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A Touchstone Energy<sup>®</sup> Cooperative 

# Electronews

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## CEO MESSAGE

### Goodbye, Too Soon

I write this with great sadness over the unimaginable loss of our friend and colleague, **STEVE JIMMERSON**, and his wife Kathy, in a car accident on Oct. 4.

The void created by the sudden death of someone as beloved as Steve is still hard to grasp. He was someone we took for granted would be with us for a much longer time. His laughs, his ever-present smile, and his help—I can still see his grin and his big wave as he walked down the hallway of the office with a Pepsi in his hand.

In his career as a journeyman tree trimmer at Victory Electric, he worked with much dedication and energy. He truly had a passion for his job and loved helping members. Steve was living proof of how fine a person can be. He was a good friend to many, a great colleague, and a loving husband to Kathy. The character of the life he lived might be summed up in a few words: he was sincere, he was earnest, and he was loyal.

Even on a seemingly mundane, slow day, Steve could brighten your mood with a crazy story of one of his various adventures, and he loved showing everyone photos and videos of his family, hunting and fishing trips, and whatever monster tree he cut down that day.

All who knew him will miss a vibrant individual with a rare friendliness

and charm of personality. Steve was a genuinely warm and wonderful individual—one we will miss greatly.

Our sorrow is lessened only slightly with the comforting thought that we had the privilege to know him.

We lost a dear friend and valued colleague, and their deaths deeply affected us all. Our grief and confusion are small compared to what Steve and Kathy's families are feeling. Our hearts and prayers go out to them. I would also like to extend my appreciation to everyone in our community who helped and supported Victory Electric, Trinity Manor and the Jimmerson/Gann families in so many ways over the past few weeks. Your help, your conversation, your laughs, your stories, and your hugs have kept us going strong during this time of grief.

Adlai Stevenson, former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, once commented about a man and his contribution: "It is not the years in a life that counts; it is the life in the years." Steve truly lived. We will all miss him.



Shane Laws

*Shane and the Victory Electric Family*

## Underwood Retires After Nearly 30 Years of Service



Greg Underwood

**GREG UNDERWOOD**, Victory Electric vice president of engineering, retired after 27 years of service.

Underwood started his career at Victory Electric in March 1991 as an apprentice lineman. “Greg did a lot of good things for this organization and he is missed,” said Shane Laws, Victory Electric CEO.

Underwood left his career in the field as a crew chief, and moved into the office in 1998 as line superintendent. The industry was transitioning, and in 2005 the need for an engineering department was recognized. Underwood seized the opportunity to manage the new department. He remained in that position for 13 years.

“We knew industry was changing, like it does all the time,” Underwood said. “There was a need for an engineering department so I moved there as the manager of engineering.”

Underwood’s tenure allowed him to see the careers of many grow and develop for a lot of Victory Electric’s employees.

“I was here during Ryan Miller’s internship,” Underwood said. “Now he’s vice president of operations and I have really enjoyed watching everyone grow into new roles and positions.”

The ice storm of 2017 was easy to Underwood compared to the one he experienced a decade earlier.

“The ice storm of 2006/2007 was something,” Underwood said. “It’s my favorite memory of my career. We completed a lot of work for FEMA and seeing poles I set as a linemen years previous being rebuilt was really neat.”

He is an avid hunter and fisherman

and plans to spend his time doing those things. Underwood also plans to complete projects around the house.

“Since I’m retired, the honey-do list will be even longer,” Underwood said.

All of us at Victory Electric thank Greg for his many years of dedicated service to Victory Electric and the local community. We wish him a happy and relaxing retirement.



Victory Electric gifted Greg Underwood a new rod for fly fishing.

## Victory Electric Welcomes Tucker, New Workforce



Zach Tucker

The electric power industry is changing all the time and the work force is no different. Retirements and promotions allowed Victory Electric to hire new, young professionals.

**ZACH TUCKER** is the newest addition to Victory Electric’s line crew. Hired as an apprentice lineman, Tucker is one of the youngest on the team.

“There has been an opportunity to hire these younger guys and we’ve taken advantage,” said Eric Speer, manager of operations.

Tucker is a Scott City native. After attending Dodge City Community College’s lineman program, he went to work for J&J Powerline. Tucker was there for several months before joining Victory Electric.

“This seemed like a good job and it got me closer to home,” Tucker said. “I’m from western Kansas and wanted to stay here. I am looking forward to working with these guys.”

