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# Electronews



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

## FROM THE CEO

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# Streamline and Save With SmartHub

Was streamlining your budget and personal finances one of your New Year's resolutions? Victory Electric's secure SmartHub website and mobile app are powerful digital tools that will help you achieve your 2025 goals. SmartHub also gives you the ability to securely and quickly pay your bill, report outages, set notification preferences and keep your account details up to date. It also gives you the power to manage your Victory Electric account while you're on the go.

Log in to SmartHub and learn more about SmartHub's features and account options below. If you don't already have a SmartHub account, visit <https://victoryelectric.smarthub.coop>, click "Don't have an account? Register now" and follow the prompts. You will need your Victory Electric account number, which can be found on your bill.

#### AUTOPAY

Automating your energy bill payment means you don't have to keep track of due dates or worry about late fees. Sign up for Victory Electric's AutoPay option on SmartHub, and your electric bill payment will be automatically withdrawn from your credit or debit card or bank account each month. New AutoPay users will receive a \$10 credit when they sign up for the program.

To sign up, click Bill & Pay in the left drop-down menu, then select Auto Pay Program. Check the Terms & Conditions box and click Enroll. Follow the directions to enter your credit/debit card or bank account information, then click Continue to finish setting up your auto-payment option.



Shane Laws

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### ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

If you have a home office, look for opportunities to save energy in your workspace. Use Energy Star-rated equipment, which consumes up to 50% less energy than standard models. Set equipment like printers and scanners to automatically switch to sleep or energy-saver mode when not in use. Use efficient lamps for task lighting. Replace any older bulbs with energy-saving LEDs. **SOURCE: ENERGY.GOV**



## Roy Hampton Retires From Victory Electric

**ROY HAMPTON** retired recently after more than 17 years at Victory Electric.

The cooperative hosted a retirement reception for him on Jan. 3.

"It's been good working with you, and we wish you well," said Vice President of Safety and Key Accounts Kyndell Penick before presenting a gift.

"I said I wanted to retire before the snow flies again," Hampton quipped, referring to the forecast for a weekend winter storm, which later blanketed the state in ice and snow.

Hampton began his career at Victory Electric as a meter service representative when Aquila was acquired by Victory in 2007. He became a third-class journeyman meterman in 2013.

"The technology now is completely different than when I started," he said. His position in metering previously involved visiting member-owners' residences or businesses in person and turning meters off or on manually. The co-op's upgrades over the years to Advanced Metering Infrastructure and smart meters changed the nature of his job.

Hampton became a full-time warehouse clerk in 2016 and was responsible for maintaining Victory Electric's warehouse and materials and tracking inventory.

He doesn't have any set plans for his retirement but said he is looking forward to spending more time in his shop and with his remote control cars. He also has several items on a "honey-do" list to work on, including some home renovations. He enjoys hunting and fishing and will have more time for those hobbies.

"It will be nice not to have to get up with the alarm," he said.

Roy and his wife, Stephanie, have two adult children, Tristan and Metissa.

Manager of Warehouse and Facilities Jason Guillen extended his appreciation to Hampton on behalf of the co-op: "Thank you very much for your years of service. We'll miss you! Congratulations and enjoy yourself."

### CONGRATULATIONS, ROY!

**ABOVE RIGHT:** Roy Hampton helps serve dinner to a member attending Victory Electric's 2012 annual meeting.

**BELOW RIGHT:** Jason Guillen, warehouse and facilities manager, chats with Roy Hampton at the reception.



Victory Electric recognized Roy Hampton's 17 years of service to the cooperative at a retirement reception Jan. 2.



# Midwest-Plains Transmission Corridor Will Not Move Forward

The Department of Energy (DOE) announced on Dec. 16, 2024, that its proposed Midwest-Plains National Interest Electric Transmission Corridor would not proceed in the NIETC designation process. Three of the 10 preliminary proposed regional corridors were selected to advance to Phase 3, but those routes do not go through Kansas.

