

# Rural Power

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*Please send your story ideas to*  
[ruralpower@kec.org](mailto:ruralpower@kec.org).

## Co-ops have strong showing at Day at the Capitol

Approximately 50 co-op managers, board members, and staff braved the winter weather to gather at the Kansas State Capitol on Feb. 6 to advocate for electric cooperatives.

Co-op officials met for a briefing by KEC staff. **BRUCE GRAHAM**, CEO, **LESLIE KAUFMAN**, Director of Government Relations and Legal Counsel, and **TARA MAYS**, Manager of Government Relations, reviewed the agenda and gave updates on state legislative issues.

Cooperative attendees hosted a breakfast for the legislators, and then spent the remainder of the event meeting with elected officials and attending committee hearings and legislative sessions.

"This was a very timely opportunity for our members to visit with state legislators and staff about the issues that are important to our electric cooperative industry," Kaufman said.

During the event, co-op representatives met with legislators to help them better understand electric cooperatives and the issues that impact rural Kansas. They reminded legislators that co-ops are not-for-profit, consumer-owned, and self-governed businesses actively engaged in the political process.

The primary talking points of the day were

explaining and encouraging KEC's legislation on the Kansas Underground Utility Damage Prevention Act (KUUDPA) and why electric cooperatives oppose the overreaching SB 69. This bill calls for an independent study to examine more than 40 utility related and biased topics. Members advised that the cooperatives do not oppose a thoughtful study of certain issues, and they informed legislators that the cooperatives were drafting their own bill.

"We were pleased to have almost 50 co-op members attending this year's event," Mays said. "This level of participation shows that our members are engaged on the decisions being made in Topeka that have serious consequences for our member-cooperatives and the communities that they serve. We are looking forward to continuing this annual event."

Attending the event were board members, management, and staff from the following cooperatives: Ark Valley, Bluestem, Brown-Atchison, CMS, Doniphan, DS&O, FreeState, Heartland, KEC, KEPCo, Lane-Scott, Lyon-Coffey, Midwest Energy, Nemaha-Marshall, Ninnescah, Pioneer, Prairie Land, Rolling Hills, Sedgwick County, Sumner Cowley, Sunflower, Victory, Western, and Wheatland.



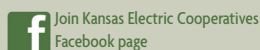
Representative Steven Johnson, Chairman of the House Committee on Taxation (pictured left) visits with Keith Miller and Pat Parke of Midwest Energy, Pat Morse of Victory, and other co-op representatives who participated in the Day at the Capitol activities.



From left: Larry Froese, Rep. Joe Seiwert (Chairman of the House Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications Committee) and KEC President Keith McNickle take time during the event to pose for a photo in Seiwert's office. All three also serve on the Ark Valley Electric board.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative  
PO Box 4267  
Topeka, KS 66604-0267  
[www.kec.coop](http://www.kec.coop)



# Ken Maginley to be inducted into the KCC Hall of Fame

**KEN MAGINLEY**, retired Bluestem manager, will be inducted into the Kansas Cooperative Council's Hall of Fame. The 2019 inductees, which also includes **DR. DAVID BARTON**, will be honored on Wednesday, March 20 in Wichita.

Maginley built a legacy by providing exceptional service to the electric co-op program and its members during his 41-year career. Dr. Barton spent 27 years providing guidance and leadership to co-ops through his role as Director of the Arthur Capper Cooperative Center.

Both inductees' biographical information will be placed in the Hall of Fame showcase display at the Kansas State Fairgrounds. This permanent display, located in the Pride of Kansas Building, plays a significant role in educating others about the uniqueness of the co-op business model.

Since being established in 1999, 47 leaders from all types of cooperatives have been inducted.

## jobmarket

KEC helps to promote co-op careers by listing openings on the careers section of the KEC website.

Visit <https://www.kec.coop/careers> to learn more about the following positions.

Send your open position listings to [ruralpower@kec.org](mailto:ruralpower@kec.org). Positions will be posted on the website for one month, unless otherwise directed by the co-op.

- FreeState has openings for an Accountant in Topeka and Apprentice 1 in McLouth.
- Sunflower has openings for a Senior Corporate Paralegal, Project Management Intern, Journey Line Technician, Line Technician Apprentice I-IV, Lab Tech Trainee, Environmental & Science Intern, Transmission Engineer I, Transmission Engineer II, Transmission Engineer Intern, Transmission Geotechnician I, and an Instructional Designer.
- Wheatland has an opening for a Social Media Specialist.

