

Rural Power

INSIDE

- 2 | Calendar
- 2 | Directors courses offered at KEC Summer Meeting
- 3 | Member co-op annual meetings
- 4 | KEC plans series of Co-ops Vote events for 2021

Please send your news announcements to ruralpower@kec.org.

Heartland hosts first of seven scheduled *Flip the Switch* events

With the flip of a switch, Heartland dedicated two one-megawatt solar farms on May 11. The installations are located outside Girard and Chanute. This event marks the first of seven scheduled *Flip the Switch* events for Kansas electric co-ops.



Heartland Board President Earnest Troth, left, and CEO Mark Scheibe flip the switch on the cooperative's new solar farms on May 11. In the back row are Heartland board members Dean Davied, Ron Taylor, H.H. Stockebrand, Steve McFarland, Larry Lindberg, and Don Davied.

These solar farms are the first two of 22 to be built as part of the Kansas Cooperative Sun Power Program, a Today's Power, Inc. (TPI) solar power services agreement program that ensures low-cost renewable energy to 12 participating Kansas electric co-ops. Once all 22 solar farms are completed, 80,000 homes will be powered by the 20 megawatts of capacity the farms will produce.

Both of Heartland's newly-dedicated Greenbush and Urbana solar farms were customized in the design process to maximize output during

the cooperative's peak demand hours, when power is most expensive. These factors will all help Heartland control power costs and keep power affordable for its members.

Heartland will purchase electricity generated by the sun farms at a fixed-low cost for the length of the 25-year-or-more agreement. TPI owns and operates 100% of the solar array.

Six additional *Flip the Switch* events have been scheduled so far, and they are: **FREESTATE** on May 26, **SEDGWICK COUNTY** on May 27, **TWIN VALLEY** on June 10, **4 RIVERS** on June 21, **DSO** on June 22, and **BUTLER** on June 23.

Co-ops strengthen connections during Legislative Conference

More than thirty cooperative leaders representing 18 electric co-ops serving Kansas consumer-members registered for NRECA's 2021 Virtual Legislative Conference held April 19-21.

The meeting was an on-line alternative to the long-standing April fly-in to Washington, D.C. It included updates on key cooperative issues before Congress and tips for making the most of virtual Hill visits with delegation members.

KEC hosted separate virtual visits with Kansas delegation members Senators **JERRY MORAN** (R-KS) and **ROGER MARSHALL** (R-KS), and Representatives **RON ESTES** (R-KS 4), **TRACEY MANN** (R-KS 1), and **JAKE LATURNER** (R-KS 2). More than 30 co-op leaders joined

in each of the discussions and briefed the delegation on issues including RUS loan re-pricing, increasing postal rates on not-for-profits, and co-op concerns and potential contributions in moving to a lower-carbon future.

"We know our Senators and Representatives are very busy and we are fortunate to have had the opportunity to share with them personally, even if through a remote platform," said **LESLIE KAUFMAN**, vice president of government relations and legal counsel. "We extend our appreciation to them and their staff members that participated or helped coordinate the events."

The 2022 NRECA Legislative Conference is scheduled for May 2-4.



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Directors courses offered at KEC Summer Meeting

Prior to the KEC Summer Meeting, four directors courses will be offered at the Overland Park Marriott. All classes will run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and lunch will be served to registered attendees.

Two courses will be offered on Saturday, July 31:

- ▶ NRECA Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) Course **2630.1 STRATEGIC PLANNING** with Scott Luecal.
- ▶ NRECA Board Leadership Course (BLC) Course **943.1 CONVERSATION SKILLS OUTSIDE THE BOARD-ROOM** with Mike Marsch.

Two courses will be offered on Sunday, Aug. 1:

- ▶ NRECA BLC Course **953.1 IMPROVING BOARD DECISION-MAKING QUALITY** with Mary McLaury.
- ▶ NRECA BLC Course **974.1 RATE MAKING STRATEGIES AND POLICY DECISIONS FOR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE BOARDS** with Scott Luecal.

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

For more information about these courses or individual credential levels, please call Shana Read at 785-228-4620 or email sread@kec.org.

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.