Sens. Jerry Moran and Roger Marshall and Rep. Tracey Mann celebrated the news in a joint statement. All three previously introduced legislation to prevent the federal government from using taxpayer dollars to seize property for the NIETC and worked with the DOE to extend the comment period regarding the NIETC proposal in Kansas.

“Kansans have made their voices heard — the Department of Energy has withdrawn its proposal and there will no longer be a National Interest Electric Transmission Corridor across Kansas,” Moran stated. “This is great news for the impacted landowners and farmers and ranchers.”

The DOE’s decision does not alter Invenergy’s



Grain Belt Express transmission line, which the Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC) previously approved after years of permitting, siting and regulatory processes were completed. A portion of the Grain Belt Express line approximately 380 miles long will run through Kansas, and Invenergy expects to begin construction in 2025, pending additional reviews.

## Victory Announces Position Changes

**CRAIG RENICK** recently changed roles in Victory Electric’s engineering department from substation technician to relay technician. Renick began his career at Victory as a fourth-class lineman in 2008, then served the cooperative in metering and substation roles.

**BRAD ACKERMAN** was recently named Victory’s first cybersecurity analyst after serving as the cooperative’s senior information technology (IT) system analyst. The increasing frequency and sophistication of cybersecurity threats led to the need for a full-time position dedicated to safeguarding data and combating threats. Ackerman began his career at Victory as an IT supervisor in 2004.

**JAROD SCHEVE** has moved from the substation department to the operations department as Victory’s new system operator. He began his career at Victory as a warehouse



Craig Renick



Brad Ackerman



Jarod Scheve

clerk in 2002, then worked as a groundsman and a fourth-class lineman before serving as manager of substation technology and most recently as a staking engineer.

**CONGRATULATIONS, CRAIG, BRAD AND JAROD!**

## EFFECTIVE WAYS To Lower Home Energy Use

Outside factors, such as fuel, equipment costs and extreme weather, can impact electricity prices. But you have the power to control home energy consumption by taking proactive steps to reduce energy use.

### THERMOSTAT MANAGEMENT

The thermostat is one of the best places to lower your energy use because heating and cooling account for a significant portion of home energy consumption. During winter months, adjust your thermostat to the lowest comfortable setting to reduce energy use. The Department of Energy recommends 68 degrees or lower.



### UTILIZE OFF-PEAK ENERGY TIMES

Plan energy-intensive chores and tasks, such as running the dishwasher or washing clothing, during off-peak energy hours when the demand for electricity is lower. Off-peak times are early in the morning or late evenings. By scheduling these activities during off-peak periods, you can help keep rates lower, reduce demand and relieve pressure on the grid.



### SEAL YOUR HOME

According to Energy Star, about 20% of heated or cooled air that moves through a home is lost due to lack of proper insulation and air leaks. Ensure your home has sufficient insulation levels and seal air leaks around windows and doors with caulk and weatherstripping.



### MAINTAIN EQUIPMENT

The health of your heating and cooling system is essential for comfort and can greatly impact energy bills. Maintain your system by regularly replacing dirty filters and scheduling annual inspections for maintenance and necessary repairs.



# Understanding Factors

February brings some of the coldest weather of the year, and as our home heating systems work harder and longer to keep us warm, we typically see higher energy bills.

There are a few key factors that affect electricity prices, as well as a few ways you can make a meaningful impact on home energy savings.

When you receive your monthly bill from Victory Electric, you're provided with a summary of how much electricity you used during the billing cycle. You can even see how electricity use may have spiked on days when you used more electricity, such as a particularly chilly day or when relatives were staying with you.

But you might be surprised to learn that beyond your monthly energy consumption, there are external factors that can impact the cost of electricity.

### FUEL PRICES

Victory Electric purchases electricity from our power generation partner, Sunflower Electric Power Corporation, at a wholesale cost, then we deliver that power to our local communities. The cost of generating and transmitting electricity from our generation partner accounts for a significant portion of the cost to provide electric service to homes and businesses — and the cost of fuels that are used to generate that electricity, such as natural gas and coal, fluctuate based on supply and demand. While these fluctuations can impact the cost of electricity, we work closely with Sunflower to plan

and help stabilize electricity prices for our members.

