

# Rural Power

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Rural Power will transition to a solely electronic newsletter at the end of the year. To ensure you continue to receive Rural Power, email us at [ruralpower@kec.org](mailto:ruralpower@kec.org).

## Kaw Valley subscribes to *Kansas Country Living* magazine

Effective with the December issue, Kaw Valley will subscribe to *Kansas Country Living* on behalf of its members. This addition makes the Topeka-based cooperative the 23rd subscribing co-op, and Kaw Valley will mail approximately 7,200 copies to its members in six northeast Kansas counties.

This new subscription will bring the magazine's circulation to more than 126,000, the most in the publication's 65-year history.

"We are extremely pleased to add Kaw Valley to the KCL family," said Larry Freeze, KCL Editor. "With our magazine winning the George W. Haggard Memorial Journalism Award this year from NRECA, the great value of the magazine as a member benefit has been emphasized."



Kaw Valley plans to use the monthly magazine and centerspread to replace a quarterly newsletter.

"Kaw Valley has determined that the award-winning publication will help communicate effectively with their membership on important industry issues as well as the progress of a strategic alliance with LJEK," said Bruce Graham, KEC's CEO.

The two cooperatives announced the alliance earlier this month and the membership will consider a possible consolidation of the cooperatives in 2016.

The addition of Kaw Valley is the second significant circulation increase for the magazine since 2005. The first was when circulation rose from 80,000 to 118,000 when six western Kansas electric cooperatives purchased Aquila's Kansas electric network and subscribed on behalf of its new members.

## Kansans assist with CFC's Independent Borrowers Executive Summit

Two Kansas cooperative representatives had program roles in the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation Independent Borrowers Executive Summit (IBES) last week.

Kirk Thompson, CFC District 7 Director and General Manager of CMS, presided over the general session on the last morning of the two-day conference. Thompson introduced speakers and made announcements during the session that covered a capital market update and also had a panel to discuss politics and energy fuel resources.

The agenda also included breakout sessions on rate design strategies, new technologies impacting the central utility model, and economic headlines. In addition, Bruce Graham, KEC's CEO, was part of a breakout session that featured a panel of statewide managers who provided insight on how the elections will shape policy in their state as well as other challenges and opportunities facing their organizations and the electric cooperatives.

Prior to the conference, several workshops tailored to the needs and interests of cooperative

staff were available.

The theme for this year's conference was "Experience the Energy." IBES provided a timely and informative exchange about the changes, challenges and opportunities confronting the energy industry and electric cooperatives nationwide.

Sheldon Petersen, CFC's CEO, provided attendees with an inside look at some of CFC's strategies in raising funds from the capital markets.

"Ultimately, the quality of CFC's loan portfolio is reflective of the strong financial condition of our borrowers," Petersen said. "To put it simply, your success is our success."



Bruce Graham, far right, shares his perspective during a statewide managers' panel discussion at the CFC summit.



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**KEPCo selects new EVP & CEO**

Kansas Electric Power Cooperative's Board of Trustees has selected Marcus M. Harris, P.E., as the new Executive Vice President and CEO.

KEPCo's Board President Scott Whittington stated, "Marcus possesses the knowledge and talent to continue to move the cooperative forward in order to meet the energy needs of our member-owners. We look forward to working with him in his new position as we strive to meet future challenges in today's turbulent energy markets."



Marcus M. Harris

Harris has more than 23 years of leadership experience in the utility business. Most recently, he directed the renewable and demand side management activities at South Carolina Electric and Gas Company.

"This cooperative has a rich history in Kansas, working hard to provide its members with the most reliable power and at the most affordable cost. I look forward to working with the Board of Trustees to continue that mission," stated Harris.

Harris received a Bachelors degree as well as his Masters of Engineering from the University of South Carolina, Columbia. He also is a licensed Professional Engineer. He and his wife, Allison, have two sons and currently reside in Lexington, SC.

He will assume his new duties mid-December.

**NOVEMBER**

- 21 **Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting**, Sunflower Headquarters, Hays
- 20-21 **Metering Workshop**, Kaw Valley Electric, Topeka
- 27-28 **Thanksgiving Holiday**, KEC Office Closed

**DECEMBER**

- 3-4 **KEC Board of Trustees Meeting**, Marriott Hotel, Wichita
- 17-18 **KEPCo Board of Trustees Meeting**, KEPCo Headquarters, Topeka
- 19 **Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting**, Sunflower Headquarters, Hays
- 25-26 **Christmas Holiday – KEC Office Closed**

**JANUARY**

- 1 **New Year's Holiday – KEC Office Closed**
- 16 **Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting**, Sunflower Headquarters, Hays
- 24-27 **KEC Annual Meeting**, Capitol Plaza Hotel, Topeka
- 27 **KEPCo Board of Trustees Meeting**, KEPCo Headquarters, Topeka – 1 p.m.

