

Rural Power

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

KEC prepares for annual meeting, legislative reception

Representatives of rural electric co-ops from across the state will gather at the Capitol Plaza Hotel in Topeka from Jan. 23-26 for the 74th annual meeting convened by Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. (KEC).

The agenda features legislative updates by **SEN. JEFF LONGBINE** and **REP. RUSSELL JENNINGS**, a discussion on cyber security by Sunflower's **BILL BRANCH**, an iPad training session by Apple certified instructor **CYNDI DANNER-KUHN**, a Kansas Committee for Rural Electrification (KCRE) "Get Pinned" ceremony, and a legislative briefing and safety awards presentation by KEC staff. The luncheon program features the inspirational **CHRIS KOCH**, a farmer and rancher who was born without arms and legs but who lives life to its greatest potential. The *Kansas Power+Hope Award* recipient will be recognized. In addition, NRECA's **JIM SPIERS** will look into the utility industry future and how technology promises to impact our operations. Spiers leads NRECA's Business & Technology Strategies/CRN. NISC's **VERN DOSCH** is now an author and will share his insights in a presentation entitled *Culture Matters*. The program also includes a USDA/REDLG update, Federated's **PHIL IRWIN**, and a Trustee Roundtable discussion.

Legislative Reception

The Legislative Reception will be held from 5:30-8 p.m. on Jan. 25, and is hosted by Federated and the Kansas electric cooperatives.

KCRE Silent Auction & Auxiliary Raffle

KCRE will host its annual silent auction on Jan. 25. For more information or to donate items, please contact KEC's Carol Dorr. The KEC Auxiliary will also raffle a hand-made quilt donated by **CAROLYN MCNICKLE**, Twin Valley, and two child rocking chairs (to be raffled separately) donated by **DAVID MUELLER**, DS&O trustee.

Directors' Training

Three courses will be offered prior to the meeting. On Jan. 23, **BRYAN SINGLETARY** will facilitate the new BLC 963.1: *Strategic Technologies and their Impact on the Co-op*, and **TERRI SMILEY** will offer the CCD course 2620: *Board*

Operations and Process.

On Sun., Jan. 24 from 1-4 p.m., **ADAM SCHWARTZ** will facilitate *Doing the Right Thing—How to Avoid Complacency at Your Co-op*. This course highlights high-profile cases where co-ops have engaged in behavior that was not in the members' interests. Sometimes the behavior has included criminal acts, and other times the activity was 'legal' but unethical. Attendees will also look at high-performing co-ops, asking the same questions why and how do good things happen.

Because Sunday's seminar is a half-day independent offering, it does not qualify for NRECA education credits.

Photo Area

A photo area will be available on Jan. 25 from 4-6 p.m. for anyone who would like a new photo in the annual KEC Directory.

"Catch" Breakfast on Tuesday

On Jan. 26, breakfast will again feature "Short Stack," from Chris Cakes of Wichita. Get your hot cakes between 6:30-7:45 a.m.

Auxiliary

The KEC Auxiliary will meet at 9 a.m. on Jan. 25, and is also invited to participate in the *iPad and Tablet Basics* and *That's Awesome – How to Wow Your Kids and Grandkids* training sessions beginning at 9:30 a.m. on Jan. 26.



Tickets for the quilt and two rocking chairs (to be raffled separately) are available for \$1 each or six for \$5. Proceeds benefit KEC's youth programs. For tickets, contact Carol Dorr at 785-478-4554 or cdorr@kec.org.



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Victory seeks Manager of IT

Victory seeks a full-time Manager of IT. A bachelor's degree is desired, especially in computer science or information systems, and five to seven years of IT supervisory/management experience.

Applicants should be able to support and maintain in-house computer systems, desktops, printers, telephone systems, and other peripherals; install, diagnose, repair, maintain and upgrade all hardware and equipment; diagnose, resolve, and document hardware and software network problems, including mobile fleet management software and the Microsoft Office suite; and provide end-user training and assistance where required.

This position is part of the co-op's management team, reporting to the CEO and is jointly responsible for the implementation of corporate policies and procedures. Pre-employment drug screening and background check is required.

Victory Electric offers competitive salary, health benefits, including medical, dental, vision, life, disability and a defined benefits package.

For a complete position description, visit www.victoryelectric.net/content/careers. Position opened until filled. Send cover letter and resumé to: Victory Electric Cooperative, Attn: Amy Grasser, P.O. Box 1335, Dodge City, KS 67801, or email amy@victoryelectric.net. EOE.

insympathy

Ronald McNickle

Ronald McNickle, Twin Valley Board Member, died on Nov. 11. He had served on the Twin Valley Board since 2000, and had been the KEC representative since 2009. In addition, he served on the Executive Committee of the Kansas Touchstone Energy Cooperatives.

