

Rural Power

INSIDE

- 2 | Calendar
- 3 | Kansas cooperatives respond to Arkansas mutual aid request
- 4 | Governor appoints KEC's Leslie Kaufman to Kansas Complete Count Committee

Please send your story ideas to ruralpower@kec.org.

KEC meetings feature customer choice issues and “what if” workshop

There was a strong turnout for KEC's District Meetings held Nov. 1 in Andover, Nov. 5 in Dodge City, Nov. 6 in Hays, and Nov. 7 in Mayetta. More than 200 managers, directors, and key staff attended the series of meetings.

BRUCE GRAHAM, CEO, kicked off each meeting with the KEC year in review, listing accomplishments across all departments.

The agenda included an update on electric cooperative work with the Kansas Legislature and in Congress, and a review of customer choice issues through an interactive Retail Wheeling Jeopardy game.

KEC staff provided “what if” exercises related to cooperative governance and related communications challenges to help start dialogue between co-ops and their membership. Staff sifted through uncommon areas where Kansas



KEC's Doug Shepherd and Tara Mays engage with the District 2 attendees during the Retail Wheeling Jeopardy game.

ings included **VICKI ESTES**, **BOB HALL**, **LESLIE KAUFMAN**, **TARA MAYS**, and **DOUG SHEPHERD**.

A key lawmaker served as the luncheon speaker at each meeting: Senator **TY MASTERSON**, District 1; Representative **MARK SCHREIBER**, District 2; Senator **RICK BILLINGER**, District 3; and Representative **JOE SEIWERT**, District 4.

During the meetings, each District elected a representative to the KEC Executive Committee: **CHRIS KELLY**, Caney Valley, District 1; **RALPH PHILLIPS**, FreeState, District 2; **JOHN BLACKWELL**, Midwest Energy, District 3; and **PAT MORSE**, Victory, District 4.

law may impact co-op operations. The proposed 2020 Budget was also reviewed. Presentations will be uploaded to the members only section of the KEC website.

Staff presenters at the District Meet-

Heartland Electric Cooperative employees help save a life

Due to some quick action on the part of Heartland Electric Cooperative employees and local first responders, a life was saved.

On Nov. 7, three Heartland employees were

eating lunch at a restaurant in Girard when they noticed a lady having difficulty breathing. They approached her and learned that she was choking on the chips she had been eating.

As the woman began to turn blue, **BLAKE BOONE**, Apprentice Lineman, followed his safety training and began performing the Heimlich Maneuver. When she



From left: Heartland employees Blake Boone, Paul Norris, and Jason Vitt utilized their safety training to help save a choking woman.

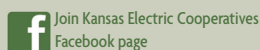
lost consciousness, Boone was joined by Lineman **JASON VITT**, and Director of Operations **PAUL NORRIS**. The employees attended to her until emergency workers arrived to

administer care. She was conscious and alert when the co-op employees departed.

“Heartland’s commitment to safety and properly training our employees helped save a life,” said Mark Scheibe, CEO. “Heartland is proud of these individuals’ quick thinking and being situationally aware enough to provide lifesaving care.”



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Mike Rayburn to perform at KEC Annual Meeting

MIKE

RAYBURN, billed as the world's funniest guitar virtuoso, is a two-time TED Talk Presenter, an innovative entrepreneur, and Hall of Fame speaker.



Mike Rayburn

Rayburn will use both his world-class guitar skills and his comedy as the KEC luncheon keynote on Monday, Jan. 27 in Topeka. Through his presentation *Become A Virtuoso - Elite Performance Mastery*, he will share simple, powerful tools that took him from playing empty bars to headlining Carnegie Hall (eight times!).

KEC's Sales Tax Workshop featured tax specialist

Nearly 50 electric co-op employees attended the KEC Sales Tax Workshop on Oct. 23 in Hays.

The training preceded the Accountants Association meeting. Featured speakers were **CARL YORK**, a tax specialist with the Kansas Department of Revenue, and **DOUG SHEPHERD**, KEC's Vice President of Management Consulting Services.

Carl York's presentation will be emailed to the cooperatives, along with a short survey regarding the training.

jobmarket

KEC promotes co-op careers by listing openings on the careers section of the KEC website: <https://www.kec.coop/careers>.