### EXTREME WEATHER

While we can't control the weather, we can review weather patterns and forecasts to prepare for times of extreme cold or heat when we know the demand for electricity will increase. But when temperatures become extremely cold and the demand for electricity spikes, the price of electricity can also increase.

### INFRASTRUCTURE AND EQUIPMENT

To cover the costs associated with providing electricity to your home or business, Victory Electric members pay a monthly service availability charge. This flat monthly fee ensures the cost of equipment, materials, labor and daily operations are covered for all members in Victory's service territory. To ensure the reliable service you expect and deserve, we must maintain the local grid, including power lines, substations and other essential equipment.

### ENERGY POLICY AND REGULATIONS

Federal energy policies and regulations can have a profound impact on electricity

## EFFICIENCY TIP

About 30% of your home's heating energy escapes through windows. Use window coverings to minimize energy loss in cold weather and consider smart blinds that automatically adjust based on sunlight and temperature. This helps regulate indoor climate and keeps your heater from kicking on, saving energy.



SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG

# That Impact Your Energy Bills

costs. As energy generation shifts to the use of more renewable sources and stricter regulations for traditional, always-available fuel sources, such as natural gas and coal plants, costly upgrades and technologies must be constructed and deployed. These additional costs are ultimately passed to consumers.

U.S. power consumption is expected to double by 2050. Across the country, electric cooperatives are working with members of Congress to advocate for smart energy policies that reliably power our local communities.

## YOU HAVE CONTROL

While many of these external factors that impact electricity costs are out of our control, we all have the power to manage our energy use at home. The most effective way to lower use is thermostat management. Since heating and cooling account for a major portion of home energy use, adjusting the thermostat to the lowest comfortable setting

can help you save energy and money. Remember to service your heating and cooling system annually and replace dirty filters as needed.

You can also reduce energy use by taking advantage of off-peak periods, when the demand for electricity is lower. Reserve energy-intensive chores for off-peak times, such as early in the morning or later in the evening, to save energy. Be sure to seal air leaks around windows, doors and other areas where gaps are possible. This will help your heating and cooling system work less and improve the overall comfort of your home.

Victory Electric is your local energy partner, and we're here to help. As always, we will continue working diligently to provide you with reliable power at an affordable cost.

**U.S. power consumption is expected to double by 2050. Across the country, electric cooperatives are working with members of Congress to advocate for smart energy policies that reliably power our local communities.**

## LIGHTNER COMMUNITY SPIRIT SCHOLARSHIP



**SCAN  
TO APPLY**

**10 \$1,000  
scholarships  
available!**

**APPLY TODAY • APPLY TODAY**  
Applications are open until  
**2/28**

High school seniors or current students at a university, college or technical school who are dependents of a Victory Electric member, have a 3.0 GPA and have demonstrated a commitment to their community are encouraged to apply.



Visit [www.victoryelectric.net/lightner-community-spirit-scholarship](http://www.victoryelectric.net/lightner-community-spirit-scholarship).

# Streamline and Save With SmartHub Continued from page 12A ▶

## PAPERLESS BILLING

With paperless billing, there's no need to deal with mailbox clutter or wonder whether a check will arrive before the due date. Instead of a paper bill every month, you will receive an email or text notification when a PDF copy of your monthly electronic bill is ready to view. Use SmartHub to securely access and pay your bill at any time. To select this option, go to Settings, Paperless Billing and move the slider to "Go Paperless."

## MONITOR YOUR USAGE

SmartHub gives you the power to track and take control of your energy usage, and when you save energy, you save money. View your monthly, daily or hourly energy use and look for trends under the Usage drop-down menu. Reviewing this information regularly helps you make informed decisions.