Funeral services were held on Nov. 14 at Center Bethel Church.

Memorials are suggested to The Gideons International, sent in care of Bath-Forbes-Hoffman Funeral Home, P.O. Box 325, Altamont, KS 67330.

DECEMBER

- 16-17 **KEPCo Board of Trustees Meeting**, KEPCo Headquarters, Topeka
- 18 **Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting**, Sunflower Headquarters, Hays
- 24-25 **Christmas Holiday**, KEC Office Closed

JANUARY

- 1 **New Year's Day Holiday**, KEC Office Closed
- 15 **Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting**, Sunflower Headquarters, Hays
- 23-26 **KEC Annual Meeting**, Capitol Plaza Hotel/Maner Conference Center, Topeka
- 26 **KEPCo Board of Trustees Meeting**, Emerald II-III, Capitol Plaza Hotel, Topeka – 12 p.m.

KEC promotes electric cooperative careers at University of Kansas

On Nov. 18, Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., representatives attended the University of Kansas Internship Fair.

At the event, staff informed students about co-ops and available internships. Decks of cards promoting the Touchstone Energy jobs website were popular giveaways among the students.

The event gave students of all major fields of study the opportunity to learn about the various electric cooperative careers and internships.

Carrie Kimberlin, KEC's Communications Specialist, organized KEC's participation in the event. Assisting Kimberlin was Blake Miller, KEC's Communications Intern.

Cooperative attorneys attend continuing legal education event

Electric cooperative attorneys from across the state attended the Continuing Legal Education (CLE) seminar hosted by KEC at the Courtyard by Marriott in Wichita on Nov. 23.

All Kansas attorneys are required to participate in continuing legal education annually, and 34 co-op representatives attended the seminar.

The event, which was typically held in April, was moved to November based on input from the attorneys. While the seminar is designed for co-op attorneys, co-op managers were also invited to attend.

"It's a fun event to organize," said **KIM CHRISTIANSEN**, KEC Director

of Government Relations and Legal Counsel. "I get to see attorneys I don't see regularly, and we share information that will help them with their work."

The seminar included seven different presentations on co-op legal subjects ranging from *Ethics in Movies* to *Preventing and Addressing Misconduct*.

Other topics included information on how to prevent loss, followed by the Choctaw Electric Story with **JOE HARRIS**, a national legal update by NRECA staff, a presentation on the KCC Complaint Process by **GLEND A CAFER** and **TERRI PEMBERTON**, and a board issues presentation by **TIM LARSON**.

upcomingtraining

74th NRECA Annual Meeting Registration Now Open

Co-op officials from around the nation will convene at the 2016 NRECA Annual Meeting in New Orleans, Feb. 14-17.

Attendees will hear from nationally renowned experts from within, and outside, the electric co-op industry, including **CHIP HEATH**, best-selling author of *Switch: How to Change Things When Change is Hard*, and **SALIM ISMAIL**, technology strategist and executive director of Singularity University. On Tuesday, Feb. 16, two superstars of the country

stage – **LEANN RIMES** and **LONESTAR**. – will be featured on Entertainment Night.

More than two dozen Director Education courses will be offered prior to the meeting, Feb. 11-14. Access to the popular TechAdvantage Expo is included in the registration.

This year, NRECA is offering a new way for co-ops to support the workforce of the future with the launch of the Next Generation Leaders program. Visit cooperative.com for complete program details and to register.

Community rallies behind injured lineman

More than \$31,000 was raised for a Wheatland Electric journeyman lineman at a benefit auction held in Syracuse on Nov. 14.



Auctioneers take bids on donated items at a fund raiser to benefit Wheatland journeyman, Wayne Parks, on Nov. 14.

A native of Syracuse, **WAYNE PARKS** has been a lineman for Wheatland for six years. He was injured after an incident involving an energized line in September, and is recovering at home from burns to his arms. The benefit was organized to help Parks with medical bills and other monetary concerns.

The event began with a supper and live auction attended by more than 200 members of the community. All items auctioned were donated by the community and varied from baked goods, to a

saddle, to a fully decorated Christmas tree.

KEC's Communication Intern Blake Miller attended the event and made a

donation during the auction on behalf of KEC. Miller is from Syracuse and knows the Parks family.

"Thanks to everyone who helped put it on, everyone who attended, bought raffle tickets, worked behind the scenes, donated auction items, auctioneered, generously bought items at the auction and anything else you've all done," said **JULIE PARKS**, Wayne's mother, who attended the event. "I love this community of people who never fail to help someone in need."

