

## THE VICTORY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

# electronews



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### FROM THE MANAGER

## Victory Electric's Members Approve Self Regulation in an Effort to Keep Utility Costs Affordable

The membership of Victory Electric Cooperative voted last month in favor of self-regulation. The vote gives Victory Electric's member-elected board of trustee's more decision-making authority to self-regulate Victory's rates, a responsibility previously held by the Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC).

I would like to thank our members who voted in the election. I believe our members' decision underscores their belief in the democratic process, which is cornerstone of the cooperative business model. It also gives me confidence that our members responded with a "yes" vote, as they understood the benefits of self-regulation and how it reduces our overall expenses.

Votes were cast throughout May and 3,162 ballots were cast, yielding a participation rate of 23.95 percent. Of those members who voted, 73.8 percent voted "yes" to self-regulation, giving us the majority we needed. The KCC was notified, and we are now effectively a self-regulated cooperative.

Many of you may be wondering "what's next?" Our generation and transmission (G&T) cooperative is in the process of restructuring wholesale rates in response to the

new integrated marketplace. Once we have more information from our G&T's on how our wholesale rates will be structured, we will initiate a cost-of-service study to determine the best way to combine our native co-op and MKEC tariffs. This can be a several month process, so members should not see any immediate changes.

I have no doubt the members made a solid decision in their vote to self-regulate. As a cooperative, our goal is to provide our members with reliable power at the most affordable cost. Eliminating unnecessary costs will help us better serve our members and position Victory for future opportunities.

Our members are not without protections with self-regulation. Victory will continue to be subject to other state and federal environmental, safety, reliability, and labor regulations; and certain functions will remain under KCC authority, regardless of the members' vote.

If any member should have a question about self-regulation, I invite you to call or stop by our office and we would be happy to speak with you.

**Shane Laws**



Shane Laws

*I believe our member's decisions underscores their belief in the democratic process.*

# Victory Donates Bicycles to Deserving Kids

## Bicycle Winners

**Amanda Hernandez**, Beeson  
**Noe Tiu**, Beeson

**Damaris Coca**, Sunnyside  
**Zekariya Farah Ali**, Sunnyside

**Esperanza Morales**, Central  
**Wilmer Hernandez**, Central

**Jennifer Bedolla**, Miller  
**Yasmin Dorado**, Miller

**Dairy Ochoa**, Wilroads  
**Nick Vargas**, Wilroads

**Benjamin Torrez**, Ross  
**Owen Wesley**, Ross

**Janet Morales De Le Rosa**, Linn  
**Samuel Rivera**, Linn

**Emir Solorzano**, Soule  
**Kelly Morales Frausto**, Soule

Victory Electric partnered with the local Kiwanis Club for their TERRIFIC (Thoughtful, enthusiastic, respectful, responsible, inclusive, friendly, inquisitive, capable) Kids program. The program awards local elementary kids for their hard work and dedication. Students chosen are those who have shown growth and excelled into their studies, many of which improved their grades/scores by several letters. Several students from each elementary were chosen to receive a certificate, and two students from each school received a bicycle.

The local Kiwanis TERRIFIC Kids program is coordinated by Ryan Ausmus. Victory Electric would like to thank him for his time organizing



Beeson Elementary winners stand with their bikes. (from left) Mrs. Pendergast; Moe Tiu; Jerri Imgarten, Victory; Micaela Morales, Victory; Amanda Hernandez; Kelly Bolin, Principal; Ryan Ausmus, Kiwanis; and Miss Waugh.

the program and dedication to the students of Dodge City. TERRIFIC Kids promotes character development, self-esteem and perseverance.

Victory Electric congratulates all of the student winners.

## Summer Interns Gain Experience at Victory Electric

The summer is full of opportunities for four interns. Three interns are starting their first summer with the cooperative, but for one student, this is his third summer. **JEFF HUBBELL** is an intern in the engineering department. Hubbell is a student at Kansas State pursuing a degree in electrical engineering and will be graduating in December.

