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www.victoryelectric.net

THE VICTORY ELECTRIC CO-OP

electronews



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Supervisor of Operations

Tom Lowery

Manager of Operations

FROM THE CEO

Kansas Legislative Committee Considering Tax Exemptions

It's no secret the state of Kansas needs additional revenue. News stories about the revenue shortfall and editorials about what has led to the situation are plentiful. The Kansas Department of Revenue recently announced for the first quarter of the current fiscal year—the months of July to September—receipts were short of estimates by \$42 million. Tax revenue comes to the state in a variety of ways—sales taxes, income taxes and property taxes—and if taxes are reduced from one source, you are correct in concluding taxes must be increased somewhere else.

In 2012 the Kansas Legislature removed taxes on nonwage business income earned by small business owners (i.e., limited liability companies, S corporations and sole proprietorships). The theory is untaxed income earned from small businesses would be reinvested. The reinvestment would allow the business owner to either add employees or property, both of which would generate taxes from the expansion. Unfortunately, small business growth in Kansas hasn't generated increased payroll or property taxes to keep pace with the needs of the state. Therefore, Kansas

needs more revenue.

To compensate for the revenue shortfall, the 2015 Kansas Legislature passed legislation to increase sales and use taxes from 6.15 percent to 6.5 percent. Cigarette and tobacco taxes were also increased. Although some legislators were not supportive of the policy shift away from income taxes toward consumption or sales taxes, efforts to eliminate the small business income tax reductions passed in 2012 were not successful. As a compromise, a special legislative committee was formed to determine the value of current tax exemptions and credits within the State's tax code and to recommend proposals to eliminate select property or sales tax exemptions.

The newly formed Special Committee on Taxation met recently in Topeka to discuss sales taxes and exemptions. Energy sales currently have a retail sales tax exemption, but last spring a legislative committee considered a proposal to remove the exemption on residential energy sales. While utility representatives were successful in fighting this change



Shane Laws

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FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Victory Seeks Board Nominations



Kenny
Wehkamp

Dear Victory Members,

It is time once again to start thinking about Victory Electric's annual membership meeting held in April 2016.

We are currently soliciting nominations for Victory Electric's board of trustees. Positions up for election are in District 4, currently held by **GARY GILLESPIE**, Copeland; District 7, currently held by **JIM OCHS**, Jetmore; District 9, currently held by **RICHARD LIGHTNER**, Garden City; and District 10, currently held by **PAT MORSE**, Dodge City.

To qualify, you must be a natural person (not a corporation, partnership or any other business entity); and your principal residence must be served by Victory Electric and located within our territory and within the district you wish to represent. Also, if a close relative of yours—within the third degree—is an employee or a trustee of Victory Electric, you are not eligible to run for a trustee position.

Duties of an elected trustee include: attending a monthly six-to-eight hour board meeting, board training opportunities, and some travel will be required.

If you would like to run for a position, or you know someone interested, please send a letter of interest with qualifications to Shane Laws or Kenny Wehkamp at Victory Electric, P.O. Box 1335, Dodge City, KS 67801.

Sincerely,

KENNY WEHKAMP, PRESIDENT

Tax Exemptions Continued

► *Continued from page 20-A*

last spring, the special committee is expected to consider the proposal again, perhaps recommending to the 2016 Legislature that the tax exemption on residential energy sales be eliminated. If this exemption is removed, expect this legislative action to increase your electric bill by 6.5 percent automatically.

All tax exemptions are put in place for a reason. Our core economies—electricity, oil, gas, agriculture and manufacturing—use special tax programs to keep costs as low as possible and remain competitive. The residential electricity exemption was originally approved because legislators know energy is vital to the daily lives of Kansans. Changing the rules would increase costs at a time when our core economies are struggling.

On your behalf, the government relations staff at Kansas Electric Cooperatives, our statewide organization, have consistently worked with legislators to explain how removing sales tax exemptions on residential energy sales would be harmful to rural Kansans. As a whole, rural electric customers are older, earn less, and live in sparsely populated areas where it is difficult to shoulder cost increases of any kind, particularly for services that are a necessity. As always, Victory Electric will continue to advocate for public policy that protects you and your fellow cooperative members from unnecessary rate increases.

Thanks, Shane

Ten \$1,000 Scholarships Available

The Victory Electric Cooperative Assn., Inc., is proud to announce our scholarship program for high school seniors and current college students.