The Average Usage tool shows you what your typical or average usage is for the time period

you select. Usage Comparison lets you select any two months and compare the usage history side by side. Usage Explorer gives you a detailed look at your past and current usage, all in one place. The Usage Planning tool lets you create markers to help you keep track of differences in your energy usage, such as when you install a new air conditioner or go on vacation.

## PREPAY POWER

Prepay Power is a self-managed, pay-as-you-go billing plan that allows you to pay for electricity how and when you choose. Residential members may open an account by paying \$50 to load their account for future energy use. Victory Electric then records daily energy usage and deducts the amount from your credit balance. The rates, energy charges, taxes, franchise taxes, service availability charge and energy charge adjustment are the same as those for accounts on a standard residential billing plan (some charges are prorated daily).

**CONGRATS TO OUR YOUTH TRIP WINNERS!**

**EMPOWER**

**REBECCA DURLER**  
BUCKLIN HIGH SCHOOL

**BAILEE BRADFORD**  
HODGEMAN CO. HIGH SCHOOL

**KYNLEE FINK**  
CIMARRON HIGH SCHOOL

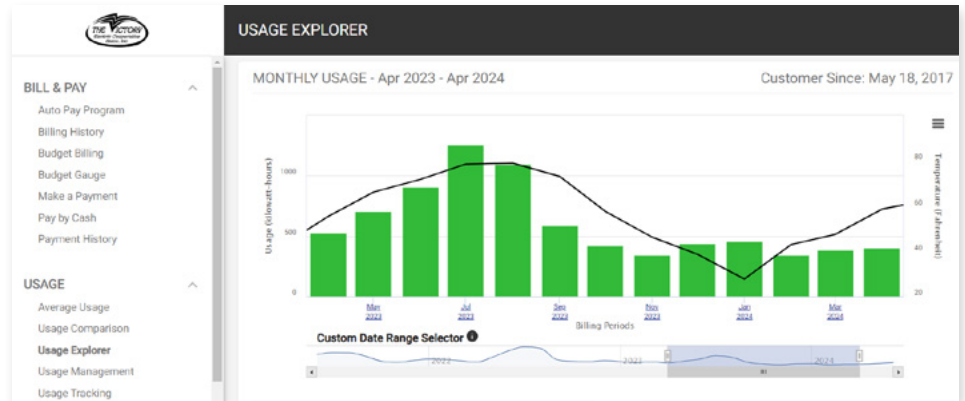
**BLAIRE BRADFORD**  
HODGEMAN CO. HIGH SCHOOL

**COLORADO Camp**

Members on a Prepay Power plan are not required to make a security deposit or pay disconnect, reconnect or late fees. You receive a notification when the account balance reaches \$25 or less, and you can “recharge” your account easily on SmartHub.

### ENERGY ADVISOR

Access our Energy Advisor tool at [www.victoryelectric.net/energy-resources](http://www.victoryelectric.net/energy-resources) or under Usage, Usage Management. The tool securely connects to your account and makes personalized recommendations to help you save money. The more details you provide Energy Advisor about your home, heating and cooling system, lighting, water heater, and



With SmartHub, Victory Electric Cooperative member-owners can track their energy usage, view their bills and make payments. With both web- and app-based options, you can access information anywhere, anytime. Sign up online or reach out to our member services representatives for assistance.

appliances, the more personalized the tool's analysis and energy-saving recommendations will be. This free tool also sends periodic email alerts and videos to members who provide an email address.

### REPORTS

Click Report Power Outage to report an outage at your location. Submit the form under Report an Issue for to ask about billing or other issues, request to disconnect service, or make other inquiries.

### NOTIFICATIONS

Review the Settings menu to keep your account contact information current. Also manage notifications that you would like to receive by email or text message.

Victory Electric's member service representatives would be happy to answer any questions you have about SmartHub or its features and help you sign up. Visit <https://victoryelectric.net/smarthub> for additional details, or call 620-227-2139.

THANKS, SHANE

# 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.

