

P.O. Box 1335, 3230 N. 14th Ave.
Dodge City, KS 67801
620-227-2139 or 800-279-7915
victoryelectric.net
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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Electronews

The Victory Electric Cooperative Assn., Inc.

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CEO MESSAGE

Capital Credits Retirement to Distribute \$900,000-plus to Members

Capital credits are just one of the many reasons it is great to be a member of an electric co-op. This month, Victory Electric is retiring capital credits and returning more than \$900,000 to members. The credit amount represents net margins issued to members who purchased electricity between 1986 and 1994.

So, what is a capital credits retirement? Electric cooperatives are not like other utilities. We operate on a not-for-profit basis, which means we operate at cost. But even not-for-profit businesses can have money left over after all expenses are paid in a given year. The difference is, at the end of the year, we allocate that money (but not immediately retire) to each member's account according to the amount of electricity purchased. We collect only enough revenue to run and expand business without the need to generate profits for distant shareholders. Victory Electric works hard every day to

keep rates as low as possible. But it's sure nice to know when there are extra margins at the end of the year, they go back to members and members receive cash back over time.

As a not-for-profit utility, Victory Electric is limited to two options for raising capital: borrowing or raising capital from its members. By combining capital credits funding obtained from members with borrowed money on which Victory Electric must pay interest, the cooperative is able to lower its cost of capital. Therefore, capital credits help Victory Electric remain in good



Shane Laws

Continued on page 16H ►



Happy Holidays

Wishing our members a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! In observance of the holidays, our office will be closed on Tuesday, Dec. 24, and Wednesday, Dec. 25, for the Christmas holiday. We will be closed on Wednesday, Jan. 1, for the new year.

Pumpkin Painting and Carving Festival a Success

The 13th Annual Pumpkin Painting and Carving Festival was held at Victory Electric on Oct. 26. More than 500 children were in attendance with their families. A team of 49 volunteers consisting of the Ladies Community Outreach group, Dodge City Community College's Hispanic and Latino Outreach organization, Dan Reichenborn, and Victory Electric employees and family members volunteered and sponsored the two-hour event. Thank you to all who attended and helped serve. We look forward to next year's festival!



Above: More than 500 kids had the opportunity to paint or carve pumpkins.
Left: Employee Kody Stockton spent the morning giving rides on the pumpkin train.



Above: Miss Teen Dodge City helped out at the tattoo and face painting booth.
Left: Employee Kyndell Penick helps kids navigate the pedal car course.

Above: Even the young kids have a great time painting pumpkins and playing games.

Right: We couldn't host such a large event without the help of our many great volunteers.



Victory Electric and CoBank Award Sharing Success Grant to Ingalls Recreation Commission

Victory Electric is pleased to announce **INGALLS RECREATION COMMISSION** as the recipient of this year's Sharing Success Grant. The Ingalls Recreation Commission was awarded two checks totaling \$15,000 – \$7,500 from Victory Electric and \$7,500 from CoBank – for repairs and upgrades to the Ingalls community swimming pool.

The Ingalls swimming pool is older, in need of expensive repairs, and requires extensive work on the lining of the pool. This has affected the number of days the pool is open to the community.

"There are pools in nearby larger towns, but the problem is they all have fees and require transportation to get to," said **LEONARD RODENBUR**, president of the recreation commission. "The Ingalls pool is free and offers accessibility to the members of our community. This grant will ensure the availability of the pool and easy access to summer fun for our local kids."

The grant will assist them in repairing the pool and extending the life of the pool for another 5 to 8 years until further plans can be implemented for more dramatic repairs.

"Victory Electric appreciates the hard work and dedication of the recreation commission," said **KENNY WEHKAMP**, Victory Electric board member. "The CoBank Sharing Success Grant is a great program that allows Victory Electric to match grants from CoBank and give back to the communities the co-op serves."

The annual "Sharing Success" grant opportunity, capped at \$15,000, is made possible by Victory Electric's governing board of trustees, in partnership with CoBank – a cooperative bank that provides loans, leases, export financing and other financial services to agribusinesses and rural power, water and communications providers. CoBank's \$4 million Sharing Success fund matches charitable contributions made by its co-op members to local nonprofits in their individual communities. The matching grant program is designed to celebrate the vital role that cooperatives play in individual communities across the country. CoBank states that collaborating with their customers to support worthy causes they care about is a great way for them to make a

positive difference and fulfill its mission of service to rural America.

