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Electronews

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FROM THE CEO

Let's Talk

The energy industry is undergoing rapid change, and technology is paving the way for innovation in the way energy is used, produced, stored and shared. Consumers are interested in more green energy alternatives while smart homes and apps make managing energy use and paying your electric bill more convenient than ever.

While the changing energy market has created more options for consumers, it has also resulted in more utility scams and misleading information surrounding solar installations in particular. That's because of two factors.

Utility scams are common because of the vast number of utilities that exist, and consumers are understandably anxious with the threat of disruption to their electric, heating or water service. Second, new products and services in the energy industry provide an opening for scammers and pop-up companies to provide misleading information or shoddy products and services.

Avoid Phone Scams

A common phone scam typically begins with a phone number that appears to be from a valid utility company. The scammer will claim you have a past due account and threaten to disconnect service or take legal action. The scammer will typically demand that you use a prepaid debit card or money order, often within a

very short, urgent time frame to pay the "past due" amount.

You can combat this scam by being aware of the status of your account. Never give your banking or personal information over the phone to someone you did not call. If you have a question or concern about your energy bill, call us directly at 800-279-7915. Do not use the phone number given by the scammer.



Shane Laws

Avoid Solar Scams

Another scam we see from time to time is connected to rooftop solar. Homeowners with rooftop solar may receive a sales call offering an accessory, upgrade or extended warranty to their solar array. The calls could be from crooks claiming to represent a solar company, promising to replace faulty or broken parts or improve efficiency. Again, if you are not expecting the call, don't be fooled. These calls offering misleading information are likely a scam. Call Victory Electric or the company that installed the solar array if you think there may be a problem. Other than occasional cleaning, rooftop solar (if installed correctly) is virtually maintenance-free.

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Let's Talk *Continued on page 12A* ▶

Use Trusted Sources

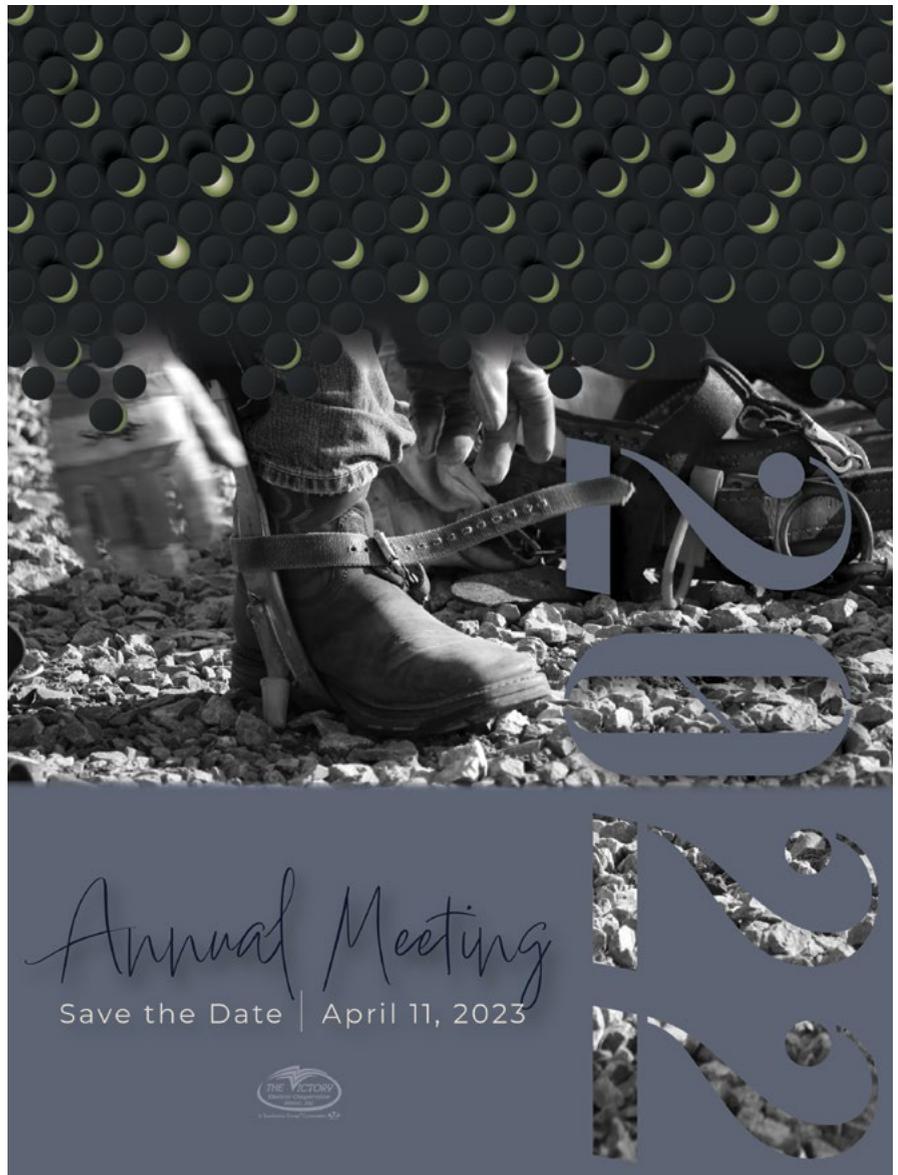
If you're considering solar for your home, make sure you are working with a reputable company. Because this is still an emerging industry with evolving technology, there has been a proliferation of pop-up companies in the market to make a quick buck. Representatives of rooftop solar companies may have more sales experience than knowledge of the energy industry, and their primary goal could be making a sale and moving on to the next prospect.

