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# Electronews



## The Victory Electric Cooperative Assn., Inc.

### Board of Trustees

<b>John Leis</b> <i>President</i>	<b>Terri Larson</b> <i>Trustee</i>
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<b>Jim Imel</b> <i>Trustee</i>	<b>Kenny Wehkamp</b> <i>Trustee</i>
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<b>Shane Laws</b> <i>Chief Executive Officer</i>
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<b>Amy Grasser</b> <i>Vice President of Corporate Services</i>
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<b>Denzil McGill</b> <i>Vice President of Information Technology</i>
<b>Ryan Miller</b> <i>Vice President of Operations</i>
<b>Angela Unruh</b> <i>Chief Financial Officer</i>
<b>Jerri Whitley</b> <i>Vice President of Communications</i>

## CEO MESSAGE

# We Want to Hear From You



Shane Laws

We live in a device-driven world. Our smartphones, tablets, laptops and an assortment of other devices help us communicate and connect. Companies spend billions of dollars pushing out a steady drumbeat of messages and information, and we are constantly bombarded with one-way communication. But is anyone listening on the other end?

### Listening to our Members

At Victory Electric, we are not only listening, but we are also eager to hear from you. Whether you call us, respond to a survey or social media post, send an email or simply stop by and chat in person, we thrive on your feedback. Connecting with you helps us keep pace with our community's priorities and needs.

**Connecting with you helps Victory Electric keep pace with our community's priorities and needs.**

Because we are a cooperative, we have a different way of operating. Victory Electric exists to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to you, the members of the co-op. Equally important is our mission to enrich the lives of the members we serve. We hope you will consider us more than your energy provider, but instead as a local business that supports this community and powers economic development and prosperity for the people.

### Developing Community

You will notice that throughout the year, we create opportunities for you and other community members to attend cooperative gatherings and events in order to hear from you.

These include our annual meeting, as well as cooperative sponsored community events like the Parade of Lights and Chili Cook-off, Pumpkin Painting and Carving Festival, Dodge City Days and more.

### Gathering Information

We also conduct quarterly surveys to gather feedback so we can plan for new initiatives and programs and improvements on existing co-op programs and services. Our planning is

*Continued on page 16C ▶*

# Get to Know Your Victory Electric Board Candidates



## District 2

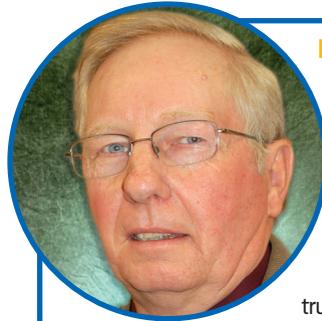
### JOHN LEIS

Incumbent | Minneola

Being residents of rural communities, we all rely on an electric cooperative to provide the growing demand for electricity to meet current and future needs. Recent industry changes altered the way cooperatives generate, deliver and use electricity, and power

supply and financing regulatory issues are growing more complicated all the time. Luckily, electric cooperatives are at the forefront of these changes and we have the unique ability to identify and meet our members' growing needs because you are not simply customers — you are our members and owners.

The past several years brought positive changes for Victory Electric including streamlining costs, boosting cybersecurity protocols, restructuring long-term debt, and working with power suppliers to reduce the overall cost of wholesale power. My wish is to continue as your trustee to build upon my 15 years of experience, which has given me the knowledge necessary to be an effective board leader. With your support and vote, I intend to continue to help deliver quality electric service that is safe, affordable and reliable for years to come.



## District 4

### JIM IMEL

Incumbent | Bucklin

Cooperatives across the U.S. are facing rapid industry changes, advances in technology, and challenges from state and federal regulations. Serving on the board of

trustees involves an understanding of these

issues and challenges and working together to

come up with the best possible solutions for both Victory

Electric and our members. Our job is to protect the institution of the cooperative, meet our members' needs, and accomplish our mission to provide safe, reliable electricity at an affordable price.