A native of Spearville, Hubbell and his wife, Uriah, will be relocating to Spearville after their graduation. Hubbell will be joining the engineering team full-time after graduating. When asked what kept bringing him back to Victory, Hubbell said, "The atmosphere, friendly people and I enjoy the work I do."

Recent graduate **RUBEN ROJAS** and **WILLIAM STEGMAN**, of Dodge City Community College's lineman program are teaming up with the operations department for the summer.

Rojas is from Dodge City and plans to become a lineman. He has learned a lot and

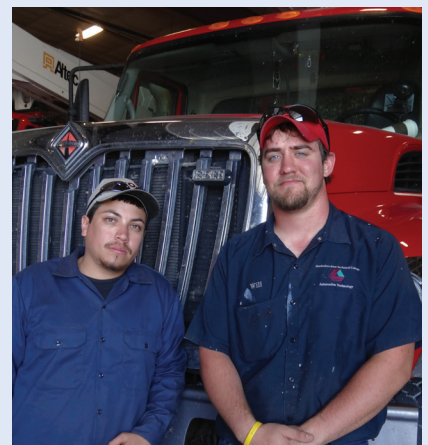
said, "The people here are pretty cool and I get along with everyone."

Stegman is from Kinsley and also credits the people and the great working environment to what he likes most about being with Victory. "I've learned a lot and I know this is a great start to a career as a lineman," he said.

**KENNEDY ST. GEORGE** is interning with the communications department. From Indiana, St. George is a student at Kansas State and will be graduating next May with a degree in agricultural communications and journalism.

"I interned at Kansas Electric Cooperatives and loved what I did, so when I heard about the internship at Victory, I knew it was a great way to work with the electric cooperatives, and gain more skills that will be beneficial to my career," said St. George, "I couldn't be more excited to be here."

We welcome all of our interns and we hope that you all have a great summer.



Ruben Rojas and William Stegman



Kennedy St. George and Jeff Hubbell

## Victory Presented Top Communications Award

**JERRI IMGARTEN**, manager of marketing and communications at Victory Electric, recently accepted a “gold” Spotlight on Excellence award.

Imgarten received the Award for “Best Graphic Design (Illustration)” for the design of the 2013 Dodge City Days T-shirt. The Spotlight on Excellence awards program was created to recognize the communication and marketing efforts by electric co-ops. Victory competed with other co-op’s our size for the award. Electric co-op communicators submitted more than 640 entries in the Spotlight on Excellence program, now in its 27th year.



Jerri Imgarten with the gold award.

## Grain Bins: Harvesting Safely this Season

As rewarding as it may be, farming is an extremely difficult job and it ranks among the top ten most dangerous professions in the United States. At Victory Electric, safety is top priority for our employees and our members.

Our farmers work hard to get the job done, and sometimes it’s easy to forget all the necessary steps to take when practicing safe operations. Grain bins are siloed spaces built for storing grain and fermented feed known as silage. These bins play an integral role in the efficiency and profitability of farm and ranch operations, and safety regulations should always be considered when working around these structures.

Whether you’re purchasing new grain bins or remodeling areas that contain existing ones, proximity to overhead power lines must be a considered factor.

► **Safe clearance.** The National Electrical Safety Code requires an 18-foot minimum vertical clearance from the highest point of the filling port of the grain bin to nearby high-voltage wires and a 55-foot minimum distance from the power line to the grain bin wall. Changes to landscaping and drainage work can affect clearance heights of power lines, so remember to check these measurements regularly.

► **Filling grain bins.** High-voltage power lines are not insulated, so it’s important to remember to maintain an adequate high-wire clearance when using a portable auger, conveyor or elevator to fill your grain bin.

► **Moving equipment near grain bins.** When moving equipment, such as a hopper or a scaffold, be aware of nearby power lines. Remember to maintain a ten-foot clearance to ensure safety.

Accidents can happen in a split-second, which is why Victory Electric reminds you to always use caution when working near power lines.