Since its inception in 2012, the program has generated more than \$36 million in total charitable donations, primarily in rural areas across the country. In early 2019, CoBank announced the board of directors increased the size of the annual Sharing Success charitable giving program from \$3 million to \$4 million per year and raised the maximum matching amount from \$5,000 (\$10,000 total grant) to \$7,500 (\$15,000 total grant).

"Thanks to our board of trustees and CoBank, the Sharing Success Grant has enabled Victory Electric to make an impact to give back to the communities we serve," said Shane Laws, Victory Electric CEO.

2019 is the eighth year Victory Electric has awarded "Sharing Success" grants to local nonprofits. Applicants must be federally recognized as 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations. **THE BUCKLIN LIBRARY** received a \$10,000 grant in 2012 to help fund the construction of its new library building. In 2013, the **MISSION OF MERCY** dental clinic in Dodge City was awarded \$10,000. The grant funded the **STAUTH MEMORIAL MUSEUM** in Montezuma for the 2014 "Suits in Space" Smithsonian exhibit. In 2015, the **MANNA HOUSE**, a local shelter and food bank, was awarded the grant to repair and improve its facilities. **THE DEPOT THEATER** upgraded its theater sound system in 2016. In 2017, the **FORD COUNTRY HISTORICAL SOCIETY** made repairs to preserve the history in the Home of Stone - Mueller Schmidt House. In 2018 the **FORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE** received \$10,000 for security upgrades.

For more information on the Victory Electric and CoBank Sharing Success Grant or how your organization can apply, visit our website.



Pictured left to right: Kenny Wehkamp, Victory Electric board trustee; Deniz McGill, Victory Electric vice president of IT; Jerri Whitley, Victory Electric vice president of communications; Mikey Goddard, Victory Electric vice president of safety; Mark Poer, recreation commission board member; Leonard Rodenbur, president of the Ingalls Rec Commission; Jeanette Dwyer, recreation commission board member; Kim Schmidt, recreation commission board member; and Allison Doll, Victory Electric communications coordinator.

Quint Earns Board Leadership Certificate



Randy Quint

RANDY QUINT, Victory Electric trustee, received the Board Leadership Certificate from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

Today's electric utility environment imposes new demands on electric cooperative trustees, particularly increased knowledge of changes in the electric utility business,

new governance skills, and a working knowledge of the cooperative principles.

"The courses offered by NRECA allow our trustees to stay current on important issues such as power

supply, power transmission, regulatory requirements and environmental stewardship," said Shane Laws, Victory Electric CEO. "This is a great achievement for Randy and Victory Electric appreciates all his time and dedication to the cooperative."

The NRECA Board Leadership Certificate recognizes individuals who continue their professional development after becoming a Credentialed Cooperative Trustee. Trustees who have attained the Board Leadership Certificate have completed 10 credits in advanced, issues-oriented courses. NRECA's director and trustee education programs are specifically designed to address the learning needs of electric cooperative directors.

Victory Electric congratulates Randy on his achievement!

Co-ops Care Charity Golf Tournament Proceeds Benefit Wright Park Zoo Revitalization Efforts

Representatives of Victory Electric and the Co-ops Care Charity Golf Tournament presented a check for \$3,535 to the Friends of the Wright Park Zoo on Friday, Oct. 25. The funds donated were proceeds from the inaugural Co-ops Care Charity Golf Tournament, co-hosted by Victory Electric and Wheatland Electric in September.

Together, Victory Electric and Wheatland Electric's golf tournament raised money to benefit the Friends of Wright Park Zoo in Dodge City and Wheatland Electric's Cram the Van food drive. Each organization is focused on giving back and making a positive difference in their communities so we all have a better place to live, work and play.

"Giving back to the community is what cooperatives do," said Jerri Whitley, Victory Electric vice president of communications. "We couldn't be more happy to be a part of helping build and support strong and healthy communities for our members."