Victory Electric is embracing the change in our industry and has hired several new linemen to fill the shoes of retired and promoted linemen.

“Hiring these young guys keeps everyone competitive,” said Ryan Miller, vice president of operations. “In my opinion, we have some of the best linemen and when younger guys come in, they all want to be better than the next man on their crew.”

Justin Straight is Tucker’s crew chief and knows the responsibility of teaching these linemen.

“We want them to be capable crew members who work safe and are reliable,” Straight said. “Zach has already done great things for our crew.”

“Getting guys who are just beginning their careers allows us to teach them the way we want,” Straight said.

Like most linemen at Victory Electric, Tucker enjoys hunting and fishing.

“I like being outside,” Tucker said. “That’s what I like most about being a lineman.”

Hiring these guys has allowed Victory Electric to balance the workforce.

“In 10 to 15 years, we don’t want everyone retiring at the same time,” Speer said. “A lot of our linemen have reached their journeyman status and are crew chiefs. We needed some apprentice linemen in the mix. Having a balanced workforce allows room for greater experiences and someone for our younger guys

## Victory Electric Linemen Participate in Lineman's Rodeo

Back then—as it is still today—when you ride for the brand, it means you signed on to the mission, you committed, you were a dedicated team player. In the Old West, a brand was a ranch's trademark, representing pride, duty and stewardship, while inspiring loyalty, dedication and camaraderie. This week linemen **MARLON HERNANDEZ** and **FELIX STRAUSS** are “Getting the Hell Out of Dodge” and trading their spurs for gaffs and pistols for shotguns to represent Victory Electric at the 35<sup>th</sup> Annual International Lineman's Rodeo.

The 2018 International Lineman's Rodeo and Expo will be held Oct. 10-13, in Bonner Springs, Kansas. The rodeo is designed to recognize journeymen and apprentice linemen from the U.S. and abroad who are the best in their field. In most industries, employees strive to prove their skills are better than or comparable to their peers through award ceremonies, certifications, or public recognition. For electric linemen, it's called a rodeo. While there is no bronc or bull riding, ropes are still used, just not for lassoing livestock.

“The International Lineman's Rodeo is like the Super Bowl of lineman rodeo's,” said Mikey Goddard, Victory Electric's vice president of safety and the “unofficial coach” of the Victory Electric duo. “They only compete in one rodeo per year and it takes a lot of guts and determination to put your skills to the test on such a grand platform.”

Last year, Hernandez and Strauss made history as the first linemen from Victory Electric to ever participate in the International Lineman's Rodeo, and they are both excited about competing again.

“We had a ton of fun, learned a lot, and met some cool new people,” Strauss said. “But my goal is to do better than I did last year. I've been practicing the most on pole-top rescue to perfect my technique and form to shorten my time.”

The lineman duo has dedicated their time practicing after hours and working with Goddard to review various safety measures before running drills in preparation for the event.

“I love to climb and the thrill of climbing,” Hernandez said. “I also strive to always do my best, so this competition is perfect because I get to compete against the best linemen, and that motivates me to keep going. It's just fun.”

The International Lineman's Rodeo attracts the best linemen from around the world to compete in events based on traditional lineman tasks and skills. The rodeo consists of several events in which contestants are scored on their ability to follow safety protocols and proper procedures, and are timed on how efficiently they perform those tasks. In the hurt-man rescue event, for instance, a dummy (simulating an injured line worker) hangs from atop a 40-foot pole and linemen are judged on how safely and quickly they secure the dummy and pulley it to the ground.

As apprentice linemen, Hernandez and Strauss have fewer than four years of utility experience. Apprentices compete in separate classes than journeymen linemen, who are classified

as having more than four years of utility experience.

“Linemen provide a critical service to our communities, and we are proud of the highly trained workforce at Victory Electric,” said Shane Laws, Victory Electric CEO. “We have some of the best linemen, and the International Lineman's Rodeo allows them the opportunity to demonstrate their skills and showcase their pride of the lineman's trade.”

Hernandez and Strauss are already in Bonner Springs attending safety training and pre-conferences leading up to the completion on Saturday. Victory Electric asks its members and community to join them in wishing Marlon and Felix the best of luck at the 2018 International Lineman's Rodeo. To follow Marlon and Felix's journey at the rodeo, visit Victory Electric's Facebook page at [facebook.com/VictoryElectric](https://facebook.com/VictoryElectric).