If you are considering a plan for a new grain bin or reconstruction of an existing bin’s site, please contact our office at 620-227-2139 and let us assist you in maintaining a safe environment for you and your family.

### GRAIN BIN SAFETY

**DANGER: HIGH VOLTAGE!**  
**FOLLOW FARM SAFETY RULES AROUND POWER LINES**

Height of grain storage structure	D=Minimum distance from line to bin wall*
15 ft.	55 ft.
20 ft.	68 ft.
25 ft.	80 ft.
30 ft.	93 ft.
35 ft.	104 ft.
40 ft.	118 ft.
50 ft.	143 ft.
60 ft.	168 ft.
70 ft.	193 ft.
80 ft.	218 ft.

\*Based on a typical power line having a vertical clearance of 18.5 feet above the ground and a supply line phase to ground voltage of more than 0V to 22KV; National Electrical Safety Code Rule 232.

## Visit our Website & Join us on Facebook



Visit our website at [www.victoryelectric.net](http://www.victoryelectric.net). On our website, you will find a calendar of events, frequently asked

questions, bill pay, and energy calculators—just to name a few tools!

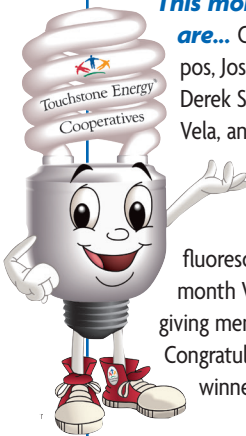
You can also become a fan of Victory Electric on Facebook at [facebook.com/VictoryElectric](https://www.facebook.com/VictoryElectric) or by searching for The Victory Electric Cooperative Assn., Inc. Check our page for updates, outage information, and energy efficiency tips. Facebook is a great way to stay in touch.

## Happy Fourth of July



Happy Fourth of July from all of us at Victory Electric. Our office will be closed, Friday, July 4. We hope you have a safe and happy holiday.

## CFL Charlie Says "Come Get Your Free CFL!"



**This month's lucky winners are...** Christine Alam, Paulo Campos, Joshua Riley, Steve Riegel, Derek Seacat, Shirley Terrell, Cesar Vela, and Michael Zuniga.

Come by Victory Electric Cooperative to get your free compact fluorescent light bulb (CFL). Every month Victory Electric will be giving members free CFL light bulbs. Congratulations to this month's winners!

## Overhead vs. Underground Wires

High winds mixed with precipitation can cause tree limbs to fall on overhead power lines, triggering outages. You might remember a few years back when major ice storms in southwest Kansas knocked out power twice within a couple months. Although Victory Electric linemen are on call around the clock and respond quickly to problems, some folks wonder why power lines are kept in harms way.

There are two ways electricity can be delivered: through overhead or underground power lines. Underground lines may seem attractive during storms because the lines are not exposed to extreme weather, but the technology doesn't always make sense for co-ops focused on affordability and reliability.

Building three phase distribution underground lines would cost between two to three times more than overhead lines, and transmission lines could cost as much as six times more.

In 2005, Hi-Line Engineering, a Georgia-based utility consulting firm, compared the increased cost of underground lines against their benefits in Virginia. The results showed that underground savings did not outweigh the heavy initial cost of installation.

Most underground lines are found in subdivisions where developers request and pay for the option for aesthetic reasons or to comply with local statutes. These locations typically have a high concentration of homes which helps spread out the expense.

There are pros and cons to both forms of power distribution. For instance, underground facilities are more reliable during storms and generally require less right-of-way maintenance because there are no trees, brush, or other vegetation to clear away.

In the other hand, in underground power lines are not

easy to track down and fix. A North Carolina reliability study measured both the frequency and duration of power outages and found that the frequency of outages on underground systems was 50 percent less than for overhead systems, but the average duration of an underground outage was 58 percent longer.

"If a tree falls on an overhead line, you can normally drive down the line, see the problem, and get to work restoring power," explained Tom Lowery, manager of operations at Victory Electric. "The same holds for repairing broken insulators and cross arms. If you see it, you can fix it.