Friends of the Wright Park Zoo is raising funds for a zoo revitalization project aimed at creating a more enriching environment for the animals in the zoo's care, updating habitats, and educating the community with unique experiences. The zoo currently entertains more than 60,000 visitors per year from Dodge City, the surrounding counties,



Representatives from Victory Electric, Friends of the Wright Park Zoo, City of Dodge City and zoo staff gathered for the official check presentation.

and even out-of-state visitors. Home to about 126 animals, the zoo's animals represent approximately 30 species from nearly every continent.

"We couldn't have asked for a better first year of hosting a joint cooperative charity golf tournament," said Kyndell Penick, Victory Electric manager of key accounts. "We had approximately 29 teams and many great sponsors who made the event a huge success. Victory Electric looks forward to hosting this tournament again in the future and having the opportunity to support other local causes."

Four Local High School Students Awarded Leadership Trips

Victory Electric is proud to sponsor four local high school juniors to participate in the 2020 electric cooperative youth tour program. Each summer, Victory Electric sends two students to Washington, D.C., and two students to Steamboat Springs, Colorado, to attend two unique leadership opportunities.



Hever Arjon



Clay Frink



Kaitlyn Jarnagin



Benjamin Meador

HEVER ARJON, Dodge City, and **BENJAMIN MEADOR**, Ingalls, will travel to Washington, D.C., in June to attend the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour.

While in Washington, D.C., Arjon and Meador will join more than 1,800 youth from across the nation. Participants will visit the monuments, have breakfast on Capitol Hill with Kansas senators, and attend several other attractions.

KAITLYN JARNAGIN and **CLAY FRINK**, both of Cimarron, will attend Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, in July.

At camp, the Kansas students will join youth from Colorado, Oklahoma and Wyoming and have the opportunity to form a mock cooperative, gain leadership skills, and learn about the cooperative industry with tours and activities.

The four winners were chosen based on their application, résumés, two letters of recommendation, and an interview with a panel of judges.

“Victory Electric is proud to sponsor local students for youth tour,” said Jerri Whitley, Victory Electric vice president of communications. “As a cooperative, we value the seven cooperative principles and one of those principles is concern for community. Investing in our youth is a great way for us to stay involved and provide students opportunities they may not have otherwise.”

The youth tour contest is held each fall for high school juniors. For more information on the program or how to apply, please visit our website.

Winter Tips for Renters



Replace Air Filters

Don't make your heating system work harder than it needs to – dirty air filters add to your monthly expense. Replace your air filters every three months.



Reverse Ceiling Fan Direction

Change your ceiling fan direction to run clockwise during the winter. This causes air to sink to the lower part of the room so you can stay warm and toasty.



Winter Temperature Settings

During the day set your temperature lower while you are absent from your home – the recommended temperature is 65 degrees during the day and 55 degrees at night. Each degree higher can add 3% to your heating bill.



Hang Curtains

Save on heating costs by hanging thick curtains that add a layer of insulation to your home. If your walls feel cold, also consider hanging a curtain, tapestry, or even a poster to add an extra insulating layer.



Complacency: That's When Accidents Happen

“Complacency: self-satisfaction especially when accompanied by unawareness of actual dangers or deficiencies.” This is the definition according to Merriam-Webster. But according to Tracy Moore and the Highline Heroes Foundation, it's when tragic accidents are bound to happen.

On Aug. 26, 2002, Tracy Moore's life changed forever. She became the widow of a lineman who worked for Lakeland Electric in Lakeland, Florida. Marc Moore was killed in the line of duty due to a series of failures in safety protocols. He was a husband, a father of two young boys, and a beloved friend of many. While the years following her husband's death have been full of grief, Moore said she has been blessed in surprising ways.

Through the Highline Hero Foundation, Moore has been able to honor and recognize all lineworkers, and promote the importance of safety and looking out for one another. Moore refers to her journey following her husband's death and deeming it as her job to promote a ministry of safety. On Nov. 6, during a Victory Electric all-employee meeting, Moore spoke on the topic of safety.