“A lineman's job is to ‘keep the lights on,’” said Goddard. “This is a great opportunity for Victory Electric linemen to show the public and members their technical skill set, and the intense training linemen go through to effectively face a multitude of obstacles on a daily basis to ensure our members have safe, reliable power.”



Marlon Hernandez and Felix Strauss head to the 35<sup>th</sup> Annual International Lineman's Rodeo in Bonner Springs.

# PowerMyWay and How it Works for You

PowerMyWay is a new self-managed pay-as-you-go billing plan with no deposits, no late fees, and no disconnect or reconnect charges. Pay \$50 dollars toward future electricity and after that, pay as much or as little as you want on an as-needed basis. So you can pick your bill due date!

Every day your balance will adjust based on how much electricity you used the previous day. When you have less than \$25 left in your account, you will receive a text message, email or phone call reminder that your balance is low and you need to think about making a payment. Since you no longer

get a paper bill, your account information is available 24/7 on our online bill payment site or mobile app, so it is three easy clicks to access your balance information or make a payment.

For more information on PowerMyWay, visit our website at [victoryelectric.net](http://victoryelectric.net) or call 620-227-2139 or at our office on North 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Dodge City.

## POWER MY WAY

TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR ENERGY FUTURE

**Sign up**



Visit [victoryelectric.net](http://victoryelectric.net) or stop by our office for information on how to get started.

**Charge account**



Put money in your account via the SmartHub app and other payment methods.

**Check balance**



Get updates and low account balance reminders by text, email or phone.

**Recharge**



Online at [victoryelectric.smarthub.coop](http://victoryelectric.smarthub.coop) or via your SmartHub app on your mobile device.

## Give Your Extension Cord Some Respect

You should be giving your extension cord some love by inspecting it before you use it. Make sure it doesn't have signs of wear like cracks or fraying.

Safe Electricity offers additional tips to keep you and your family safe while using this common household item.

### Make sure

- ▶ The plug prongs and the slots of the extension cord match (two pronged

versus three); never try to plug a three prong cord into a two-slotted outlet. If you have grounded outlets (with three slots), it's time to upgrade to a three-pronged cord.

- ▶ The plug is fully inserted into the extension cord; unplug when the cord is not in use.
- ▶ You use the cord temporarily; have permanent wiring installed by an electrician if use is long term.
- ▶ The extension cord is certified by an independent testing laboratory.
- ▶ Cords used outdoors are plugged into a GFCI outlet.
- ▶ You store the cords indoors when not in use.

### Conversely

- ▶ Never plug major appliances, such as a window air conditioner or refrigerator, into an extension cord ill-

equipped for the job. Commonplace household extension cords (those that appear thin and flat and are often inexpensive) and power strips cannot handle surges in power.

- ▶ Never cut the bottom lone prong off to fit in a two-prong receptacle. This could create a shock hazard.
- ▶ Don't use an indoor-rated extension cord outdoors.
- ▶ Don't use them near water sources
- ▶ Don't "string" or lengthen cords by plugging one extension cord into another one.
- ▶ Don't overheat or overload an extension cord, place under rugs or carpets in high-traffic areas, or (when using one outside) drive over one.

Don't take your trusty friend, the extension cord, for granted. Give it a once-over and take care when using it, and it should serve you well.



# Button Up Your Home to Stay Safe and Warm

Old man winter will soon come knocking on your front door. Now is a good time to make sure he won't be accompanied by a draft coming through your home. Use the mild weather now to improve your home's efficiency for greater comfort and less energy waste:

- ▶ Caulk and add weather stripping to doors and windows that leak air.
- ▶ Clean your furnace and replace your furnace filter.
- ▶ Replace door bottoms and thresholds with ones that have pliable weather stripping or sealing gaskets
- ▶ Use foam sealant on larger gaps around windows, baseboards, and other places where air may leak out.
- ▶ Make sure your insulation is up to a foot or foot and a half in your attic or crawl space.

For more information on preparing your home for winter, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

## Keep watch over your space heater

Before you reach for your space heater, make sure you consider the potential dangers of using one. If misused, it can cause electric shock or fire.

Never plug your space heater into

an extension cord. Although handy and convenient, an extension cord cannot handle the energy spikes caused by a space heater and may become overloaded, possibly causing a fire. Also make sure the appliance is plugged in properly so there is not a loose connection, and carefully consider where you'll place the heater in your home.