"But underground lines are tough to troubleshoot. You can't find a problem with your eyes. You have to search harder for it, using expensive equipment to track it down based on where the power flow stops. Then a line crew has to dig a hole to reach the spot before repairs can be made."

Long-term reliability is also an issue. As underground lines get older, they become less reliable and are more difficult and costly to repair. A Maryland utility found that customers served by 40-year-old overhead lines had better reliability than those by 20-year-old underground lines.

Lowery agreed with the results of the study, saying that some of the co-op's overhead lines that were installed 40 and 50 years ago are still providing reliable service to members.

Storms inevitably will continue to cause power outages, but Victory Electric works year-round to minimize and prevent outages.

"Overhead lines are inspected regularly, and our tree crews work hard to clear branches away from power lines so they hopefully won't cause problems during a storm," Lowery said. "We can't control the weather, but we try to minimize the damage it causes to our lines."

# Electric Generating Units: Yes, You're the Owner

As a member-owner of Victory Electric, you're more than a customer because you have a voice. Each year, you have the opportunity to elect fellow members to the Victory Electric board of trustees. Through the trustees who you elect, you have a seat and a voice at the Victory Electric board table for each decision made.

Because you are a member of Victory Electric, you are one of the owners of Sunflower Electric Power Corporation and Mid-Kansas Electric Company, LLC. Both provide wholesale generation and transmission services to Victory Electric.

What does this ownership mean for you? Among other benefits, it means you have ownership in a diverse electric generation portfolio, comprising of coal, natural gas, and renewable resources. The law of supply and demand dictates that as demand for a product increases so does the price, and your having access to more than one generation fuel resource helps protect you against rising costs.

Consider when a mover transports 2,000 boxes across country, it is more efficient to use a diesel semi-tractor trailer rig and make one trip than to it is to use a small cargo van that makes 20 trips. Likewise, when a mover transports 100 boxes across the state, it is more efficient to use a cargo van than it is to use an eighteen wheeler. When moving a few packages within a city, the transportation of choice might be an electric vehicle with technology that benefits from frequent stops and slower speeds.

Just as vehicles are designed to meet varying delivery scenarios, electric generating units are also designed with different configurations to best meet energy demands; for example:

## Like an eighteen wheeler, coal units are designed to run for extended periods at high loads.

This plentiful and affordable domestic fuel source comprises approximately 53 percent of the Sunflower and Mid-Kansas generation portfolio. Generation facilities fueled by coal are typically considered baseload resources because they usually run all the time and generate large amounts of electricity to serve the base electric demand that is always there. Coal resources can also be dispatched when necessary to meet energy demand. Another important advantage of this fuel source is affordability, as your G&T participates in long-term contracts to protect against price fluctuations.

While some oppose coal-based generation, Sunflower and Mid-Kansas take great pride in being environmental stewards, operating all assets in a way that meets both state and federal environmental requirements. Your democratically elected Sunflower and Mid-Kansas understand the advantages of this fuel and will continue to advocate for reasonable environmental regulations that keep coal in the mix.

## Like cargo vans, natural gas units are usually smaller in size and offer flexibility to the generation portfolio.

Approximately 40 percent (on a nameplate basis) of the Sunflower and Mid-Kansas system is natural gas-based generation. Natural gas units that utilize a steam cycle are typically

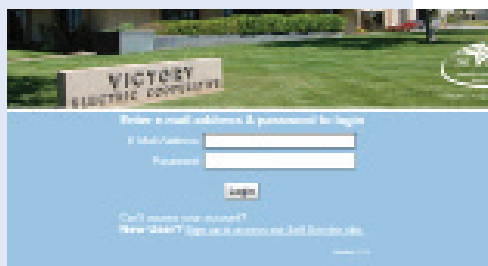
“As a member of Victory Electric, you also have ownership in the generation and transmission services provided by Sunflower Electric and Mid-Kansas Electric.”