In the spring, Victory Electric will award ten \$1,000 scholarships to its members or their dependents. The Lightner Community Spirit Scholarship is designed to recognize students who have demonstrated academic success as well as showing a commitment to bettering their community.

"We are thrilled to announce this scholarship program, which reflects the importance of civic and community engagement," said Shane Laws, Victory Electric CEO. "As a not-for-profit cooperative, one of our guiding principles is 'Commitment to Community,' and I can't think of a better way than a scholarship program to give back to the communities we serve and encourage youth to be involved in their own community."

The name of the scholarship honors the Lightner family of Plymell, Kansas. Richard Lightner has been on Victory Electric's board of trustees for 34 years and his father, George, served 31 years previous. Both strongly supported Victory Electric's community and youth programs.

To be eligible for the scholarship, applicants must be an active member in good standing with the cooperative, or a dependent of such member. Applicants must be a student or entering an accredited college or university (two or four year). Applications must be received no later than March 1, 2016.

For further information or to request the application form, please contact Jerri Imgarten at 620-371-7730 or jerri@victoryelectric.net.



Victory Youth Enjoy 9th Annual Pumpkin Festival



The Annual Pumpkin Painting and Carving Festival was attended by approximately 550 area youth.

The 9th Annual Pumpkin Painting and Carving Festival was held on October 24 at Victory Electric.

Sponsored by Victory Electric and Ladies Community Outreach, the event was free for the approximately 550 youth who participated.

“The kids really love coming out and using their creative abilities to create pumpkins that are artistic and uniquely their own,” said Jerri Imgarten, manager of marketing and communications at Victory Electric. “I enjoyed

helping with such a fun and festive event for the youth of the Dodge City and surrounding communities.”

Victory sponsors the event to provide a safe environment for kids to enjoy Halloween activities. It is also a way to give back to the community and supply a pumpkin to those kids in our community that may not otherwise get a pumpkin to paint or carve.

In addition to painting and carving, there were also Halloween and fall-themed games for the youth to enjoy.



Kambre Konrade concentrates on painting a pumpkin.



David Masden helps Dillion Stormont get back on track during a race.



Ethan Pogue shows off his creation.



Micky and Minnie make an appearance at the Pumpkin Festival.



There were many colorful pumpkins, kids even came in their halloween costumes to enjoy the event.

Merry Christmas



Shane Laws
CEO



Kenny Wehkamp
Board President



John Leis
Vice President



Pat Morse
Secretary/Treasurer



Cedric Drewes
Trustee



Gary Gillespie
Trustee



Jim Tr
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Victory Electric, Shane Laws, CEO; the board of trustees; and employees wish all of our members a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! We will close on December 24 and 25 in observance of the Christmas holiday, and close again at 3 p.m. on December 31 and all day on January 1 for New Year's.



Shane Laws
CEO



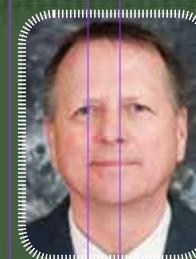
Terri Larson
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Richard Lightner
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Jim Ochs
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Randy Quint
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Ken Schulte
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Daryl Tieben
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Victory Electric Bill Payment Options



Pay your bill online at www.victoryelectric.net, at our office, by mail or at any of our pay stations.

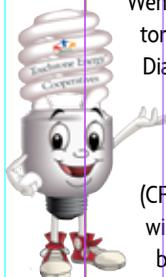
Victory Electric has several convenient options for you, the member, to pay your bill.

In addition to paying in our office or by mail, options include online bill pay at victoryelectric.net, drop boxes at Victory Electric and City of Dodge City.

CFL Charlie Says "Come Get Your Free CFL!"

This month's lucky winners are...

Wendy Barnett, Ryan Brady, Hector Bustamante, Quincy Donovan, Diana Gonzales, Ronald Hunter, and Mikal Roelfs. Come by Victory Electric's office to get your free compact fluorescent light bulb (CFL). Every month Victory Electric will be giving members free CFL light bulbs. Congratulations winners!



Irrigation Meeting Scheduled

Victory Electric will be hosting the Irrigation and Technology Seminar Friday, February 26, 2016.

The irrigation meeting is open to the public and will cover important agricultural issues. More details to follow.

Vittles for Vets | Winners

Congratulations to our October winners, Loren Ochs and Ashley Ewy. The third and final drawing for two, \$100 bill credits will take place December 9.

Also, with every ten items donated, you'll also receive a free voucher to any Dodge City Law Football Game.