Since 1987, the members of District 2 have extended me the privilege of serving on the board of trustees and I take that role very seriously. I strive to be a good steward of your cooperative investment and take a balanced approach to all decisions. I also diversified my knowledge of the electric utility industry and advocated for our members by representing Victory Electric on the board of directors of our power supplier, Sunflower Electric. It has been a privilege to serve your interests and your vote would give me the opportunity to continue serving the members of Victory Electric.



## District 6

### KENNY WEHKAMP

Incumbent | Cimarron

In Victory Electric's 75th year, we celebrate the pioneering spirit of our founding members — people who knew success comes from creating a vision and having the courage, solidarity and work ethic to see it through.

Although society, people and technology have changed since 1945, our mission of providing safe, reliable and affordable power will never falter. As the cooperative moves into the next 75 years, I am proud to be a part of a board dedicated to maintaining pride in our past and faith in our future, while upholding a promise to make decisions in the best interest of our members.

As a self-employed farmer, I am well versed in fiscal responsibility and business management. I am dedicated to using those skills to maintain the financial stability of the cooperative. It has been an honor to serve as the District 6 trustee, and I would be grateful for your vote and the opportunity to continue working to ensure Victory Electric is a cooperative of which we can all be proud.



## District 10

### RANDY QUINT

Incumbent | Dodge City

Thank you to the members of Victory Electric for the support, confidence and faith you entrusted in me as your representative on the board of trustees. The electric utility industry faced many challenges in recent

years and changed at a rapid pace — and

continues to change. In my nine years as a trustee, I've

been there through the many tough decisions and conversations the board and management faced as we determined how to change and adapt to those challenges and industry changes. As your trustee, I strive to stay educated and informed on any issues with the potential to affect Victory Electric's mission to provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity.

My 25-year background working for electric utilities, in combination with my wife Lynne and my experiences owning a local small business for 20 years, proves beneficial in the boardroom and gives me a unique perspective on the challenges facing Victory Electric. As we celebrate the cooperative's history, your vote would help me to ensure Victory Electric continues to serve our members for another 75 years.

# Hearing from our Cooperative Members

Continued from page 16A ▶

led by employees and board trustees who are local people, just like you, who understand the needs of the community and are looking out for the long-term interests of the larger community.

We are in the midst of significant changes in the energy sector, as technology and the drive for more renewables and a more balanced energy mix is impacting long-term planning. These are complex issues we will be navigating in the coming months and years. This is why it is so important that we hear from you and other community members as we plot and plan our course for the future.

## Growing and Learning

Victory Electric works to continually learn from our members about their priorities so we can better serve you — because your electric co-op was built by the community, for the community. But we can only improve, adapt and effectively plan for the future if we have two-way communication.

For our co-op and community to thrive now and in the future, we depend on hearing from you, our members. I hope you will connect with us and let us know your perspective and insight. You can always reach me at 620-227-2139 — I'm listening.

*Thanks, Shane Laws*

## Annual Meeting Notice

Look for your annual report in the upcoming April issue of *Kansas Country Living* magazine!

April 2020						
S	M	T	W	U	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

Notice is hereby given that the annual meeting of the members of The Victory Electric Cooperative Assn., Inc., for the year of 2019, will be held at the Western State Bank Expo Center in Dodge City on Tuesday, April 14, 2020, at 6 p.m., for the following purposes:

- ▶ To hear, review and discuss the reports of officers and trustees.
- ▶ To receive the report of the election results for trustees, one each from District 2, 4, 6 and 10 for a three-year term.
- ▶ To take action upon any and all other matters that may properly come before the meeting.