These additional tips will keep you and your family safe while using portable space heaters:

- ▶ Place heaters in open areas and keep them at least three feet away from anything that can burn, such as paper or rugs; also do not place them near combustibles in your home such as paint, varnish, harsh cleaners, aerosol sprays or nail polish remover.
- ▶ Monitor space heaters when they are in use. Buy one with an automatic shut-off function.
- ▶ Do not use them in potentially wet areas, such as kitchens or bathrooms.
- ▶ Do not use space heaters around small children.
- ▶ Keep space heaters away from pathways or doors in your home, and make sure the cord is not a tripping hazard.

- ▶ Do not use open-coil space heaters.
- ▶ Do not use a heater in disrepair or with a frayed cord or damaged plug.
- ▶ Do not plug other electrical devices into the same outlet as the space heater.
- ▶ Before using your heater, read all manufacturer's instructions and warning labels.
- ▶ Place them on flat, level surfaces and never place on furniture, counters or carpet, which can overheat.
- ▶ Select a space heater that is endorsed by a recognized testing laboratory.
- ▶ Space heaters are for supplemental heat only; they should never be used for another purpose (thawing pipes or drying clothes, for example).
- ▶ When not in use, unplug the heater and put it away.

A space heater can help keep you warm, but be sure to use it with care so that you and your family will stay safe in the colder months.

Taking the time now to prepare your home for winter will lower your energy use and help your family stay warm this winter. If you must use a space heater, take caution to prevent fire or electric shock.

## KEEP SAFE AND WARM THIS WINTER

When the chill of fall and winter set in, be aware of potential fire hazards that are lurking in your home. Whether keeping warm with heat from your furnace, space heater, fireplace, or electric blanket, Safe Electricity offers these tips to prevent a fire in your home. For more tips, visit:

 Safe Electricity.org



Always place your space heater on a **STEADY SURFACE** and away from curtains, tablecloths or other flapping fabrics. Use a space heater with an automatic shut-off switch.



**INSPECT ELECTRIC BLANKETS** for scorch marks or visible damage regularly.



Have your furnace **INSPECTED** annually.



Be sure your **CHIMNEY IS CLEAR** before each use, and cover your fireplace with a screen to keep children and pets away from flames.

## Mark Your Calendars for Parade of Lights and Chili Cook-Off



The annual Parade of Lights and Chili Cook-off is scheduled for Monday, Nov. 26, 2018. The chili cook-off judging begins at 4:30 p.m. Public sampling begins at 5:30 p.m. The parade of lights kicks off at 6 p.m.

The virtual reality Santa sleigh ride trailer will be back for the second year and Santa will visit too! We hope to see you there!

For more information or to enter the chili cook-off, contact Kennedy St. George at 620-371-7738 or email [kstgeorge@victoryelectric.net](mailto:kstgeorge@victoryelectric.net)



**Top:** Arrowhead West prepares to serve their chili.

**Left:** Santa rides through the lighted parade following the chili feed.

**Right:** Ford County Development Corporation presents their chili for tasting.

## Victory Joins Progressive Ag Safety Day in Jetmore

Victory Electric demonstrated the dangers associated with high voltage power lines and grilled hamburgers for the Progressive Ag Safety Day.

A total of 143 students in fourth, fifth and sixth grades at Hodgeman and Ness County and Ness City Sacred Heart, and local FFA student volunteers learned about first aid, drug awareness, chemical safety, tractor safety, animal safety, fire and electrical safety.

“There is great danger with power lines,” said Mikey Goddard, vice president of safety. “Teaching kids how

to avoid the hazards is something we take very seriously.”

Victory Electric has a large trailer to demonstrate the hazards connected with electricity. The linemen demonstrated the difference between insulators and conductors and taught the students how the human body can become a conductor.

Any organization may request to see and experience the demonstration. Interested organizations can contact Mikey Goddard at 620-227-2139 to schedule a demonstration.



