

# RURAL POWER

Electronic Edition



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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



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Cooperatives: United We Stand

February 28, 2003

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## The Value of Cooperative Membership

It is safe to say that there is a crisis of confidence today among American consumers. Regularly, we see reports and updates on national scandals at accounting firms, the stock market, and other segments of corporate America. A number of formerly high-flying utility companies are suffering on the regulatory, financial and leadership fronts.



Written by Bruce Graham, KEPCo

On the other hand, it has never been a better time to be an REC member. Recent research shows that our members believe in and trust their cooperative. They see RECs as part of the solution, not part of the problem.

That research is a small part of NRECA programs that build REC stamina and pride. Programs such as "The Cooperative Business Model – Why It's a Competitive Advantage," that cites a comprehensive and very timely study. Over 22,000 cooperative consumers and 4,000 non-cooperative customers were surveyed. The key result: cooperative members who have some degree of identity as owners are more satisfied and more loyal than those who think of themselves as customers, than those who don't know that they are served by a co-op, and they are more loyal than IOU and municipal customers.

So, what do we do with that information? NRECA is suggesting a rededication to communications and member services that

concentrates on turning customers into members. "How we advertise ourselves and communicate with members is as essential as implementing an engineering plan. No matter how competitive we are, or how good our engineering is, we can always have a public relations problem," NRECA says.

How to communicate the value of being a cooperative member? This new research proves that Touchstone Energy has been on target the past four years. We're not some conglomerate accounting firm suddenly discovering the need to advertise integrity. RECs have been true to their roots, operating with a history of innovation, accountability, commitment to community, and true integrity.

I believe it is time for electric cooperatives across the nation to continue with and capitalize on the investment made by over 500 visionary Touchstone Energy partners. The program is growing, developing new services, and most importantly, it's working! The latest advertising messages reinforce the value of cooperative membership and the production quality of the materials is first class. Programs such as the Touchstone Energy Home and the "Get Charged" school materials fall within the value-added category that is only possible through the combined investment and energy of all Touchstone Energy cooperatives.

Bottom line is...we're doing things right. Let's communicate our cooperative spirit. Let's show everyone that we're just as proud as our members are to be part of a rural electric co-op.



**Have an idea or a story for Rural Power?**

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## Cooperative Calendar

February	27-3/3	TechAdvantage Conference & Expo, Nashville, TN.
March	12	KEC Standing Committees, Holiday Inn, Great Bend.
	13	KEC Board of Trustees Meeting, Holiday Inn, Great Bend, 8:30 a.m.
	13	KEC Women's Executive Committee, Holiday Inn, Great Bend, 8:30 a.m.
	21	Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting, Sunflower, Hays, 8:30 a.m.
April	15-16	Energy Everywhere 2003 in Scottsdale, AZ.
	17	KEPCo Board of Trustees Meeting, KEPCo Headqtrs, Topeka, 8:30 a.m.
	18	Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting, Sunflower, Hays, 8:30 a.m.
	24	Eastern MDM Meeting, KEC Headquarters, Topeka, 10:00 a.m.
	30	KEC Standing Committee Meetings, Holiday Inn, Great Bend.
May	1	KEC Board of Trustees Meeting, Holiday Inn, Great Bend, 8:30 a.m.
	1	KEC Women's Executive Committee, Holiday Inn, Great Bend 8:30 a.m.
	3	ElectroRally Race, Dodge City.
	4-5	NRECA's National Orientation for New Communicators, Arlington, VA.
	5-9	NRECA's Human Resource/Benefit Conference, Myrtle Beach, SC.
	15	KEPCo Board of Trustees Meeting, Holcomb Plant, Holcomb.
	16	Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting, Sunflower, Hays, 8:30 a.m.
	21-23	KEC Marketing Conference, Holiday Inn Select, Wichita.
22	Eastern MDM Meeting, KEC Headquarters, Topeka, 10:00 a.m.	
June	5-6	Kansas REC Managers Association Meeting, Salina.
	12-19	"Government In Action" Youth Tour, Washington, D.C.

### Marketing, Member Services & Communication Conference

Don't miss NRECA's MMS&C Conference, July 13-16 in Reno, Nevada. This conference attracts more than 500 marketing, key accounts, member services and communication professionals at electric co-ops nationwide.

Find strategies to help you exceed member expectations, practical steps to cope with a changing marketplace and innovative techniques to effectively manage your key commercial and industrial members.

Learn about solid marketing and communication tools from professionals, take away information that enables you to produce better results for your co-op, and build a peer network you can use long after the conference!

Go to [www.cooperative.com](http://www.cooperative.com) for more information!