In connection with the election of the trustees, the following members have been nominated by the nomination committee appointed by the board pursuant to the bylaws:

### ▶ DISTRICT 2

**JOHN LEIS**

12548 108 Rd., Minneola

### ▶ DISTRICT 4

**JIM IMEL**

12993 Wilburn Rd., Bucklin

### ▶ DISTRICT 6

**KENNY WEHKAMP**

15907 G. Rd., Cimarron

### ▶ DISTRICT 10

**RANDY QUINT**

1818 Barham Blvd., Dodge City

Members serving on the nominating committee are: Kent Bartlett, Greg Hainer, Roy Baker, Nick Parr, Richard Lightner, Tim Gleason, Jim Lembright and Tom Stanley.

# TOP 10

REASONS TO ATTEND

## ANNUAL MEETING

- 1 Socialize with cooperative employees, board trustees and other members.
- 2 Act on the principle of democratic member control and vote in the board elections in districts 2, 4, 6 and 10.
- 3 Get the latest news at Victory Electric.
- 4 Join us for a **FREE** steak dinner served with a side of baked potato, green beans, a dinner roll, and dessert.
- 5 Get your **FREE** registration gift.
- 6 Enter for a chance to win great door prizes.
- 7 Enter for a chance to win one of five \$200 bill credits.
- 8 Learn about what Victory Electric is doing to better serve you in 2020.
- 9 Ask questions! Know exactly what is happening at Victory Electric.
- 10 Victory Electric is your cooperative. This is your time to exercise your voice.

# FACTS

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## 75TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

### The Blizzard of 1957

*In March 1957, a huge snowstorm slammed southwest Kansas. Snowdrifts were reported to be up to 12 feet deep in some areas. Winds were reported to be up to 60 miles per hour and lasted around three days. Trains, motorists and cattlemen were left stranded as heavy, wet snow piled high.*

*Over the next several days, the classic ingredients all came together for a major blizzard in western Kansas: robust, deep development of cyclone-like weather to provide very strong winds, an influx of Gulf of Mexico moisture, and cold Canadian air. Dodge City reported less than a quarter-mile of visibility in blowing snow for a staggering 44 consecutive hours. The degree of large scale cyclone development was unprecedented, even by the Great Plains standards in the month of March.*

*According to the Dodge City Daily Globe, 500 trucks with more than 1,200 men were sent into the storm area. Six hundred poles were down on long-distance lines, plus another 150 poles on rural lines. Through the trials and challenges of the storm and snow, Victory Electric was there through it all. Here is their account from the Rural Electrification Association newsletter in March of 1957.*

Ike Kirkland and Max Ames, employees of Victory Electric Cooperative at Dodge City, spent about 41 hours in a company truck stalled in a ditch a few miles north of Cimarron during the blizzard of March 23-25.

Saturday morning, March 23, the company began to receive telephone calls from people all over southwest Kansas about power failures. Immediately, men started out in all directions to find the trouble. Ike and Max got as far as they could before the snow overpowered them and the truck stalled in a ditch about 6 p.m. They dared not get out to try to find a farmhouse due to low visibility, although there was a house about three-quarters of a mile away. They had communications back to the home office by means of two-way radio but, when the office crew went home that evening, no one could get back Sunday morning.

As far as food was concerned, Max and Ike did not get too hungry, although all they had for Sunday dinner was one candy bar between them.

Other Victory Electric men were able to reach shelter. Roscoe Bargsdale and Bill Wagner were stranded at Gibbons Service Station in Montezuma, and Jim Mooney and Robert Pyle were marooned at Wright. These men were on the road for the same reason as Ike and Max.

On Monday at about 10 a.m., the weather cleared enough so they could make it to the home of Millard Jantz where they found food and shelter. They were visitors of the Jantz family until Tuesday afternoon, when a helicopter from Fort Riley dropped down in a field next to the Jantz home and picked them up. From there, Max and Ike continued their work repairing power lines. They covered approximately 1,000 miles hunting for damaged lines. When they found one, the helicopter dropped right down beside it and the Victory Electric men would repair the line.