## co-opcalendar

### FEBRUARY

- 15 **Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting**, Sunflower Headquarters, Hays
- 20-21 **KEPCo Board of Trustees Meeting**, KEPCo Headquarters, Topeka
- 28 **MDM Meeting**, KEPCo Headquarters, Topeka

### MARCH

- 5 **KEC Microlearning Webinar**, Transitioning in the Workplace: Succession Planning with Multiple Generations, 10 a.m.
- 6-7 **KEC Board of Trustees Meeting**, Hilton Garden Inn, Salina
- 10-13 **NRECA Annual Meeting**, Orlando, Florida
- 12-13 **Speak Up!/Listen Up!**, Heartland Headquarters, Girard
- 14-15 **Speak Up!/Listen Up!**, FreeState Headquarters, Topeka
- 15 **Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting**, Holcomb
- 21-22 **Speak Up!/Listen Up!**, Western Headquarters, WaKeeney
- 21-22 **Co-Bank Regional Customer Meeting**, Hyatt Regency, Wichita
- 26-27 **Speak Up!/Listen Up!**, Butler Headquarters, El Dorado
- 27-29 **KMSDA Meeting**, Courtyard by Marriott Old Town, Wichita
- 28-29 **Speak Up!/Listen Up!**, DS&O Headquarters, Solomon

## annualmeetings

### FEBRUARY

- 26 **Nemaha-Marshall**, American Legion, 207 5th Street, Axtell. Meal starts at 11 a.m. Meeting starts at 12:45 p.m.
- 28 **Brown-Atchison**, Co-op Headquarters, 1712 Central Ave., Horton. Meal starts at 11 a.m. Meeting starts at 12:30 p.m.

### MARCH

- 2 **Pioneer**, Grant County Civic Center, 1000 W. Patterson, Ulysses. Health fair starts at 7 a.m. Meal starts at 12 p.m. Meeting starts at 10 a.m.
- 4 **Bluestem**, St. Bernard Catholic Church, 17665 Old Post Rd., Wamego. Dessert served 6:15-7 p.m. Meeting starts at 7 p.m.
- 7 **Butler**, Circle Middle School, 14697 West SW 20th, Benton. Meal starts at 5:30 p.m. Meeting starts at 7 p.m.
- 14 **Caney Valley**, Cedar Vale School gym, 500 Dora, Cedar Vale. Meal starts at 5 p.m. Meeting starts at 6:30 p.m.
- 19 **Ninnescah**, Pratt Municipal Building, 117 W. Third, Pratt. Meal starts at 6 p.m. Meeting following meal.
- 26 **Heartland**, Fort Scott Community College, 2108 S. Horton, Fort Scott. Meeting starts at 7 p.m.
- 28 **Doniphan**, Troy Community Building, 1217 Last Chance Rd., Troy. Meal starts at 6 p.m. Meeting following meal.
- 30 **Sumner-Cowley**, Wellington High School, 1700 E. 16th St., Wellington. Meal starts at 11:30 a.m. Meeting starts at 1:15 p.m.

### APRIL

- 2 **DS&O**, Webster Conference Center, 2601 N. Ohio Street, Salina. Meal starts at 6 p.m. Meeting following meal.
- 2 **Prairie Land**, Co-op Headquarters, 14935 U.S. Hwy. 36, Norton. Meal starts at noon. Meeting starts at 12:45 p.m.
- 2 **Sedgwick County**, The Cotillion Hall & Ballroom, 11120 W. Kellogg Dr., Wichita. Meal starts at 6:30 p.m. Meeting starts at 7 p.m.
- 4 **CMS**, Meade High School, 409 School Addition, Meade. Meal starts at 5:30 p.m. Meeting starts at 6:30 p.m.
- 4 **Flint Hills**, Herington Community Building, 810 S. Broadway, Herington. Meal starts at 5:30 p.m. Meeting starts at 6:30 p.m.
- 4 **Radiant**, Co-op Headquarters, 9346 Jewell Rd., Fredonia. Meal starts at 5:30 p.m. Meeting starts at 7 p.m.
- 5 **Alfalfa**, Cherokee High School gym, 412 E. 5th St., Cherokee, OK. Meal starts at 5 p.m. Meeting starts at 7 p.m.
- 5 **Rolling Hills**, Co-op Headquarters, 3075 B U.S. Hwy. 24, Beloit. Meal starts at 5:30 p.m. Meeting starts at 6:30 p.m.
- 8 **Lyon-Coffey**, Burlington High School, 830 Cross Street, Burlington. Meal starts at 6 p.m. Meeting starts at 7 p.m.
- 9 **Victory**, Western State Bank Expo Building, 11333 Highway 283, Dodge City. Meal starts at 5 p.m. Meeting following meal.
- 11 **Twin Valley**, Labette County High School Cafeteria, 601 S. High School St., Altamont. Meal starts at 6 p.m. Meeting starts at 6:30 p.m.
- 16 **Ark Valley**, Sunflower Building, Kansas State Fair, 2000 N. Poplar St., Hutchinson. Meal starts at 6:30 p.m. Meeting at 7 p.m.
- 23 **FreeState**, Perry-Lecompton High School Theatre, 404 Lecompton Rd., Perry. Meeting starts at 7 p.m.
- 24 **Wheatland**, Great Bend Events Center, 3111 10th St., Great Bend. Meal starts at 11:30 a.m. Meeting starts at 12:30 p.m.