“I feel that sharing my heart and story with lineworkers

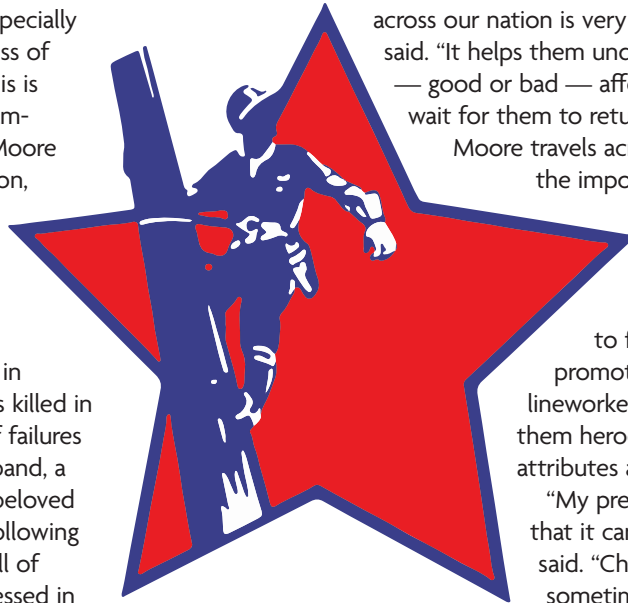
across our nation is very important and impactful,” Moore said. “It helps them understand every decision they make — good or bad — affects those who love them and wait for them to return home.”

Moore travels across the country speaking about the importance of safety to anyone willing to listen — but most importantly, to lineworkers and those involved in the electrical trade. While ministering to families of lineworkers, she promotes the national recognition of lineworkers as first responders. She calls them heroes for their first-responder like attributes and attention to safety.

“My presentation also brings awareness that it can really happen to you,” Moore said. “Chances aren't worth taking and sometimes, it's the last chance you take.

I encourage all utilities to recognize their lineworkers and I am happy to help in any way. It is important to recognize our nation's lineworkers; they are the true first responders, clearing the way and making it safe for emergency responders.”

If you are interested in learning more about the Highline Hero Foundation, please contact Tracy Moore at 863-393-4317 or e-mail her at tracy@highlineheroes.com. They can also be found on Facebook.





PARADE OF LIGHTS
and
CHILI COOK-OFF

SAVE THE DATE

December 9, 2019
Eisenhower Park (First and Gunsmoke)

5 p.m. | Chili sampling, hot chocolate, and cookies by Boot Hill and Santa in the Santa House
5:45 p.m. | Mayor's Tree Lighting
6 p.m. | Parade of Lights

Co-op Retiree Bob Hughes Jr. Honored on Veterans Day

The Victory Electric family was saddened to lose retired employee and military veteran **ROBERT “BOB” HUGHES JR.** in July. During his time at Victory Electric and after his retirement in 2009, Hughes served as the chairman of the Avenue of Flags in Dodge City. The Dodge City Commission and Kansas Governor Laura Kelly proclaimed Monday, Nov. 11, 2019, as Robert L. “Bob” Hughes day, in conjunction with national Veterans Day.



Bob Hughes Jr.

Bob spent half of his two-year Marine service in the jungles of Vietnam, earned a private pilot's license, and served as a Lieutenant Major in the Kansas Wing of the Civil Air Patrol. Hughes was largely responsible for the Avenue of Flags, forming the association with other veterans in 1978.

Hughes was recognized for his inspiring patriotism and service to the United States, Kansas and Dodge City at a ceremony at Maple Grove Cemetery in Dodge City. Proclamations from Gov. Kelly and Dodge City Mayor Brian Delzeit were

read, and the laying of the wreaths and honoring of the Unknown Soldier and the Vietnam Memorial were performed by auxiliaries from the GI Forum and American Legion.

“The Memorial Day and Veterans Day ceremonies conducted by the Avenue of Flags at Dodge City’s Maple Grove Cemetery require substantial organization and funding. Bob Hughes provided leadership in creating a collaborative relationship among the VFW, GI Forum, American Legion, City of Dodge City, Boy Scouts, and the Community Foundation of Southwest Kansas to install and maintain the

magnificent Avenue of Flags display,” said Mayor Delzeit. “The Avenue of Flags honored Bob Hughes during the annual Veterans Day ceremonies in recognition of his inspiring patriotism and service to the United States, Kansas and Dodge City, and with gratitude for his commitment to preserving and honoring his proud legacy for generations to come.”