Members of the helicopter crew from Fort Riley were William Chambers, chief warrant officer and instructor pilot; Willie E. Baker, warrant officer and pilot; Dean L. Stoneburner, specialist third class and crew chief; and Ray L. Godbold, sergeant and medic.





1. Victory Electric linemen were taken via helicopter to repair damaged transmission lines from the storm.

2. The Dodge City Globe reports on the effects of the blizzard.

3. Snowdrifts were reported as high as 12 feet. Pictured is a family photo of children playing in the snow.

4. Sandra Olsen poses in her bathing suit in a snow pile by the Santa Fe Depot.

5. Wyatt Earp Blvd. in Dodge City is covered in piles of snow, blocking businesses and cars from daily routines.



# We Love Our Southwest Kansas Community

*“To move forward, you have to give back.”*

This quote from Oprah Winfrey reflects the special bond and obligation tying Victory Electric to the communities we serve. We can't think of a better way to express how much we love our communities and serving you, the members of the cooperative.

By helping bring electricity to rural southwest Kansas 75 years ago, the quality of life improved for all. Through the years, other issues needed to be tackled, and we have been at the forefront of helping to address those issues. Our goal has always been to help meet the long-term needs of our communities to ensure they continue to thrive — because just like you, we live here, too.

While our top priority is to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to you, equally important is our mission to enrich the lives of the members (that's you!) we serve. This focus to benefit the larger community is central to the way we operate as a cooperative. Victory Electric knows that electricity is a critical need for modern-day life, but it takes more than poles and power lines to make a community.

Over time, our cooperative evolved to meet the changing needs of our communities, thereby improving the quality of life for everyone. And that can mean many different things. It can mean programs for southwest Kansas' youth, such as the Lightner Community Spirit scholarships or the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, where we take our community's brightest young people to Washington, D.C., for a weeklong immersion to experience democracy in action. It also means partnering with organizations like CoBank for the Sharing Success grant program to give back to local non-profits and other worthy programs.

In the last 75 years, our community-focused programs and other giving projects have assisted with educational

scholarship needs for 40 students, assisted local non-profits financially, enabled those in need to keep the lights on and so much more — and we couldn't do any of this without you, our members.

We all benefit from these programs because of you and your neighbors. You empower Victory Electric through your membership and through your participation in and support of these various programs.

As a local business, we are proud to power your life and bring good things to our community. We hope you will continue to guide our efforts by sharing your perspective as we plan for the future. The energy landscape is undergoing dramatic change fueled by evolving technology and consumer desires for more options. While the larger environment in which we operate is constantly changing, but one thing remains the same. By working together, Victory Electric is certain we can continue to do good things for our community.



**Victory Electric lineman Phil Huffman assists in hanging Christmas lights from poles in Bucklin.**



**Vice President of Corporate Services Amy Grasser awards a member her prize at the annual meeting.**



**Vice President of Safety Mikey Goddard snaps a selfie with elementary students from Ford County during a safety presentation.**

# Protect Yourself Against Scams

It seems Victory Electric is always sending warnings about utility scams, and the Federal Communications Commission Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau issued an alert warning consumers of a scam in which consumers are being called and told they owe money to their utility companies and they must pay by prepaid debit cards, credit cards or gift cards.

The scam is always the same story. A member receives a phone call from someone, usually posing as a representative of Victory Electric (or another utility), saying their payment had been denied, or never

received, and demands immediate payment or they would shut off their power. They are even known

for spoofing telephone numbers so the caller ID makes it appear to be a call from Victory Electric.

Prepaid debit cards are a popular method of payment for scammers. Wire transfer services have tightened their security, so crooks have turned to prepaid cards instead. The cards are difficult to trace, you do not need photo identification to collect or spend the money, and transactions cannot be reversed.

If a Victory Electric employee contacts you by phone, it is the policy of Victory Electric to **NEVER** request confidential, personal financial information. Only give your confidential financial information to the cooperative if you have contacted us directly to make a payment. Chances are, anyone contacting members asking for payment is not employed or authorized by Victory Electric. We encourage you to play it safe and always contact Victory Electric directly. Never give anyone who contacts you your credit card or bank account information.