# Kansas Lieutenant Governor, industry leaders among annual meeting speakers

More than 200 representatives of Kansas electric cooperatives gathered in Topeka from Jan. 26 to 29 for KEC's Annual Meeting. The attendees discussed issues facing the co-ops, listened to a wide range of speakers and participated in special presentations and events.

During Monday's meeting, Kansas Lieutenant Governor **LYNN ROGERS** discussed the newly-created Office of Rural Prosperity. He stated that this initiative will focus on building an interconnected, strategic plan for rural economic development that leverages Kansas communities' unique assets.

"Our vision for the Office of Rural Prosperity is to interact with all levels of government from the township to the federal government grappling with the way our policies affect families and businesses in our rural communities," Rogers said. "Rural Kansas will have a seat at the table when we talk about policies and procedures and rules and regulations that affect all Kansans."

Monday's program also included NRECA's Program and Product Line Manager **BRIAN SLOBODA** who discussed consumer-centric emerging technologies including Blockchain, batteries, and electric vehicles.

"Blockchain is a great solution desperately looking for a problem to solve," Sloboda explained. "Some say if you have Blockchain, you won't need the grid. But Blockchain cannot replace poles and wires. It's a very immature technology worth tracking."

NRECA Director of Media and Public Relations **STEPHEN BELL** reviewed the Lexicon Project that has helped to establish a common language for co-ops to use when discussing priority issues. He stated that the specific words we use when communicating can make a difference in how the other person perceives the conversation.



Lt. Governor Lynn Rogers discusses the newly-created Office of Rural Prosperity at KEC's Annual Meeting.

like costs, rates, or adding renewables."

During the annual meeting luncheon, **MARK J. LINDQUIST**, world-touring entertainer and author, reviewed his strategy on how to reignite your passion. He also shared his talent by singing the national anthem.

**BRUCE GRAHAM**, KEC's CEO, distributed a handout showcasing the 2018 highlights during his State of the Statewide presentation. He recapped the significant legislative success and reported on the challenges expected at the Statehouse in 2019. He highlighted the improved efficiency of the KEC headquarters facility, the transition to a new printer for *Kansas Country Living* that has reduced the cost of the magazine production and improved the quality, and the patronage retirement that returned more than \$2.2 million to member co-ops.

The program also included a G&T update by **SUZANNE LANE**, Executive Vice President and CEO for KEPCo, and **STUART LOWRY**, President and CEO of Sunflower Electric Power Corporation and Mid-Kansas Electric Co., LLC. They discussed a variety of issues including increases in transmission costs, transmission rate formulas, and emerging technologies.

**SID SPERRY**, President and CEO of SPIDI Weather Solutions, explained how the Sperry-Piltz Ice Accumulation (SPIA) Index, an ice impact and ice damage predictability tool for utilities, helps to enhance co-ops' preparedness. SPIA is available to all Kansas cooperatives through KEC membership.

**PHIL IRWIN**, CEO of Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange,

"At the end of the day, it's not what we say that's really important, it's what people hear us say that matters." Bell explained to the meeting attendees. "That's especially true as we get into complex issues

discussed the trend of current claims, the importance of learning from near misses, and public service announcements to help prevent public contacts. **AAMER ARSHAD** and **BILL KNECHT**, CFC, presented KEC with grants totaling \$22,400 on behalf of CFC and NCSC. **JOHN DONNER**, CoBank, presented KEC with a check in the amount of \$25,000 for statewide association outreach initiatives.

Other speakers included **TIM BRYAN**, CEO of the National Rural Telecommunications Cooperative, who shared lessons learned from electric co-op broadband build-outs. **BRANDI MILLER**, CEO of the Kansas Cooperative Council, announced that Ken Maginley, retired Bluestem Manager, would be inducted into the Kansas Cooperative Hall of Fame. The KEC app was introduced, and **KELLY LENZ**, Farm Director for WIBW Radio and the statewide Kansas Agriculture Network presented a humorous outlook about rural living.

Kansas Committee for Rural Electrification (KCRE) Chairman **ED WILTSE** gave a report before the KCRE membership and held an officer election. Concurrent meetings were held by each KEC District to determine the Executive Committee representative.