- ▶ KEC has an opening for the CEO position.
- ▶ KEPCo has an opening for an Administrative Assistant-Receptionist.
- ▶ FreeState has an opening for an Apprentice Lineman I.
- ▶ Sumner-Cowley has an opening for the CEO position.
- ▶ Sunflower has multiple openings.

Send your open position listings to ruralpower@kec.org.

co-opcalendar

NOVEMBER

- 14 MDM Meeting**, KEPCo Headquarters, Topeka
- 15 Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting**, Sunflower Headquarters, Hays
- 20 KEPCo Annual Meeting**, Prairie Band Casino and Resort, 12305 150th Road, Mayetta. Meeting starts at 4 p.m. Meal starts at 6 p.m.
- 20-21 KEPCo Board of Trustees Meeting**, Prairie Band Casino & Resort, Mayetta
- 21 KEC Youth Tour Coordinator web conference**, 10 a.m.
- 25 Co-ops Vote**, Rolling Hills, DS&O, Bluestem & Nemaha-Marshall Electric Cooperatives, Country Club, Clay Center – 6:30 p.m.
- 28-29 Thanksgiving**, KEC Office Closed

DECEMBER

- 4-5 KEC Board of Trustees Meeting**, Marriott Hotel, Wichita
- 18-19 KEPCo Board of Trustees Meeting**, KEPCo Headquarters, Topeka
- 12-13 Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting**, Kansas City
- 25 Christmas Day**, KEC Office Closed

upcomingtraining

KEC to host Youth Tour Coordinators web conference

KEC has scheduled a Youth Tour Coordinators web conference starting at 10 a.m. on Thursday, Nov. 21.

Co-op employees who are responsible for promoting and coordinating the selection process for the "Electric Cooperative Youth Tour" to Washington, D.C., and the "Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp" to Steamboat Springs, CO, are encouraged to attend.

Topics will include a recap of the 2019 programs, plans for the 2020 programs, and a review of promotional materials available through KEC.

The web conference will end with roundtable discussions for attendees to share how to promote the youth programs, how to select winners, and what to expect from your students. Attendees are asked to come prepared with questions or to share their best practices.

Information to join the web conference will be emailed to the participating cooperatives. The web conference will be recorded and posted to the members only section of the KEC website.

For more information, contact Shana Read at sread@kec.org.

Directors training at KEC Annual Meeting

Prior to the KEC Annual Meeting, three directors courses will be offered at the Capitol Plaza, Topeka, in January.

On Saturday, Jan. 25, directors will have a choice between a CCD course and a Board Leadership course. Mike Guidry will facilitate **2600.1 DIRECTOR DUTIES AND LIABILITIES**. This course discusses and explains the duties of loyalty, obedience, and due care; and the need for directors to acquire the minimum knowledge and skills necessary to fulfill their responsibilities within the cooperative context.

Also on Jan. 25, Kevin Sump will facilitate **921.1 RISK OVERSIGHT: THE BOARD'S ROLE IN RISK MANAGEMENT**. This course provides directors with the principles and tools to improve their

processes for overseeing the cooperative's risk management activities. Using real world case studies, this interactive course discusses the unique role of board and management to identify, manage and mitigate risk with processes that are appropriate to the characteristics of individual cooperatives.

On Sunday, Jan. 26, Mary McLaury will facilitate the Board Leadership Course **913.1 COOPERATIVE FUNDAMENTALS, LEGACY AND ECONOMIC IMPACT**. Course participants will explore the cooperative principles and define how they provide a competitive advantage for today's co-op.

Registration for these courses will be sent out with the KEC Annual Meeting registration materials.

Midwest Energy annual meeting

Midwest Energy held its annual meeting Oct. 21 at The Venue in Hays.

More than 120 people attended the meeting and received an LED light.

The five winners of the 2019 Youth Tour—**DALTON DICKS, LONDON DINKEL, ETHAN HILDEBRAND, MACY SCHAMBERGER, and THANE WILDEMAN**—spoke about their trip to Washington, D.C., this past summer.