## Tips for Spotting a Scam

Because Victory Electric does sometimes contact members by phone, it

can be difficult to tell a scammer from a member representative. Here are some tips:

- ▶ If a caller specifically asks you to pay by prepaid debit card, this is a red flag.
- ▶ If you feel pressured for immediate payment or personal information, hang up the phone and call the customer service number on your bill.
- ▶ Never allow anyone into your home to check electrical wiring, pipes or appliances unless you have scheduled an appointment or reported a problem. Also, ask employees for proper identification.

**Never give anyone who contacts you your credit card or bank account information.**

These types of scams continue to make their way around the country. Utility industries have been on alert for

scams but as long as the scammers continue to make money, it will continue to be an issue.

If you receive a suspicious call, capture as much information about the caller as possible. After calling Victory Electric directly to confirm we did not contact you, notify your local authorities. However, if the person is at your home, please be safe and contact the local authorities for assistance first.

## Bottom Line

The most affordable, safe and secure form of payment is using SmartHub, Victory Electric's online bill payment site. SmartHub is a website and mobile device app that makes it easy to view and pay your electric bill with your computer, smartphone or tablet. Victory Electric offers this secure online bill pay option as well as several other secure payment choices.

Be careful, read the fine print for any red flags, and if you have questions about paying your bill online, please call one of our member services representatives. We would be glad to help walk you through the process.

# Hubbell Receives Certification

Victory Electric is proud to announce electrical engineer, **JEFF HUBBELL**, achieved his professional engineer license.

This license, granted through the Kansas State Board of

Technical Professions, is no easy feat. To earn the license, Hubbell had to complete what his college professors called "the three E's of engineering." These "E's" stand for education, experience and examination.

"For the education portion, I had to obtain a college degree in electrical engineering. After that, I acquired four years of experience working directly under a licensed professional engineer to gain experience," Hubbell said.

Hubbell filed an exemption for this requirement because Victory Electric did not have a licensed professional engineer. He was able to complete the requirement by working with three professional engineers from Sunflower Electric Power Cooperation.

"To complete the license I had to take two exams," he said. "The first was a fundamentals of engineering exam. The second was a principles and practice of engineering exam. The second exam was 80 questions, lasted eight hours long, and covered everything power related."

Hubbell started at Victory Electric as an intern in 2012. Upon graduating from Kansas State University with a bachelor's in electrical engineering in 2014, Hubbell began working at the cooperative full-time. Congratulations Jeff!



Jeff Hubbell

# ENERGY SAVINGS WORD SEARCH

Did you know there are many ways you can help save energy in your home?

Read the energy efficiency tips below and circle the **bolded** words in the puzzle.



O E S P W F W A T E R S Y E S  
 A L L R S A E T D E I A L S R  
 T E X K E J T O G H C E P X E  
 L C O O G G Z E N X C N M N W  
 B T B F M X R R R T B X Q K O  
 G R I S M M R A R H C L I D H  
 X I S Y K Y E O H X E V A F S  
 I C B X X I N Y B C N A P J I  
 A I G Y Z I H F H X C F T Y E  
 U T U N C W U Y X Z O M B E S  
 U Y Z S E M F P O R V N V T R  
 R E F R I G E R A T O R H E Q  
 E V J M Q S D M D F V G N Y L  
 W M E O F P N T K W I H X Q I  
 G N I H T O L C R L S S B R D

- ▶ Turn off **lights** any time you leave a room.
- ▶ Keep the **refrigerator** door closed to save energy.
- ▶ Wash **clothing** in cold water to reduce the load on your **water heater**.
- ▶ Unplug items that consume **electricity** even when they're not in use, like cell phone **chargers** and coffee makers. These are known as "phantom load" **electronics**.
- ▶ Take **showers** instead of baths — showers require less **water** use.