KEC's Loss Control, Safety and Compliance Department recognized cooperatives that earned "No Lost Time" awards and Safety Achievement Certificates. KEC's Government Relations staff gave a legislative update.

Kansas legislators were the focus during KEC's annual Legislative Reception. There were more than 100 legislators who attended the reception to visit with co-op constituents.

The KCRE silent auction raised \$4,338. The KEC Auxiliary quilt auction raised \$600 for KEC's youth programs. **BOB VOET**, Nemaha-Marshall, won the auction for the K-State quilt donated by **LUANN WILSON**, Rolling Hills.

During the KEC Spouses program, a large donation of personal care items was collected for the Topeka Rescue Mission.

Prior to the meeting, three directors' courses were offered. On Sunday evening, members enjoyed a welcome reception.



## Coins keep safety in mind for the Strickert family

Every cooperative aspires to eliminate serious injuries due to electrical contacts, and many have joined a new initiative of the National Rural Electric Cooperative and Feder-

ated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange called "Commitment to Zero Contacts."

Wheatland Electric Cooperative staff took the pledge to commit to zero contacts. As part of the commitment, the co-op provided every lineman with a safety coin to carry in their pocket daily to remind them of why they work safe. Little did they know the impact this coin would have on the child of one of Wheatland's linemen.

**KAYLEE STRICKERT**, the daughter of lineman **KYLE STRICKERT**, is much like any four-year-old. She enjoys her family, she plays, and she worries. When Kyle, who has served as a lineman for the past 11 years, realized that Kaylee was worried about being safe at school, he reassured her that the teachers were there to keep her safe. Needing something more, she asked him what kept him safe at work.

"I told her that God keeps me safe at work, and that linemen look out for



Kyle Strickert has been a lineman at Wheatland Electric since May 2008. Kyle and his wife, Sydney, have two children: Kaylee (pictured, 4 years old) and Eli (2 years old).

one another," Kyle said.

While Kaylee clung tightly to him, Kyle reached into his pocket and pulled out his coin and handed it to her.

"I told her this is what keeps me safe every day,"

he stated. "I look at this coin and I think of you. I think of your brother, and I think of your mom. It reminds me to not take any shortcuts," Kyle explained.

Reassured by the physical object, Kaylee now keeps the coin in a pouch in her backpack and carries the coin with her every day as a reminder that she is safe.

In early January, Kyle was called in to work at 4 a.m. Kaylee woke up, retrieved her coin from her backpack, and fell back to sleep with the coin in her hand, assured that her dad would be safe.

Kyle now carries a new coin with him in his pocket every day.

"When you feel your coin, it makes you stop and think," Kyle said. "It reminds me to slow down. It makes me think of my family and the importance of walking through the door each night."

## Rick Johnson joins KEPCo

**RICHARD**

**"RICK" JOHNSON**

has accepted the position as Executive Director, Engineering at KEPCo. Johnson replaces **MARK BARBEE** who was promoted to Senior Vice President, Engineering and Operations in 2018.



Rick Johnson

In this role, Johnson will be responsible for leading and directing the engineering department at KEPCo and providing oversight and technical support for KSI projects.

Prior to joining KEPCo, Johnson served as the Manager, Delivery Engineering for Otter Tail Power Company. His previous experience includes system protection, substation, transmission and distribution.

"We are very pleased to have found someone with Rick's background and experience for this position," Barbee said. "We believe that with his leadership, the engineering department will continue to provide outstanding engineering and technical support for KEPCo and its members."

## KEC offers series of Speak Up!/Listen Up! workshops

Effective communication is a cornerstone in building a strong, sustainable culture of safety excellence, but talking about safety doesn't come naturally on the job site. That is why KEC is offering a series of Speak Up!/Listen Up! training dates in March (see page 2).

The training uses proven communication concepts and links them to work scenarios shown on video. The work scenarios are tailored to common work activities and help employees engage in discussions of how to best provide and receive feedback.

This program is offered at no cost to LCS&C members or \$125 for each non-member participant. Each day will begin at 9:30 a.m. and end at 3 p.m. Lunch will be on your own. To allow for maximum participation, the one-day training session will be repeated on the second day at each location.

For more information about the training, please contact Carol Dorr at [cdorr@kec.org](mailto:cdorr@kec.org).

**Q** I completed my NRECA Supervisory Certificate prior to 2018. How does my certificate fit with NRECA's new certification program?

**A** The courses taken through either the Supervisory Certificate or the Management Essentials Certificate count toward the Supervisor and Manager Development Program (SMDP). For example, those who have completed the nine half-day courses in the Supervisory Certificate will have... [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.

Asked & Answered