

Rural Power

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your news
announcements to
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Co-ops introduce Sunflower Electric Economic Development

Commitment to community is one of the seven cooperative principles that govern the operation of cooperatives. That's why the member distribution utilities that are part of the Sunflower system recently launched the Sunflower Electric Economic Development Program.

Sunflower Electric is owned by Lane-Scott, Pioneer, Prairie Land, Southern Pioneer, Victory, Western, and Wheatland rural electric utilities. The program will bring additional community and economic development programs to the communities where they serve.

Sunflower Electric Economic Development involves several programs.

Industry Marketing

Research has been completed to identify which industries are predominate in the service territories of these utilities. Companies find success in this region for a variety of reasons, perhaps natural resources or the central U.S. location of Sunflower's members. Whatever the reason, it makes sense to share the story of business success with other companies within these

industries. The world won't know this region is a great place to do business until the story is told.

Available Sites and Buildings

Just as a business needs inventory on its shelves, inventory of available sites and buildings must be visible and promoted. LocationOne Information Systems (LOIS) is the largest website for economic development properties in the U.S.

Sunflower has a license for the site, and staff are actively working to increase

the number of properties that are promoted on LOIS.

The Sunflower Certified Site Program is a certification that guarantees extensive research has been completed for a property intended for business development. Certified site programs are valuable to businesses as they reduce the chance of a site-related surprise during the construction process. A comprehensive list of items are researched and cataloged so a prospective owner knows the available utilities, capabilities, environmental and historical attributes of

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SUNFLOWER ELECTRIC
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
energy to grow



KEC cancels summer meeting, directors courses to go online

During the May 28 KEC Executive Committee meeting, the co-op officials made the extremely difficult decision to cancel this year's KEC Summer Meeting scheduled for August 1-3, 2020.

While the KEC Summer Meeting is always a highlight among the electric cooperative family, due to the unusual and uncertain circumstances of COVID-19, the committee cancelled the annual event out of an abundance of caution for the health and safety of the members, staff, sponsors, and other participants.

This decision took into account a recent manager's

survey, local and state orders, travel industry guidance, the limited availability of speakers, the number of participants and origins of travel.

KEC plans to offer two directors workshops using NRECA's online training platform. A Credentialed Cooperative Director course and a Board Leadership course will be offered this summer. Attendees of these online courses will receive credit toward their CCD and/or BLC certificates. Details about these virtual events will be sent directly to the cooperatives. For more information, contact Shana Read at sread@kec.org.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative
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Nolan Numrich to join Western's staff

Western Cooperative Electric recently announced that **NOLAN NUMRICH** has accepted the position of manager of member services. His start date is July 1, 2020.



Nolan Numrich

For the past two years, Numrich has worked as a member services representative and key accounts manager for Wheatland Electric Cooperative. He has earned his Certified Key Account Executive credentials and is experienced in internal and external communications, and member relations. He works closely with KEC, Sunflower, and Touchstone Energy to better serve the members and to promote the co-op business model.

A Western Kansas native, Numrich spent four years in the United States Marine Corps. He earned his bachelor's degree at the University of Kansas. Numrich and his wife, Ragen, have two sons, Coen and Gavin.

jobmarket

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

Visit www.kec.coop/careers to learn more about the following positions.

- ▶ KEPCo seeks two SCADA/metering technicians.
- ▶ Nemaha-Marshall seeks a journeyman lineman.
- ▶ Prairie Land seeks an electrical/system engineer.
- ▶ Sunflower has multiple openings.
- ▶ Wheatland seeks member services and key accounts manager

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

Positions will be posted on the website for one month, unless otherwise directed by the co-op.

co-opcalendar

JUNE

25 **MDM Meeting**, KEPCo Headquarters, Topeka - **TBD**

JULY

- 3 **Independence Day**, KEC Office closed
- 7 **Ark Valley Annual Meeting**, Kansas State Fair, North Sunflower Building, Hutchinson, 6:30 p.m.
- 14 **Lane-Scott Annual Meeting**, Lane County Fairgrounds, Dighton, 6:30 p.m.
- 15 **KEPCo Board of Trustees Teleconference**, 2 p.m.
- 17 **Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting**, Sunflower Headquarters, Hays
- 30 **MDM Meeting**, KEPCo Headquarters, Topeka