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## Notice: Bill Payment Changes

For several years Victory Electric has been using Mr. Payroll, a service provided by Western Union. Starting next month, Victory Electric will no longer be accepting payments at Mr. Payroll. Starting August 28, bills will need to be paid either in our office, online at [www.victoryelectric.net](http://www.victoryelectric.net), via mail, or at one of our drop boxes.

Drop boxes are located at Victory Electric at 3230 N 14th and City of Dodge City at 806 N 2nd Ave.



## Insurance Coverage is Members' Responsibility

We are often asked by members who have had damage or loss during a power outage if their loss is somehow covered by Victory Electric's insurance, but unfortunately we have no way of insuring our members from the effects of outages which are beyond our control.

Although we try to provide the most reliable service possible and have an excellent record of reliability, some outages must be expected. Weather, vehicle accidents, birds, animals, falling trees, and a variety of other causes will continue to create outages and inconveniences.

These outages are not only expensive and inconvenient for you, but they are also extremely expensive for your cooperative to repair. This leaves you with the burden of insuring yourself for these occurrences which are caused by nature or otherwise. You should consider having adequate insurance to cover such incidents.

There are many things you can do to help eliminate potential problems. It is absolutely essential to have proper protection on electric motors, an alarm system to notify you of an outage, and possibly a standby generator.

We intend to keep doing our best to prevent service interruptions, but we urge you to consider having proper insurance protection for those occasions when the unexpected happens.

## Victory Electric Employees Volunteer at Local School

Several Victory employees volunteered to grill hamburgers for students on the last day at school at Soule Elementary to reward the students for their hard work and successful school year.



Mike Clark and Josh Schmidt grilling burgers at Soule Elementary School.

# Working on the LINE

Storms in June left more than six thousand of our members without power. Strong winds were the cause for many damaged lines and poles. Three storms struck our service territory causing outages on June 1, 6, and 14. In that time we lost more than 100 poles and other infrastructure was damaged.



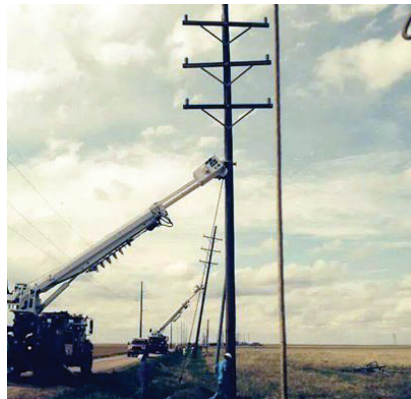
Line crews safely repair lines to restore power back to more than 6,000 members.



Wind blew down lines and poles in residential and commercial areas of Dodge City.



Downed power lines like this one had to be repaired to restore power.



Victory's line crews worked many hours through the night and into the morning restoring power to our members.

# Electric Generating Units, Continued

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considered intermediate resources as they usually come online during periods in the year when electric demand is above average.

Natural gas-fired combustion turbines are considered peaking units, as they usually come online for a few hours at a time during days that have the highest electric demand. Natural gas-fired reciprocating engines offer a flexible alternative that can be used for a variety of purposes.

Like coal resources, natural gas resources can be dispatched when needed. However, since long-term contracts are not available for natural gas, the price is more volatile than the price of coal and often much higher.

Since the goal of your G&T is to provide its members with reliable energy at the lowest possible cost, coal and natural gas units are dispatched based on their production costs to ensure the most economical blend of generation is used to serve the demand while maintaining system reliability.

More easily ramped up and down than a coal unit, natural gas units are also used to follow the natural fluctuations of wind energy.

## Like electric vehicles, wind resources can bring benefits, but this resource also has drawbacks.

The remainder of the system's generation portfolio is

comprised of contracts for renewable energy. Just as electric cars are limited to travel distance or duration based on battery capacity, wind resources can only be used when the wind is blowing.