Flax and Woods to Retire After Decades of Service

HAROLD FLAX, supervisor of system technology, and **LEROY WOODS**, crew chief at Victory Electric will retire at the end of the year.

Flax and Woods started at Victory Electric in April 2007, when Victory Electric acquired a portion of the Aquila electric properties.

Flax started at Western Light as a programmer in charge of data conversion in December of 1985. In 2007, when Victory acquired Aquila, Flax coordinated the conversion to automated meters.

"The project was the highlight of my career," said Flax. "Our whole system was automated by May 2014."

The transition to automated meters was a big project and couldn't have been done alone. "Harold isn't one you can replace. A good guy and a huge asset. He has helped me expand my knowledge and helped me get to where I'm at today," said Heath Konecny, supervisor of metering technology.

Woods came to Western Power in March of 1973 as an operator before joining the line crew a year and a half later. Woods has been on the line crew since and has served as a crew chief since 2000.

Upon retirement, Woods plans to "relax and do nothing" he said.

Tom Lowry, manager of operations, has worked with Woods for several years and said "I've known Leroy for many years. He is a hard working man. We wish him the best of luck."

Both, Flax and Woods, transitioned many times as the original Western Light company was bought and sold, before finally becoming a part of Victory Electric in 2007.

All of us at Victory Electric thank Harold and LeRoy for their many years of service to Victory Electric and the local community. We wish them a happy and relaxing retirement.



Harold Flax



Leroy Woods

Victory Gives Back to local Schools

Victory Electric donated pumpkins to Northwest and Spearville Elementary. Each student received a pumpkin they chose themselves to take home.

This is one way Victory Electric likes to continue to give back to the communities we serve.



Spearville Elementary holds their pumpkins with school principal and Michael Stefan, from Victory Electric.

CO-OP CONNECTIONS SPOTLIGHT

Depot Theater Company Offers Ticket Discount



The Depot Theater, dedicated in 1898, now serves as the Depot Theater Company and is ready for an audience for the next production, showing the weekends from December 4 to the 19.

For years, the Depot Theater Company has brought the community together for dinner and a show and they are now offering a discount with Victory Electric's co-op connections card.

Today, the Depot is the largest, still-standing train depot built for the Santa Fe railroad in Kansas. Now it's home to the Depot Theater where more than 185 volunteers create up to six shows a season.

"There is nothing like this in Southwest Kansas," said Connie Penick, Depot Theater director of operations. "Giving a fine dining experience with a show is what we do. It's what we've been doing for years." This season marks the 33rd season and this will be nothing short of better than the last.

"We're constantly moving," said Penick. "We have to if we're going to provide the best experience for our audience." Providing the best wouldn't be an option without the people and the community behind the Depot Theater.

Concern for community is one of the seven cooperative principles that guides Victory Electric and the Depot Theater is no different. "All of our volunteers are local. Not just from Dodge City, but Wright, Ashland, Bucklin and every other surrounding small town. People know the value of this place. We wouldn't be where we are today without them," said Penick.

The volunteers are important for each part of production; the planning, the executing and the final shows. "Volunteers plan sets, build sets, serve as waiters and bartenders, and do anything else we need to make our shows great," said Penick.

The concern for community makes the Depot Theater Company a "one-of-a-kind experience with professional standards," said Penick.

The Depot Theater is bringing to life Whoville December 12 and 19 with "Kids Christmas in Whoville" and their final production of the 2015 calendar year will be "Christmas Belles," directed by Sheri Tieben. Christmas Belles will run every Friday, Saturday and Sunday from December 4 to December 19.

"With a co-op connections card, audience members will save \$3 on dinner ticket prices," said Ila Siders, Depot Theater CEO and director of fundraising. "We want to get people here, we want to show them what's available right here in their own town."

A discount of \$3 on a dinner ticket is just one of several ways to save with the co-op connections card provided by Victory Electric. Tickets are normally priced \$55 for a dinner ticket and \$40 for a show only ticket. One card can be used per household at the Depot Theater Company.

For a listing of businesses participating in the co-op connections program, locally and nationally, visit victoryelectric.net/content/co-op-connections-card.



Ila Siders, director of financing, stands where dinner is served during the shows. Visit the Depot Theater for a show this season.

Happy Holidays

FROM THE

Energy Explorers



America's Electric
Cooperatives

HOLIDAY SAFETY TIP
Remember, safety first! Always ask an adult to help you with any electrical cords or outlets. The Energy Explorers wish you a safe and happy holiday season!