Re-elected to the board were **JOHN BLACKWELL, LON FRAHM, and KEITH MILLER**. The board elected to keep the existing slate of officers.



Kansas Touchstone Energy Council holds Annual Meeting

The Touchstone Energy Annual Membership Meeting was held at Butler Electric Cooperative on Oct. 30.

ANNE HARVEY, Touchstone Energy's Director of Member Relations and Communications, reported via Webex on the national program activities including new campaigns, the Best in Class model program and its resources, the Young Adult Member Engagement (YAME) initiative, and the national dues realignment. She commented that NRECA's Education, Marketing and Communications Committee is still accepting emails as the committee continues to look at the relationship between NRECA and Touchstone Energy, and she then summarized the listening sessions that were held as part of the NRECA Regional Meetings. Lastly, she announced the launch of the new Touchstone Energy website.

SHANA READ, KEC, presented a review of the state activities in 2019, including Touchstone Energy training offerings in Kansas, the Kansas State Fair, and the youth programs. **DENNIS DEINES**, Western, discussed the growth of the ElectroRally program. **MIKE TWEEDY**, Lyon-Coffey, shared his experiences with the KidWind Challenge.

The Touchstone Energy Executive Council approved the 2020 budget and set the 2020 dues assessment.

Re-elected to the council were **STEVE EPPERSON**, Pioneer; and **RON GRABER**, Heartland. **KEVIN HEPTIG**, Bluestem, was appointed to fill an unexpired term. A trustee position remains vacant.

Officer positions re-elected were **BRUCE MUELLER**, Chairman, and **STEVE FOSS**, Vice Chairman. **TRAVIS GRIFFIN** was elected as Secretary/Treasurer.

Co-op attorneys attend continuing legal education event

Legal counsel for electric cooperatives from across the state and Missouri attended KEC's Annual Co-op Attorney Continuing Legal Education (CLE) seminar at KEPCo's headquarters on Oct. 25. In total, 31 attorneys attended this year's conference.

The educational meeting included six presentations on issues of interest to electric cooperatives. **BILL MILLER**, Bolinger, Segars, Gilbert & Moss, LLP (CPAs), spoke about the board's fiduciary duty in regard to capital credit allocation and redemption. **MELODY RAYL**, Fisher & Phillips, LLP, gave a wage and hour update and explained

the new US Department of Labor rules on exempt and non-exempt employees. **ALLIE DEVINE**, Devine and Donley, LLC, joined **DOUG SHEPHERD**, KEC, to give a legislative and regulatory update. **LESLIE KAUFMAN**, KEC, discussed co-op governance issues. **PATRICIA HAMILTON**, Stevens & Brand, LLP, shared ways for co-ops to protect themselves when a member-customer files bankruptcy. **MATT FRANZENBURG**, Office of the Disciplinary Administrator, wrapped up the training with a professional responsibility presentation.

The next year's CLE is scheduled for Friday, Oct. 23, 2020.

Kansas cooperatives respond to Arkansas mutual aid request

On Oct. 21, tornadoes and powerful thunderstorms caused extensive damage in parts of Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas. More than 12,000 members were without power at Carroll Electric Cooperative in Arkansas.

The following day, KEC received a mutual aid request and seven Kansas co-op crews assisted the restoration efforts of the Arkansas co-op: **BLUESTEM, CANEY VALLEY, FREESTATE, HEARTLAND, LYON-COFFEY, RADIANT, and TWIN VALLEY**.

According to staff at Carroll Electric, more than 300 electric poles were broken during the storm. The co-op had to cut their way into a substation to assess damages.

Service was fully restored by Oct. 25.



FreeState crews struggle with muddy conditions as they restore service at Carroll Electric Cooperative in Arkansas.

Q During a Kansas RESAP Observation, the observation team viewed an underground installation with a pad-mounted transformer in close proximity to an LP-Gas container. What is the industry standard that specifically addresses this type of installation?

A Based on extensive research using NFPA, NEC, ANSI, Transformer Manufacturer, and LP-Gas Provider, a pad-mounted transformer would not meet the definition of equipment approved for hazardous... [READ MORE](#).