Unfortunately, the demand for energy in the Sunflower and Mid-Kansas service area is highest on hot summer days, not on spring and fall nights when Kansas experiences its windiest weather conditions.

Still, when available, wind energy benefits the system when it replaces energy produced from higher-priced natural gas. For that reason, Sunflower and Mid-Kansas have strategically entered into wind energy contracts that will benefit the system without sacrificing reliability or affordability.

The Sunflower and Mid-Kansas Boards of trustees believe strongly in the benefits of a diverse generation portfolio and have made decisions to advance and protect those assets at a time when fossil-fuel generation is facing restrictive federal regulations. We hope that you too will join in the grassroots movement to protect your generation resources. Visit [action.coop](http://action.coop) to let the government know that you support an "all-of-the-above" energy strategy, which will allow your G&T to continue utilizing its generation assets in a way that best benefits all members.



Holcomb Station for Sunflower Electric Power Corporation supplies Victory as one of the G&T plants.



Ed Eversole, Sunflower, stands with a natural gas unit at the Fort Dodge Station.

## Contenedores de Granos: cosencha de forma segura

Tan gratificante como le puede ser, la agricultura es un trabajo extremadamente difícil y se encuentra entre los 10 principales profesiones más peligrosas en los Estados Unidos. En Victory Electric, la seguridad es la máxima prioridad para todos-nuestros empleados y nuestros miembros.

Nuestros agricultores trabajan duro para hacer el trabajo, a veces es fácil olvidarse de todos los pasos necesarios para practicar las operaciones de seguridad. Contenedores de granos están en espacios en silos construidos para el almacenamiento de granos y alimentos fermentados conocido como ensilaje. Estos contenedores desempeñan un papel integral en la eficiencia y rentabilidad de las operaciones en granjas y ranchos, y las normas de seguridad siempre deben ser consideradas al trabajar cerca de estas estructuras.

Ya sea que usted está comprando nuevo contenedores de silo o en áreas de remodelación que contienen la proximidad a líneas eléctricas debe ser un factor considerado.

► **Distancia de seguridad.** El Código Nacional de Seguridad Eléctrica requiere una altura mínima de 18 pies desde el punto más alto del puerto de llenado del silo a los cables de alta tensión cercanos y una distancia mínima de 55 pies de la línea de alimentación a la pared del silo de grano.

Cambios en el paisajismo y obras de drenaje puede afectar a alturas del paso de las líneas de energía, por lo que no olvide comprobar estas medidas con regularidad.

► **Llenar los depósitos de granos.** Líneas eléctricas de alta tensión no están aisladas, por lo que es importante tener en cuenta para mantener un espacio adecuado en la cuerda floja cuando se utiliza una barrena portátil, transportador o elevador para llenar su recipiente de granos.

► **Equipos de movimiento cerca de granos de silos.** Al mover el equipo, tal como una tolva o un andamio, estar al tanto de las líneas eléctricas cercanas. Recuerde que debe mantener una distancia de 10 pies para garantizar la seguridad.

Los accidentes pueden ocurrir en una fracción de segundos, Victory Electric, le recuerda utilizar siempre trabajar con cuidado cerca de líneas eléctricas. Si usted está considerando un plan para un nuevo silo o reconstrucción de sitio de un contenedor existente, póngase en contacto con nuestra oficina al 620-227-2139 y permítanos asistirlo ayudándole en el mantenimiento de un ambiente seguro para usted y su familia.



### Visite Sitio Web y Únase a Nosotros en Facebook

Visite nuestro sitio web [www.victoryelectric.net](http://www.victoryelectric.net). En nuestro sitio Web, usted encontrará un calendario de eventos, con frecuencia pregunta, pago de factura y energía calculadora sólo por nombrar algunas herramientas!

También puede ser una fan de Victory Electric en Facebook buscando Victory Electric Cooperativa Assn, Inc. Consulte nuestra página en Facebook para actualizaciones, información de interrupción y consejos de eficiencia de energía. Facebook es una excelente forma de mantenerse en contacto con nuestros miembros.