## KEC Marketing Conference

**The KEC Marketing Conference and Vendor Trade Show will be held May 21-23, 2003, in Wichita, KS!**

**This conference is designed for managers, member services managers, and co-op employees.**

**Watch the mail for your invitation to this event!**

## Upcoming Workshops

### 41st Rural Energy Conference

The Midwest Rural Energy Council is co-sponsoring the 41st Annual Rural Energy Conference & Seminar in St. Paul, MN from March 5-7, 2003. For more information, visit [www.mrec.org](http://www.mrec.org).

### KCCED Annual Conference

The Kansas Center for Community and Economic Development (KCCED) will hold its 15th Annual Statewide Conference on April 9-10 at the Plaza Hotel in Hutchinson, Kansas. The theme for this year's conference is *Economic Development in Hard Times: Keeping Communities Strong*.

People interested in community and economic development issues are invited to learn about the resources that are available to Kansas communities.

The Rural Resource Expo will attract 200 local and state leaders interested in building partnerships among these communities. This is an opportunity for organizations to publicize services, announce new programs or projects, and communicate with leaders from across Kansas.

To attend or participate as an exhibitor, contact Carol Gould at (785) 532-6868 or Aaron Handke at (785) 532-6896.

### Energy Everywhere Conference

Energy Everywhere 2003 in Scottsdale, AZ, April 15-16, 2003 is designed to give co-ops up-to-date information on business opportunities and technology development, with an emphasis on green power and propane. The conference is hosted by Energy Co-Opportunity (ECO). For more information, contact Bob Gibson at (703) 709-6875 or go to [www.eco.coop](http://www.eco.coop).

# News from Kansas Cooperatives

## Employee Honored for Service

Richard "Rick" Smoots, lineman for Leavenworth-Jefferson, received a pin and gift certificate to mark his 35 years of service with the co-op.



Rick Smoots

Smoots started his employment with Leavenworth-Jefferson as summer help.

Following one year of college, he returned as an apprentice lineman. His work was interrupted by two years in the Navy Seabees serving a tour in Vietnam.

Smoots has held the following positions with the co-op: journeyman lineman, underground specialist, and line superintendent. He and his wife, Debby, live in McLouth.

## Co-ops Receive USDA funds

Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Recipients for February 2003 were recently announced.

Bluestem will receive a \$450,000 loan to assist in the start-up of a new company in Pottawatomie County that is developing cleaning and refinishing solutions for the aircraft and defense industries. The company is expected to create 26 new jobs.

Prairie Land will receive a \$450,000 loan to assist the Norton County Government in expanding the Norton County Hospital. The county will expand and renovate the existing facility, including renovations to the emergency and trauma rooms, obstetrical department, laboratory, radiology, and nurses' stations. The County is expected to add 5 additional jobs to the current workforce of 100 employees.

## Power Marketing Administrations Under Attack

An Office of Management and Budget report accompanying President Bush's fiscal 2004 budget suggests that the Power Marketing Administrations put federal power up for bid. OMB stated that each of the PMAs "does not make a unique contribution to addressing a problem in the industry, and its power allocations, by law made on a preference basis to a special class of customers, are not optimally designed." Electric cooperatives in Kansas purchase hydropower from both the Southwestern and Western Area Power Administrations.

## Two New Employees Join Pioneer Electric

Pioneer Electric is pleased to announce the addition of two new employees. Judy Parsons and Greg Davis have accepted positions and became a part of the Pioneer Electric team early this year.

Parsons took the reigns as the Executive Secretary on Jan. 2. In this position she keeps the employee records and benefits up-to-date, prepares for the Board of Trustees meetings and is available to help administration run smoothly.



Judy Parsons

"I was looking for an opportunity to get back into administration. This position became available and was the perfect opportunity for me to get back into management," said Parsons.

Prior to coming to Pioneer Electric, she was a personnel clerk and payroll manager with Russell Stover Candies and the interim Department Head with Manhattan Christian College.

Parsons has a bachelors degree from Manhattan Christian College and a masters from KSU. She is married to Bob Parsons, and they reside in northern Stevens County.

She is a 4-H horse leader and is a member of the Extension Council and Executive Board in Stevens County.

On February 10, Davis became

the Pioneer Electric Systems Administrator.

He is responsible for maintaining the software and hardware for Pioneer Electric's 50 computers.

"I've always gravitated to Information Systems, and I've been responsible for maintaining and upgrading systems," said Davis.

He said the most important part of his new position is learning why and how the system was built so the system continues to operate as needed. Learning about the system will also help him plan for future system needs.

He was employed by Bob Wilson Memorial Grant County Hospital as their Chief Financial Officer where he was in charge of the finances, accounting and the 35-user computer network.



Greg Davis

"It's (Information Systems) what I enjoy doing, and Pioneer Electric has an impeccable reputation as an employer," said Davis.

Davis earned a bachelors degree from Baker University. He and his wife Natalie have four children.