AUGUST

1-3 **KEC Summer Meeting**, Marriott Hotel, Overland Park - **CANCELLED**

Kansas co-op communicators find ways to stay connected

With the cancellation of many industry meetings and professional networking opportunities, one Kansas cooperative communicator found a way to bring together a network virtually. **SARAH FARLEE**, FreeState's public relations/marketing specialist, established a weekly Zoom conference for other cooperative communicators. The conference, playfully titled "Happy Hour," is now in its eleventh week.

Farlee said she first got the idea when the Kansas Member Services Directors Association (KMSDA) spring meeting was cancelled.

"Basically, when KMSDA was cancelled because of COVID-19, I knew I would miss getting together with other people. Then when the CONNECT Conference was cancelled, I knew I would miss that idea exchange with other professional communicators. I was thinking how much I was really going to miss these people, then I realized that I could still call them, so I started the Happy Hour."

Farlee hoped that the informal meeting would provide a platform for the employees to visit and share ideas.

"At the beginning of the pandemic, developing messaging for our members was a moving target and everything was changing so fast," she explained. "It was nice to have a support group who understands what it is you do. We have a unique connection with each other."

Farlee said that another benefit to the group was that it lends consistency to the messaging delivered across the state.

"This group let us know that we were all in this together, and that helped

a lot of people be able to ask for help," she stated. "It's also given us some insight on what we need for future professional development."

The group has been able to share information, ideas, and resources.

"These past 12 weeks has brought phenomenal exchange of ideas and discussions such as how to move forward with events and the new normal. It's also been important to have the state-wide's participation," Farlee explained. "For instance, Carrie Kimberlin (KEC's manager of creative services) was able to create a bill stuffer that stemmed from some of our conversation."

Farlee said that the group is beginning to attract other employees from Kansas and Oklahoma cooperatives.

"Participation continues to go up because it's so easy to join. It's pretty simple for me to push some buttons to set this meeting up, but it only works if people embrace it and understand that it's a professional development group. It's only as successful as the people who participate."

And the participants do engage in this new resource.

"Through this group, we've found validation for our concerns and solutions for moving through them. We celebrated our award winners, and we've shared how to better communicate with our members all while having fun. We've been introduced to families and pets and, because of that, we have developed a deeper connection with each other."

Farlee said that she plans to keep the weekly meetings running as long as people want it to continue.

Alumna from the 1966 Youth Tour shares memories

In the early years of the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, **PATRICIA (PAGE) SMITH** was one of 24 youth from across Kansas who traveled from Topeka to Washington, D.C. The Nortonville native was selected for the experience by Leavenworth-Jefferson Electric Cooperative (now part of FreeState) after entering an essay contest.

To help with her essay, Smith asked her father, James Page, to tell her when they first got electricity on the farm.

"He said about 1951 or 1952," Smith remembered. "I said, 'You mean I was born before electricity!?'"

When it was time to go on Youth Tour, the students met in Topeka and traveled to Washington, D.C., on a train.

"I remember feeling like I was weaving back and forth after we got off from the train," Smith recalled. "When we left Kansas, everything was fine and dandy, but when we arrived in Washington, D.C., a tornado hit Topeka. The fact that Topeka was struck by a tornado while we were there still stands out in my mind."

Luckily, the rest of their trip was not nearly as hair raising, but just as memorable.

"We got to tour the White House

including the Oval Office. Outside of the White House, we listened to a speech by President Lyndon B. Johnson," she recalled "I can't remember anything he said, but I remember seeing Lady Bird Johnson."

Later, the group ran into one of President Johnson's daughters.

"She had just gotten engaged and showed us her engagement ring," Smith said.

Smith and the rest of the delegation toured the U.S. Capitol, and had breakfast with their congressmen including Rep. Bob Dole.