Victory Electric can offer a candid assessment to determine whether rooftop solar is right for you. After all, we have a different "bottom line" that is not directly tied to the sale of a product or service. We take a more holistic, objective view of how to achieve energy and cost savings for our members, and that may or may not include rooftop solar.

In this ever-changing environment, it's important to remember you have a trusted energy advisor — your local electric cooperative. We are a community-focused organization that works to efficiently deliver affordable, reliable and safe energy to our members.

Remember, we're just one call or click away, so please reach out with any questions about your electric service or bills — we're here to help.

THANKS! SHANE



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In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

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Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights at 1400 Independence Ave., SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; Fax: 202-690-7442; or email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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LIGHTNER COMMUNITY SPIRIT SCHOLARSHIP

Be on the
look out!

Applications open

Jan. 16, 2023

10 \$1,000 scholarships available!

SMART

Energy Usage

Take Control of Your Energy Usage

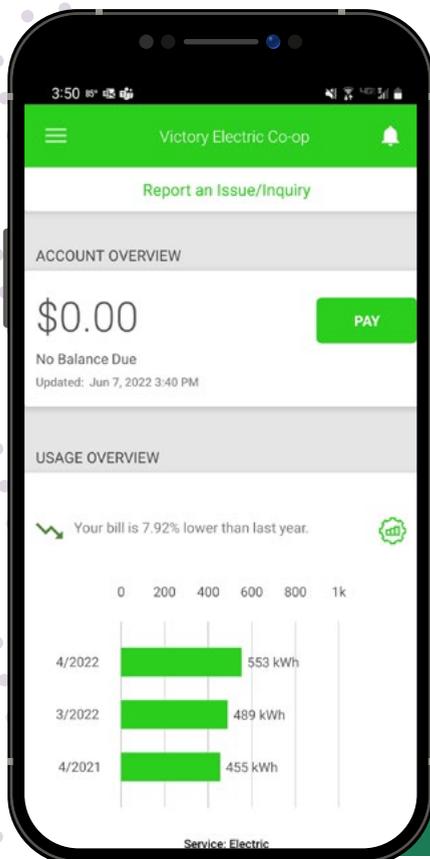
With SmartHub — an online and mobile account manager — you can view your electrical energy usage on a monthly, daily or hourly interval. You can also compare your electrical usage, charges and weather temperature variations of any two months, side by side, to note seasonal or behavioral changes in your energy usage.

By using energy markers, you can track your household energy use over dates where changes occurred, such as implementation of a programmable thermostat, installation of a large new appliance, or when you have guests stay in your home. This is a great feature to help explain energy usage on your bill and can also assist you

in helping to make informed decisions about your energy use.

Additional benefits from your SmartHub account:

- ▶ Report outages.
- ▶ 24-hour access to your electric account(s).
- ▶ View monthly, daily or hourly energy usage, displayed in easy-to-read graphs.
- ▶ View current, as well as historical, billing information and payment history.
- ▶ Sign up for email or text notifications when a new electric bill is generated.
- ▶ Pay electronically by credit card (Visa or MasterCard) or by electronic check transaction.
- ▶ Enroll in paperless billing.



iOS



Android



Scan to download the app!

Sign up online by
visiting the website at
<https://www.victoryelectric.net/pay-online-smarthub>.

Smart Communication

SmartHub gives you the ability to take control of your notifications! You can report outages and send account inquiries on the go. Be in the know with notifications for service work, news promotions, weather events, planned outages, and more all online and in the palm of your hand. SmartHub lets you decide how you want to be informed about your bill, be notified either by email or text message on your smartphone. There is even an option to set a threshold to be notified when you are using more electricity than you planned to help stay on top of your energy costs.

- ▶ **SMARTHUB FEED** — The main notifications page allows you to view your notifications for the past three months. Select which notifications are displayed by toggling the buttons for the desired social network feeds.
- ▶ **MANAGE CONTACTS** — Use this page to manage your contacts. Once you have contacts setup, you may use those contacts to sign up for notifications about your billing account. There are buttons to add email contact or add phone contact. You will be able to activate, edit, or delete any contacts on file that you have created or verified and will be used for notifications. Additional contacts on file section are contacts that we have in our system that have not been verified.
- ▶ **MANAGE NOTIFICATIONS** — Use this page to sign up for notifications about activity on your billing account. You'll use the contacts that were set up on the Manage Contacts screen. You'll have the option to modify account notifications in five categories: billing, miscellaneous, on demand, service and usage. Click the drop-down arrow to the left of each heading to expand all the notification options available.

smart hub



Manage Your
Account



Monitor Usage
24-7



View and Pay
Your Bill



Report Service
Issues



Receive Important
Updates



Annual Parade of Lights & Chili Cook-Off



1ST PLACE JUDGES CHOICE — CARGILL

The Annual Christmas Parade of Lights and Chili Contest was held on Nov. 28 in Dodge City. Sponsored by the Dodge City Globe, City of Dodge City, Main Street, Boot Hill Museum, Western Kansas Broadcasting, Dodge City Convention and Visitor's Bureau, and Victory Electric Cooperative.