Manhattan Area Technical College seeks EPD alumni

Manhattan Area Technical College, a fully accredited public college, is now 50 years old. Its Electric Power & Distribution (EPD) program has trained hundreds of students who have become linemen across the state. Current instructors **REX FAIR** and **JUSTIN MEULI** would appreciate hearing from former students. Email Meuli at: justinmeuli@MATC.net or call 785-320-4510.

"The EPD program is always appreciative of support for their efforts to help students," said **JIM GENANDT**, MATC's President who spoke at KEC's December Board Meeting. "Support from former students and companies for use as scholarships or to update equipment is greatly appreciated."

If you are interested in providing support for this program, contact Genandt at 785-320-4500. For more information about MATC, visit www.manhattantech.edu.

Electric co-ops help their communities with annual food drives

Several Kansas electric cooperatives continue to show their commitment to community by hosting local food drives.

This fall, Leavenworth-Jefferson Electric Cooperative (LJEC) collected 168 pounds of food and \$100 in cash donations for the Tonganoxie Good Shepherd Thrift Store and Food Bank, Inc., through the co-op's Community Food Drive. At the same time, Kaw Valley collected 100 pounds of food and more than \$100 in cash donations for the Rossville Food Pantry. Both co-ops also matched the cash donations, bringing the total donated to \$200 for the Good Shepherd and \$220 for the Rossville Food Pantry.

"Our Community Food Drive was able to provide for the Good Shepherd organization and the Rossville Food Pantry at a time when donations are needed," said **SARAH FARLEE**, LJEC/Kaw Valley's marketing and public relations specialist. "Our members and employees were able to provide not only food items but a monetary donation that will help many in need."

Wheatland also recently completed its second annual "Cram the Van" food drive, collecting 7,081 pounds of food

for Western Kansans. This collection brings its total to nearly seven tons of food in the past two years.

The effort also brought \$1,142.80 in cash donations. Every donation collected in a particular community stayed in that community to benefit its local food bank.

"Cram the Van" lasted two months and featured 11 stops in 10 different communities throughout Wheatland's territory. Wheatland also collected donations at its seven offices and two other drop off points in Conway Springs and Caldwell.

The drive featured a big red van, covered in bright "Cram the Van" decals, which Wheatland brought to various community events. Wheatland challenged its members to help "Cram the Van" with non-perishable food items.

At most "Cram the Van" events,

Wheatland served a meal and, in exchange, members "paid" in the form of canned goods and cash donations. "Cram the Van" events varied from cooking hamburgers at home football games, grilling hot dogs in front of community grocery stores to a Halloween Finale, complete with two food slides, pumpkin decorating, marshmallow roasting, hay rack rides, a pumpkin seed spitting contest and a free meal. Using the food slides, kids were able to drop their donations down the slide and directly into the van.



Youth dressed in Halloween costumes drop donations down the slide and into the van at Wheatland's "Cram the Van" Finale in Scott City.



Scammers again targeting Kansas electric cooperative members

Over the past few weeks, Kansas electric co-ops have received calls from members reporting scams.

The scam calls seem to follow a similar script: a member receives a call or an email from someone claiming to be from their utility and demands immediate payment of a “past due” account, threatening disconnection if not paid immediately.

“The scammers often ask the member for a credit card number or instruct the member to purchase a specific type of prepaid card and send the number to the caller,” said **SHAWN POWELSON**, Wheatland’s Manager of Member Services and Corporate Communications. “Our members are at risk to falling victim as the scammers can make Wheatland’s name appear in the

caller ID or in the email address.”

In mid-November, a Wheatland member in the Great Bend area was contacted by phone by a scammer claiming to be from Sunflower Electric Power Corporation, Wheatland’s wholesale provider. The member was asked the amount of her electric bill and was told that she needed to pay a portion of the bill immediately to avoid being disconnected. The member was then instructed to go to a local convenience store and wire money to an account number. Happily, this member contacted an acquaintance at Sunflower, who then contacted Wheatland, and did not fall victim to the scam.

Wheatland members are not the only targets. On Nov. 30, several Midwest Energy members reported

scam calls from people threatening disconnection.

“We called the scammers back to learn a little more about how they operate,” explained **MIKE MORELY**, Midwest Energy’s Corporate Communications Manager. “We found they specifically ask for ReloadIt cards to be purchased. MoneyPak and GreenDot apparently have gotten smart to the scams and are no longer the ‘preferred’ payment method.”

These co-ops, along with others, have issued warnings to help keep members from being victims of scams, reminding their members that the co-op never contacts a member by phone or email to demand immediate payment or threaten disconnection of service.