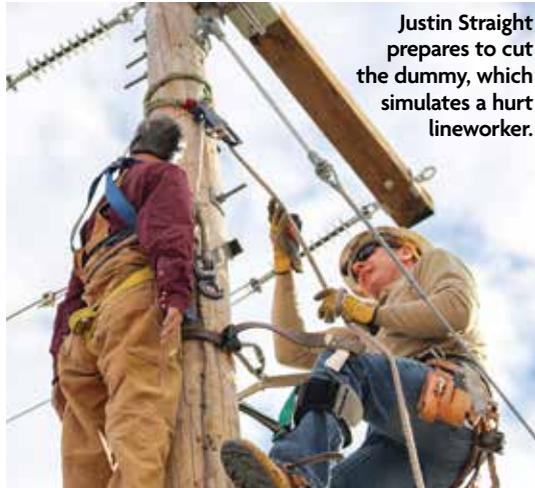
**Mike Clark (red shirt) and Jason Guillen cook hamburgers for the students, teachers and volunteers at Ag Safety Day.**



**Jacob Ledford, left, points out overhead power lines for the kids before teaching them about electrical safety.**

# Working on the LINE

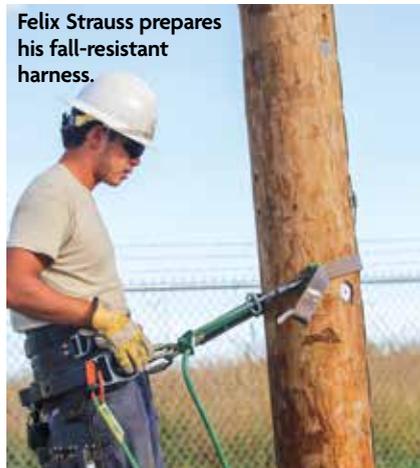
Linemen practice their pole top rescue skills each year to train and improve their technique in safely lowering an injured coworker from the top of the pole to the ground. Linemen have four minutes to complete the exercise, because safely and efficiently rescuing a fellow lineman could mean the difference between life and death.



Justin Straight prepares to cut the dummy, which simulates a hurt lineworker.



Jason Gier wraps the rope around the dummy.



Felix Strauss prepares his fall-resistant harness.



Linemen safely and efficiently lower the dummy to safety.



Ross Ackerman cuts the dummy free.

## Offices Closed for Thanksgiving

Our offices will be closed Thursday, Nov. 22 and Friday, Nov. 23 in observance of the holiday. From our co-op family to yours, Happy Thanksgiving!



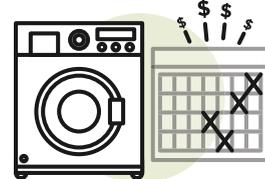
## Tips for Purchasing New Appliances

When shopping for new appliances, there are two price tags you should consider:

**1.** Purchase price of the appliance (think of this as a down payment)

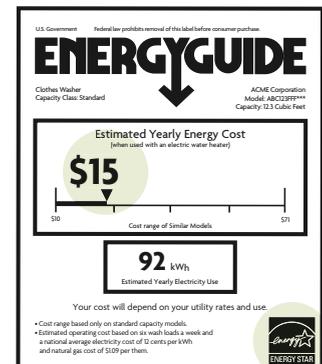


**2.** Cost to operate the appliance over its lifetime (how much energy the appliance uses)



That second price is important because you'll be paying for the appliance's energy use for the next 10 to 20 years.

- Look for the ENERGY STAR® label.
- Carefully review the EnergyGuide label on the appliance.
- After you choose your make and model, compare prices.
- Recycle or sell your old appliance if possible.



SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

## Autumn Crossword Puzzle

Autumn is finally here! Complete the crossword puzzle below by filling in the Autumn words that fit the clues. If you need help, use the word bank at the bottom of the page.



**Energy  
Explorers**

### ACROSS

1. Fruit you bob for.
3. This is a fun outing that usually takes place in autumn and can be enjoyed from a wagon, truck or trailer – as long as it's filled with hay.
5. These are orange and can be carved to decorate your home during Halloween.
6. These change colors during autumn months.

### DOWN

2. These fall from oak trees and squirrels love to collect them.
4. This is what most people eat on Thanksgiving Day.

The crossword puzzle grid consists of the following cells:

- Across 1:** 5 cells, starting at row 1, column 5.
- Across 3:** 7 cells, starting at row 3, column 3.
- Across 5:** 8 cells, starting at row 5, column 1.
- Across 6:** 6 cells, starting at row 6, column 1.
- Down 2:** 4 cells, starting at row 1, column 5.
- Down 4:** 3 cells, starting at row 3, column 1.

**Word Bank:**

- APPLE
- TURKEY
- LEAVES
- PUMPKINS
- HAYRIDE
- APPLE
- TURKEY
- ACORNS