Each issue of *Rural Power* will feature an answer to a question or a solution to a problem provided by KEC to a member cooperative. Past answers are listed on [KEC's website](#).

Asked & Answered

Kansas co-ops compete in International Lineman's Rodeo

Thousands of linemen convened in Overland Park last month for the International Lineman's Rodeo. Teams of linemen and apprentices competed in events based on traditional lineman tasks and skills Oct. 16-19.

This year's event was the largest in the rodeo's 36-year history. In the past 10 years, the number of journeyman teams competing at the International Lineman's Rodeo has nearly doubled, reaching 248 teams and 321 apprentices in 2019.

As the number of participants grow, so does the struggle to compete against the best linemen from around the nation.

"Competition was tougher because of the number of teams, and the mystery events were tougher," said **MIKE STREMEL**, Midwest Energy's Training Manager. "This is a great team-building environment, and it builds confidence in your ability to perform tasks."

Representing the Kansas electric cooperatives were **HEARTLAND'S** journeyman team of Tyler Coomes, Luke Decker, and Jason Vitt; and apprentices Blake Boone and Tanner Kepley.



Barret Freund, Midwest Energy Apprentice Lineman, talks with Doug Flick, retired Midwest Energy Line Foreman, who was judging pole-climbing events.

MIDWEST

ENERGY sent journeymen Cody Bloedorn, Alex Breeding, Travis Dinges, Austin Hase, Dustin Kibel, Benn Kirmer, Bill Nowlin, Weston Riffel, Nathan Schippers,

Michael Stremel, Nate Stryker, and Cliff Townsend; and apprentices Barret Freund and Dylan Means. **PRAIRIE LAND** competitors included journeyman Butch Hamel, Tom Huber, and Jarod Rohr; and apprentice Jameson Nielsen. Garrett Willour, Prairie Land's Safety Coordinator, served as a judge.

Congratulations to Midwest Energy's **BARRET FREUND**, Apprentice Lineman at Great Bend, who finished in the top 20 percent of apprentices (60 of 321), and scored even higher in Mystery Event #2 and on the written test.

Governor appoints KEC's Leslie Kaufman to census committee

The Kansas Complete Count Committee was created through executive order by Governor Laura Kelly to assist the U.S. Census Bureau in promoting participation in the 2020 Census. The 50 confirmed members of this committee, including KEC's Vice President of Government Relations and Legal Counsel **LESLIE KAUFMAN**, were appointed by the Governor.

The committee's duty is to coordinate efforts to promote and advertise the 2020 Census. Committee members will coordinate responses to questions about the Census, provide available resources on hard-to-count populations, and help ensure the highest participation rate possible.

"Electric co-ops can play a key role in encouraging Kansans to participate in the 2020 Census," stated Kaufman. "The census is an important aspect to ensuring that rural Kansas is adequately represented in elected offices at the local, state, and federal levels."

The U.S. Constitution requires a census every 10 years. The next one starts April 1, 2020. The census will determine how the federal government distributes over \$6 billion in federal funds to Kansas every year for the next decade.

Victory Electric Cooperative employees go on the hunt for safety

Victory Electric employees participated in a three-week safety scavenger hunt this fall to identify and demonstrate safety resources and work practices.

The scavenger hunt, developed by the co-op's safety committee, consisted of answering questions about safety practices, locating and taking "safety selfies" with safety resources and equipment, and attending a live, high-voltage electric safety demonstration.

"The safety committee decided to implement a scavenger hunt to get people out of



Victory Electric's Vice President of Safety Mikey Goddard gives a demonstration to fellow employees on the hazards associated with electricity as part of the safety scavenger hunt.

their ordinary routines and to learn about Victory Electric's safety practices," said **JACOB LEDFORD**, Victory Electric's Journeyman Lineman and president of the safety committee.

"Most of our safety initiatives are focused on the outside employees, so the scavenger hunt was a way to get the inside employees involved."

Nearly 90% of employees participated in the safety scavenger hunt. At the conclusion of the program, participating employees were given T-shirts. The three highest-scoring participants were awarded prizes.



Brad Ackerman, Victory Electric's Senior IT System Analyst, takes a "safety selfie" during the safety scavenger hunt.