"Getting to meet Bob Dole was a very memorable experience and we got to have our photo taken with him. Later, he sent us each a signed photo," she stated. "I also remember seeing Sen. Ted Kennedy and some more famous



Congressman Bob Dole poses with the Kansas delegation during the 1966 Youth Tour. Patricia (Page) Smith is seated fourth from the right.

people from the news," she said.

Smith said that the students were treated with many opportunities throughout their trip, including tours of Mount Vernon, Arlington National Cemetery, and a visit to the Lincoln Memorial.

"We also climbed up the stairs of the Washington Monument," she added.

"It was a fantastic experience," she said about the trip. "I still have my essay in a safe place!"

Gov. Kelly appoints French to Kansas Corporation Commission

On June 12, Gov. Laura Kelly announced the appointment of **ANDREW FRENCH** to a seat on the Kansas Corporation Commission, subject to confirmation by the Kansas Senate. The KCC is a three-member panel that regulates rates, service, and safety of public utilities, common carriers, motor carriers, and oil & gas production.

French, an attorney from Leawood, KS, is leaving a position with Smithyman & Zakoura in Overland Park. During his tenure at the firm, his caseload included representing a coalition of industrial consumers in many cases before the KCC. Previously, French worked for the KCC as senior litigation counsel. He is a 2010 graduate of University of Kansas (KU) law school and earned a bachelor's in environmental studies from KU.

If confirmed, he will replace Commissioner Shari Feist Albrecht, who was appointed to the KCC by former Gov. Sam Brownback in 2012.

KEC shows support for Kansas State FFA virtual convention

Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. continued its long-standing support of the Kansas FFA Convention. This year, due to COVID-19, the convention was held online through a variety of sessions May 26-29. The theme for this year's convention was "Holds True."

"The State FFA Convention is the highlight of not only a year's worth of work in the agriculture classrooms and experience, but it is also the culmination of multiple years of work



At the conclusion of the virtual Kansas State FFA Convention, Abby Johnson, Salina, was elected as the State FFA Vice President. Johnson also attended the 2019 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, sponsored by DS&O.

and dedication," said **BETH GAINES**, executive director of the Kansas FFA Foundation, Inc. "It was very important to be able to honor these students and recognize their hard work and contributions to these programs. Through the help of a lot of people, we were able to do that successfully."

KEC continued its long sponsorship of the State FFA Degrees which is the highest degree any state association may bestow on its members. The golden charm of the State FFA Degree is the symbol of growth and development. This year, the names and photos of the 254 Kansas high school students who earned this honor were displayed during the virtual ceremony.

At the end of the convention, the state officers were announced. Youth Tour alumna **ABBY JOHNSON** was elected as the 2020-2021 Kansas vice president.

Sunflower Electric Economic Development, *continued from p. 1*

the property, confirming that the site is ready for development.

Local Community Support

Local leaders are in the best position to understand what opportunities fit their community. What they may need is additional education, access to information, and resources for projects that benefit the residents. The Sunflower Electric Economic Development team includes trained facilitators to help communities identify what opportunities are right for growth. The staff have an extensive list of resource providers that

are ready to support technical expertise for economic development.

Key to sharing the story with communities and the world about what the region has to offer is the program's new economic development website, www.sunflowercodevo.com.

The website includes information for businesses that want to learn about the advantages of expanding in the Sunflower member service territory, where to review available sites and build-ins, how to connect with Sunflower's members' staff, and information about

the region. The website also has information on programs available to communities that may want to advance their local economic development program.

Living and working in a vibrant community is a goal shared by everyone. Sunflower Electric Economic Development Program will continue its commitment to community, delivering better opportunities for development through each facet of the program.

For more information about this program, contact Nikki Pfannenstiel at npfannenstiel@sunflower.net.

2020 Kansas election dates



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2020 KANSAS ELECTION DATES

JULY 14

Last day to register to vote
in primary election

JULY 15

First day advance voting ballots are mailed
and in-person advance voting for primary may begin

JULY 28

Deadline to apply to county election office
for mail-in ballot

AUG. 4

PRIMARY ELECTION

OCT. 13

Last day to register to vote
in the general election

OCT. 27

Deadline to apply to county election office
for mail-in ballot

NOV. 3

GENERAL ELECTION