- ▶ Doniphan seeks a general manager.
- ▶ KEPCo seeks an information systems specialist II.
- ▶ Sunflower has multiple openings.
- ▶ Wheatland has multiple openings.
- ▶ Niobrara Valley (Nebraska) seeks a general 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

MAY

- 22 **4 Rivers Annual Meeting**, Burlington High School parking lot, drive-in meeting, 10 a.m.
- 27 **MDM Meeting**, KEPCo Headquarters, 10 a.m.
- 27 **KEC Workshop – What Co-ops Need to Know to Protect Themselves When a Member-Customer Files Bankruptcy**, virtual, 1:30 p.m.
- 31 **Memorial Day Holiday**, KEC office closed.

JUNE

- 2-4 **REC's Managers Meeting**, DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel, Wichita.
- 3 **NRECA and NRTC's first Broadband and Digital Infrastructure Summit**, virtual.
- 8 **Ninnescah Annual Meeting**, Pratt Municipal Building, Pratt. Meal at 6 p.m. M, meeting following the meal.
- 14-16 **CFC Forum**, San Antonio, TX.
- 16-17 **NRECA CONNECT Conference**, virtual.
- 18 **Sunflower Board Meeting**, Sunflower Headquarters, 8:30 a.m.
- 21-25 **Kansas Electric Youth (KEY) Leadership Conference**, virtual.
- 24 **MDM Meeting**, KEPCo Headquarters, 10 a.m.

JULY

- 4 **4th of July Holiday**, KEC office closed.
- 13 **Twin Valley Annual Meeting**, Oswego Community Center, Oswego. Meal at 6 p.m. Meeting at 6:30 p.m.
- 14-15 **KEPCo Board Meeting**, KEPCo Headquarters.
- 20 **Lane-Scott Annual Meeting**, Lane County Fairgrounds, Dighton. Meal at 6:30 p.m. Meeting at 7:30 p.m.
- 21 **Sunflower Board Meeting**, Sunflower Headquarters, 8:30 a.m.
- 22 **MDM Meeting**, KEPCo Headquarters, 10 a.m.
- 31 **KEC Summer Meeting Directors Training**, Marriott Hotel, Overland Park.

AUGUST

- 1 **KEC Summer Meeting Directors Training**, Marriott Hotel, Overland Park.
- 2 **KEC Summer Meeting**, Marriott Hotel, Overland Park.

upcomingtraining

KEC Bankruptcy Session, May 27

KEC is offering a virtual training session on May 27, 1:30-2:30 p.m. The presentation is titled *What Co-ops Need to Know to Protect Themselves When a Member-Customer Files Bankruptcy* and will be facilitated by attorney **PATRICIA HAMILTON**, Stevens & Brand, LLP.

More than 50 co-op employees have registered for this training. For more information, contact Shana Read at sread@kec.org.

HR Summit virtual roundtable

Following last month's HR Summit, attendees indicated they would like to continue the virtual roundtable on a quarterly basis. The first is scheduled for Tuesday, Aug. 10, 10-11 a.m.

This session will be facilitated by **RUTH BEALER**, Midwest Energy, and will cover the following topics: how co-ops are preparing for upcoming retirements and retaining the institutional knowledge of those retirees, what

specific activities co-ops engage in to retain current employees, and how co-ops promote the positive side of co-op culture to employees or potential employees. Attendees will also be asked to share their favorite book or resource.

Meeting information has been emailed to the participating cooperatives.

2021 IT Summit, Sept. 20-22

The IT Summit Planning Committee asks members to save the dates of Sept. 20-22 for the fall meeting. The 2021 KEC IT Summit will be held from 1 to 5 p.m. on Sept. 20, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sept. 21, and from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Sept. 22. The Courtyard by Marriott at Old Town in Wichita is the host site.

To make a hotel reservation, call 866-522-8909 by Aug. 30. Ask for the "KEC IT Summit Block" rate of \$145 which includes breakfast and parking. Detailed program information will be emailed closer to the meeting dates.

Ark Valley

Ark Valley's 82nd annual meeting was held April 13 at the Kansas State Fairgrounds in Hutchinson. There were 210 members that registered, and 1 registered by proxy.

Approximately 450 people attended the dinner meeting, which was catered by Carriage Crossing Restaurant & Bakery of Yoder.

