need More Money” station, at which students could choose a second job for additional income during the simulation.

great experience for both the students and those involved,” said Pogue. “It gave students the opportunity to be coached by community members with real-world experience in areas such as home buying, childcare, purchasing vehicles, retirement and other everyday life decisions. These discussions were based on each student’s personal inventory and where they see themselves as young adults entering the workforce and navigating day-to-day life events. It made everything feel very real. Students gained a better understanding of how their actions — both positive and negative — have consequences.”

Ratts added, “One of my favorite moments was hearing the students express gratitude toward their parents at the end of the simulation, once they realized how much it truly costs each month to support them.”

Reality U is a program of the Pando Initiative, an education-focused organization based in Wichita. The Dodge City program was held Feb. 18-19, with Spanish sessions offered on the second day.



From left: Chanda Schulte, Shauna Rumbaugh, Danna Pogue and Dylan Ratts help local middle and high school students Feb. 18 at Reality U. (Not pictured: Dania Blatnick, who volunteered during the Spanish Reality U sessions Feb. 19.)