This year's festivities included chili sampling and cinnamon rolls, hot chocolate from the Dodge City Salvation Army, Main Street Dodge City's Santa House, the first ever Q97, Continuous Country Snowball Drop, prize giveaways, performances from the DCHS Madrigals, the lighting of the Mayor's Christmas Tree, and concluded with the Parade of Lights. The events attracted hundreds of visitors to Boot Hill and the Convention and Visitor's Bureau.

Several local organizations entered the chili contest with 14 entries. The lucky winners in the Judges Choice category were, **CARGILL** first place; **ARROWHEAD WEST** second; and **FORD COUNTY SHERIFF**, third.

Those who impressed the crowd won the People's Choice category. Winners were **CARGILL** first place; **ARROWHEAD WEST INC.** second; and **FORD COUNTY SHERIFF** third. All winners received an engraved chili trophy sponsored by Victory Electric.

The parade attracted several entries, ranging from classic cars and Dodge City school bands to floats decked out in lights. Thanks to all who attended, and we hope to see you next year!



2ND PLACE JUDGES CHOICE — ARROWHEAD WEST



3RD PLACE JUDGES CHOICE — FORD CO. SHERIFF

Stay Safe During Severe Winter Weather

When severe winter weather hits, power outages can occur. Roadways can be dangerous. Do all you can to prepare your pantry, home and car for the next severe winter storm. Once you are ready, watch and listen for weather bulletins mentioning winter storms, blizzard warnings or windchill dangers.

Supplies for the Storm

At home, have enough nonperishable food, water and medical supplies and medicines for 72 hours. The Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggest storing 1 gallon of water per person per day. Have cell phones and chargers, as well as backup charging sources, ready. Gather important documents and medical records. Protect your pets and make sure you have enough supplies for them too. Additional items to have ready: a first-aid kit, a flashlight and batteries, hand sanitizer, blankets and warm clothing.

Readying the House

Weatherproof your home ahead of winter by caulking windows and doors and looking for other air leaks that need attention. Inspect chimney flues for wood stoves or wood-burning fireplaces. Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors on each floor of your home. Protect pipes from freezing.

Prepare Your Vehicle with an Emergency Kit

According to Consumer Reports, it can be cheaper to buy a prepared emergency kit than to purchase items individually. A kit typically includes battery booster cables, an ice scraper, a portable shovel, flashlights, a signaling cone, backup batteries for the flashlight, roadside triangles, a reflective vest, a basic

PREPARING FOR STORM SEASON?

DON'T FORGET TO READY YOUR CAR

According to the National Safety Council (NSC), every vehicle should have an emergency supply kit onboard. Kits should be checked twice a year and expired items should be replaced regularly. Emergency supply kits should include:



Snow brush	Nonperishable foods	Brightly colored cloth (to tie to side mirror)
Shovel	Properly inflated spare tire	First-aid kit
Windshield washer fluid	Wheel wrench and tripod jack	Flashlight and batteries
Cat litter for traction	Jumper cables	Compass
Warm clothing	Fire extinguisher	Car charger for cell phone
Blankets	Reflective vest	
Drinking water		

SafeElectricity.org SOURCE: NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL

first-aid kit (add in what is needed for individual needs) and a cell phone charger.

In addition, your car or truck should also be stocked with gloves, a blanket, a rain poncho, wipes, rags, boots and a hat. It cannot hurt to also have bottled water and nonperishable snacks in your vehicle in case you get stranded.

Prepare Your Vehicle

Complete annual maintenance, test the car battery and cooling system, use winter tires and replace them if the tread is less than 2/32nd of an inch, check tire pressure and wiper blades, add wiper fluid rated for less than minus 30 degrees and keep the gas tank at least half full.

Know that when the power goes out, we work hard to restore it safely and efficiently. For information about electrical safety or storm preparation, visit www.SafeElectricity.org.

Denver Presents Leadership Workshop at Victory

On Nov. 28 and 29, Victory Electric brought together frontline employees from nearby electric co-ops to learn from former Elite Navy Seal, **RORKE DENVER**.

Denver shared captivating stories about leadership, tenacity, grit and combating complacency. His insights motivate teams and individuals to live and perform at their highest level.



During his presentation, Rorke Denver challenged the audience to put both hands up, and after a few seconds he asked them to raise them once more. Lastly, he asked the audience to give him one more inch. Everyone's hands went up a bit further. He shared that in most instances there is an opportunity to push a little further to find a solution that may not have been obvious or give that extra mile of effort toward a goal.

Working on the Line

Concern for
Community —
helping the City
of Dodge City
move a house for
the Community
Housing
Association project.