JUDY KINSLER and **KEITH MCNICKLE** were each elected to a three-year term on the co-op board.

Wheatland

Wheatland held its 73rd annual meeting on April 14 at the Great Bend Events Center.

Approximately 250 people met at either the Great Bend location or one of seven remote meeting locations across the co-op's service territory. Remote meetings were held in Scott City, Leoti, Tribune, Syracuse, Garden City, Harper, and Caldwell. Members could cast ballots, enjoy lunch, and win prizes at all locations.

MIKE THON, DAN BONINE, and **MARK ARNOLD** were re-elected to the board.

Victory

Victory's annual meeting was at the Western State Bank Expo in Dodge City on April 20.

Due to lingering COVID-19 health and safety concerns about mass gatherings, the co-op hosted a scaled-back annual meeting. There were approximately 125 members and guests in attendance.

Re-elected to the board were **DARYL TIEBEN, KEN SCHULTE, CEDRIC DREWES,** and **TERRI LARSON.**

FreeState

FreeState held a virtual annual meeting on April 27.

During the meeting, Board President Jeanine Murphy announced the launch of the 2021 member survey, and CEO Steve Foss noted that the trustees had approved a half-million dollar member relief adjustment. The adjustment credited to May bills averages out to

Western

Western's 76th annual meeting was held at the co-op headquarters in WaKeeney on May 12. Approximately 200 members and guests attended. The meal was provided by Bigge's Country Kitchen.

Special guest speakers included Rep.



Steven Johnson, Rep. Barbara Wasinger, Rep. Jim Minnix, Rep. Ken Rahjes, Sunflower CEO Stuart Lowry, and KEC CEO Lee Tafanelli.

MARVIN KELLER, CRAIG CROSSLAND, and **LANDON HEIER** were re-elected to the board.

approximately \$23 per residential member. The ability to provide the adjustment comes from pairing part of Fort Leavenworth margins and realized savings following 2020 and the cancelation of events and the adjustment of spending.

Re-elected via mail ballot were **BILL CONLEY, ROB SAGE,** and **MATT TURECEK.**

Sedgwick County

Sedgwick County's drive-through annual meeting was held April 27 at the co-op's headquarters in Cheney. Despite the different format, 382 members attended the meeting.

Members drove through the co-op warehouse where they were registered, received voting ballots which included proposed bylaw changes, director elections, and 2019 minutes approval. Once ballots were collected, members received a cooperative rain gauge and a 60-watt LED bulb. Registered members received a \$25 bill credit on their May billing.

Re-elected to the board were: **DONALD METZEN, CLINT DEVORE,** and **EUGENE SCHEER.**

Prairie Land

Prairie Land held its annual meeting in two locations on May 4. Members could attend the meeting in-person at the Norton headquarters, or they could watch a live feed

at the Concordia American Legion. There were approximately 60 members at the Norton location and 30 at the Concordia location.

Board elections were held via mail ballot in February. Re-elected to the board were **ERIC WITMER, ROBERT PAXSON, OTTO LEVIN,** and **WILLIAM PETERSON.**

KAMO

KAMO held its annual meeting virtually on May 12. The following cooperatives' trustees and alternates were elected by acclamation for three-year terms: **KENNETH OWEN** and **JEFF HULL,** Barton County; **MARK PITTMAN** and **HUNTER ROBINSON,** Central Rural; **JOE OGLE** and **JULI ORME,** Cookson Hills; **RON STEUCK** and **JARROD CAMPBELL,** Osage Valley; **PAM SMITH** and **MITCHELL JOHNSON,** Ozarks; and **JIM MURRAY** and **JIM DAVIS,** Sac Osage.

CMS

CMS held its annual meeting at the Meade County Fairgrounds on May 13. Approximately 160 members and guests attended.

Guest speakers for the meeting included KEPCo CEO Suzanne Lane and KEC CEO Lee Tafanelli.

Re-elected to the board were **ROCK ORMISTON, JAMES "WES" MCKINNEY,** and **DON NIGHSWONGER.**

KEY Leadership Conference announces speaker lineup

With the cancellation of KEC's regular youth programs, KEC is coordinating the 2021 virtual Kansas Electric Youth (KEY) Leadership Conference. Twelve electric co-ops in Kansas and Oklahoma have selected 29 local students for this exclusive leadership opportunity taking place June 21-25.