## Twin Valley Subscribes to *Kansas Country Living*

KEC welcomes Twin Valley as our newest subscriber to *Kansas Country Living*. With their first issue going out to their members this month, circulation for the February issue now approaches the 80,000 mark. Twin Valley has subscribed to the magazine as well as a local 2-page newsletter "center spread" on a quarterly basis. Their members will receive the magazine and newsletter in February, May, August, and November.

## Legislative Town Hall Meetings To Be Held

Several Kansas State Senators and Representatives will be visiting local communities on March 3 and March 8, 2003, to seek your ideas on issues being addressed in the 2003 Kansas Legislature. Information will be presented from many of the issues being considered and discussion will be held on anticipated issues and their impact on all of us.

Among those legislators who will be participating in the Legislative Town Hall meeting include Senator Stan Clark, Rep. Gary Hayzlett, Rep. Ralph Ostmeier, Rep. Jim Morrison, Rep. John Faber, and Rep. Dan Johnson

"This is the ninth year we've been holding (the Town Hall meetings)," said Sen. Clark. "It's a good time where we can still impact legislation before it starts."

Of special note is that on March 8, Kansas State Senator Karin Brownlee, Olathe, will participate in the tour. Sen. Brownlee is chairman of the Senate Commerce committee which this year is placing special emphasis on rural development.

The Legislative Town Hall meetings are open to the public, and everyone is invited to attend.

## KEC Members' Annual Meetings

March	11	Nemaha-Marshall – Lunch at 11:30 a.m., Meeting at 1:00 p.m. at Axtell American Legion, Axtell.
	20	Butler – Dinner at 5:00 p.m., Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at Andover Central High School, Andover.
	20	Doniphan – Dinner at 6:30 p.m., Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at Midway High School, Denton.
	22	Pioneer – Dinner at 12:00 p.m., Health Fair 7:00 a.m. til noon, Meeting at 10:00 a.m., Grant County Civic Center, Ulysses.
	25	Flint Hills - Dinner at 5:30 p.m., Meeting immediately following dinner at Centre High School, Lost Springs.
	25	Heartland – Dinner at 7:00 p.m., Meeting at 7:45 p.m. at Jayhawk-Linn High School, Mound City.
April	1	Ark Valley – Dinner at 6:30 p.m., Meeting following dinner at Hutchinson Memorial Hall, Hutchinson.
	1	DS&O – Dinner at 6:30 p.m., Meeting at 7:30 p.m. at BiCentennial Center, Salina.
	1	Ninnescah – Dinner at 6:00 p.m., Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at Pratt Municipal Building, Pratt.
	2	Wheatland – Dinner at 11:30 a.m., Meeting at 12:30 p.m., at Syracuse 4-H Building, Syracuse.
	3	Lyon-Coffey – Dinner at 5:30 p.m., Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at Burlington High School, Burlington.
	3	Radiant – Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at Fredonia High School, Fredonia.
	4	Alfalfa – Dinner at 5:00 p.m., Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at Cherokee High School, Cherokee, OK.
	4	CMS - Dinner at 5:30 p.m., Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at South Central Middle School, Protection.
	8	Bluestem - Meeting at 7:30 p.m., Rock Creek Jr/Sr High School, St. George
	8	Prairie Land – Dinner at 12:00 p.m., Meeting at 1:00 p.m. at Co-op Headquarters, 1101 West Highway 36, Norton.
	9	Kaw Valley – Dinner at 5:00 p.m., Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at Kaw Valley office, 1100 SW Auburn Rd., Topeka.
	10	Sedgwick County – Dinner at 6:30 p.m., Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at Cotillion Hall, Wichita.
	12	Sumner-Cowley – Dinner at 11:30 a.m., Meeting at 1:00 p.m. at Wellington Senior High School, 605 North A Street, Wellington.
	15	Victory – Dinner at 6:00 p.m., Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at Knights of Columbus Hall, 800 W. Frontview, Dodge City.
	25	Twin Valley – Meeting at 6:30 p.m. at Harrison Auditorium, Labette County High School, Altamont.
25	Rolling Hills - Dinner at 5:30 p.m., Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at the NCK Technical School in Beloit.	
May	6	Caney Valley – Dinner at 5:30 p.m., Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at Chautauqua County Fairgrounds, Sedan.
	14	Western – Dinner at 6:00 p.m., Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at Cooperative Office, 635 S. 13th St., WaKeeney.
July	15	Lane-Scott – Dinner at 6:30 p.m., Meeting at 7:30 p.m. at Lane County Fair Grounds, Dighton.
September	10	Leavenworth-Jefferson – Dinner at 6:00 p.m., Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at McLouth High School Purple Gymnasium, McLouth.
November	19	Kansas Electric Power Cooperative (KEPCo) – Dinner at 6:00 p.m. Meeting immediately following Dinner, Holiday Inn Holidome Salina, Kansas.