In November 1919, President Wilson proclaimed Nov. 11 as the first commemoration of Armistice Day, later to be known as Veterans Day. Veterans Day is the day we pay tribute to all American veterans who served their country honorably during war or peacetime.

“Retired in 2009 after 32 years of service as a lineman, we remember Bob Hughes as a wonderful person who had a great sense of adventure, humor and patriotism, and who was an inspiration to us all,” said Jerri Whitley, Victory Electric vice president of communications. “He was passionate about veterans and spent many years serving the Avenue of Flags organization. I couldn’t think of a more deserving person to receive this honor.”



Many gathered for the Veterans Day ceremony honoring Bob Hughes at Maple Grove Cemetery.

GETTYIMAGES/MARIANVEJCIK

Co-op Crew Chief Shewey to Retire



Mike Shewey

After 21 years working in the electric industry, crew chief

MIKE SHEWEY announced his retirement.

Shewey began his career as a lineman in 1998 working as an apprentice for Aquila. After Victory Electric's acquisition of Aquila in 2007, he began working at Victory Electric.

"I started out working for cable TV when the lineman opportunity with Aquila came up," Shewey said. "It's been a good career."

Something Shewey said he will always remember about his time with Victory Electric are the storms and all the long hours he spent with his fellow linemen.

"I've had the opportunity to work with almost every guy here at some point or another," Shewey said.

When it comes to his plans for retirement, he said it best. "I am going to do whatever I want, and only what I have to."

We will miss you Mike!

Four Groundmen Promoted to Fourth Class Linemen

Vice President of Operations Ryan Miller recently announced **COLTON LEE**, **AUSTIN GOODER**, **KODY STOCKTON** and **TYLER TRENT** were promoted to fourth class linemen.

This achievement is just the first step to achieving their journeyman lineman certification. To reach journeyman, each lineman must have a combination of four years of experience and successfully pass exams covering material studied in four textbooks. For every textbook, there are 10 exams. There is also a final accumulated exam at the end of all four textbooks. These four linemen all completed and passed the 10 exams for the first textbook, earning their fourth class certification.

"I have really enjoyed all the new things I have been learning during my past year as an apprentice, and I look forward to learning more as I continue in my career as a lineman," Stockton said.

Though their studying and learning are far from over, this promotion will allow the linemen to take on more challenging work on the job.

"I am excited about the opportunity to do more hot work," Lee said. "This promotion took some hard work and I am looking forward to the next step."

All four linemen agreed this



Colton Lee



Austin Gooder



Kody Stockton



Tyler Trent

promotion is just part of reaching their ultimate goal of achieving their journeyman certifications. Becoming a journeyman lineman is a goal all linemen strive for, as it is the highest classification linemen can attain.

"It feels great to get the promotion and know that I am completely done with one of my textbooks," Trent said. "It's just another step closer to achieving my journeyman certification."

Congratulations Colton, Austin, Kody and Tyler! We look forward to your continued progress.

Capital Credit Retirements *Continued from page 16A*

financial standing and keep rates as low as possible for our members. The capital is used for improvements, such as substations, power lines and other electrical system facilities that serve our members.

After each fiscal year, and once the determination has been made that the financial condition of the cooperative is stable and adequate to meet operating costs and debt covenants, the board of trustees may elect to return excess capital by retiring capital credits to Victory Electric members.

After evaluating the health of the cooperative, Victory Electric's board of trustees voted to retire more than \$900,000 in capital credits. Checks are expected to be mailed to

members in mid-December. If Victory Electric does not have a current address on file, a check will not be issued. Victory Electric members who may be leaving or have already left the cooperative service area are encouraged to provide Victory Electric with a current mailing address so capital credits can be returned as they are retired. If you think you may be a former member without a current address on file, please contact our office to arrange for your capital credits payment to be issued.

Only your local electric cooperative makes every customer an owner of the business. It is just another way we are looking out for our members.

Thanks, Shane