The virtual conference will focus on different aspects of leadership. At the conclusion of the conference, students will be asked to create a short video focused on what leadership means to them.

The speaker lineup includes a discussion with **SEN. JERRY MORAN**, a video tutorial with NRECA's **ALEXIS MATSUI**, tips on how to have your voice heard from NRECA's **AMANDA WOLF** and **LAURA VOGEL**, a course on cooperatives by **ADAM SCHWARTZ**, and a college life skills presentation by 2018 Youth Tour delegate **SLATER HEGLIN**, a brand management workshop by **MOLLY MCPHERSON**, and an inspiring message from Survivor's **HOLLY HOFFMAN**.

There will also be a panel of Youth Tour alumni who are current college students. They will share tips and answer questions from the

conference participants about college.

The keynote speaker of the conference will be **DAN MEERS**, Kansas City Chiefs mascot, who will share his presentation titled *Wolves Can't Fly*.

Students will get to know their peers across the state through mentor groups. **ANGIE CLEVEL-ENGER**, Butler; **TRAVIS GRIFFIN**, Flint Hills;

SARAH FARLEE, FreeState; **LESLIE KRAICH**, TCEC; and **ALLI CONINE**, Wheatland; will serve as mentors.

In addition to the conference, students can also apply for the Kansas Youth Spokesperson position. The student selected for this opportunity will be asked to give a speech at the KEC Summer Meeting on Aug. 2.

All students who complete the virtual conference will be eligible to apply for both the KEC Auxiliary Scholarship and the NRECA Glenn English Scholarship that are designed for youth program alumni.

For more information about the virtual KEY Leadership Conference or other KEC youth programs, contact Shana Read at sread@kec.org. KEC plans to return to the in-person Youth Tour and Leadership Camp in 2022.



KEC plans series of Co-ops Vote events for 2021

KEC staff is planning the 2021 Co-ops Vote events across Kansas. The series of meetings are being planned to run between July and December.

"As leaders in the communities they serve, Kansas electric co-ops continue to engage policymakers through Co-ops Vote," said **LESLIE KAUFMAN**, vice president of government relations and legal counsel. "These events have been extremely positive opportunities to connect with legislators, and they are a key component to our successful advocacy program."

KEC staff has sent cooperatives a calendar of available dates to help coordinate the Co-ops Vote events. Co-op managers are asked to submit their preferred dates to KEC staff by May 26.

Due to their community focus, the events will be hosted by single or neighboring cooperatives to increase their engagement with local policymakers.

"This year's Co-ops Vote tour will provide an opportunity to reach out to many leaders regarding electric co-ops and the issues important to us," explained Kaufman.

For more information, contact Leslie Kaufman at lkaufman@kec.org or Shana Read at sread@kec.org.

ElectroRally program offers unique learning environment for students

On May 3, high school teams across Kansas and as far away as Louisiana competed in the Touchstone Energy ElectroRally in Kansas City. This race was the third and final of the state races for Kansas. The other events were held April 14 in Hoisington and April 22 in Scott City, bringing together a total of 16 teams and hundreds of students.

The student teams build vehicles from scratch using lightweight components such as aluminum frames and bicycle wheels. Motors and controls are typically smaller versions of the same technology used in full-size electric vehicles (EVs). While there are specific rules, the teams are allowed much flexibility in the design and composition of their vehicles.

The ElectroRally program involves physics, mathematics, electronics, auto technology and graphic design. As the

teams are creating and racing their vehicles, students have the opportunity to participate in different aspects of the race, including design development, securing sponsorships, writing a paper, or being a driver or pit crew member.

The competition is based on time and distance, and the race is won by the team that completes the most laps in one hour.

Students build vehicles to race in either the Standard Class, that uses only batteries, or the Solar Class, that uses both batteries and solar panels.



High school teams race electric vehicles during the Touchstone Energy ElectroRally at the National WWI Museum and Memorial on May 3.

This year, the top teams in the Standard Class were Scott City High School and Hays High School. The top teams in the Solar Class were Scott City High School and Dighton High School.

Co-ops are encouraged to be involved by sponsoring local teams or volunteering at race events.