**Jackie Holmberg selected as Ark Valley's general manager**

Ark Valley's Board of Trustees has selected Jackie Holmberg, current Assistant Manager, as the new General Manager.



Jackie Holmberg

She will begin hew new duties on January 10 upon the retirement of current manager Bob Hall. Hall has served as General Manager since July 29, 1996.

Ark Valley's Board President, Steve Schweizer stated, "Part of our strategic planning has been to further the personal growth and development of the employees at Ark Valley. Jackie Holmberg, through her job performance and proven dedication to the cooperative, has met all of our expectations. We, as a Board, look forward to working with her in the position of General Manager."

Holmberg holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration from Kansas State University, and has been the financial controller for Ark Valley for the past 18 years. She had prior experience at the First United National Bank in Great Bend.

During her time at Ark Valley, Holmberg has overseen the financial-side of multiple FEMA grant rebuilds. She has also played a vital role in accruing substantial savings for the co-op through appropriately-timed refinancing of loans and utilizing prepayment discounts for co-op expenses.

"I am honored to have been selected to serve as General Manager of Ark Valley Electric. I appreciate the trust and confidence the Board of Trustees has placed in me to manage the cooperative," stated Holmberg.

Holmberg and her husband, Kirk, have two sons and reside in Hutchinson.

insympathy

**Justin Blenden**

Justin Blenden, son of KEC's Charlotte Provo-Blenden and her husband Sam, passed away on Oct. 31. Survivors include his wife, Billie, and three children. Funeral services were held Nov. 6 at Penwell-Gabel Parker-Price Chapel in Topeka. Memorial contributions may be made to the Justin Blenden Memorial Fund, c/o Kaw Valley Bank, 4848 SW 21st St, Topeka, KS 66604.

jobmarket

**Wheatland seeks member services representative**

Wheatland Electric is seeking a person for their new member services position in either Garden City or Scott City.

This individual will assist in the planning, developing and implementation of effective programs for member services, key accounts, marketing and public relations. Specific areas of responsibility include all cooperative

sponsored programs, key account management and maintenance of Wheatland's website and Facebook account. This position will promote good membership relations and must able to communicate to the membership all co-op policies, procedures and promotions.

For a complete position description or to apply, call Shawn Powelson at 620-874-4550, or email [spowelson@weci.net](mailto:spowelson@weci.net).

## KEC launches redesigned website at kec.coop

Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., recently re-designed its website. The previous website was more than 10 years old and was created using now-outdated technology. For the new design, KEC partnered with Touchstone Energy to use the National Co-op Web Builder template.

To learn what was most impor-

tant to its members, KEC surveyed its co-ops prior to the re-design. The survey results showed the highest activity on the website was *Rural Power*, *Kansas Country Living*, and the calendar. These three areas are now located on the top of the new home page. The KEC and *Kansas Country Living* Facebook pages are linked on the home page as well.

“Designing and implementing a new website is a lot more involved than perhaps many people realize. Our

team at KEC and the excellent web design staff at Touchstone Energy have worked together to make this happen,”

said Bob Jennings, KEC’s Manager of Publishing Services.

“I feel very confident that KEC’s site will be one of our best,” said Beau Townsend, Touchstone Energy’s Senior Coordinator Web Builder.



Visit KEC’s new website at [www.kec.coop](http://www.kec.coop).

“I have actually received numerous compliments from my colleagues on this site, and I have to admit that I’m looking forward to showing it off.”

In addition to the new website, KEC also has a new mobile website for use on smart phones. The mobile site provides contact information and access to the calendar and *Rural Power*.

“I look at our website as a work in progress that will never be finished. Our team will continue to work to keep it fresh and up-to-date,” said Jennings.

## KEC’s district meetings focus on Day-Ahead markets, electric safety

Hundreds of Kansas electric co-op trustees, staff and managers attended the KEC district meetings held the week of Nov. 3 in Dodge City, Hays, Topeka and Wichita.

The meeting agenda included a presentation by KEC’s Bruce Graham, as well as a legislative and communications update, a rates presentation, and a review of the KEC proposed budget by KEC staff.

The featured topic was the “day-ahead” markets. Les Evans, KEPCO’s Senior Vice President and COO, gave this presentation for Districts 1 and 2, and Al Tamimi, Sunflower’s Vice President of Transmission Planning & Policy, presented at Districts 3 and 4.

Guest speakers at the various meetings included Congresswoman Lynn



Congressman Mike Pompeo (center) poses with Sumner-Cowley staff and trustees at the KEC District 1 Meeting in Wichita.

Jenkins; Congressman Mike Pompeo; State Senators Terry Bruce and Mitch Holmes; State Representatives Kyle Hoffman, John Ewy and Don Hineman; and Dr. William Brown, Kansas

Department of Agriculture’s Animal Health Commissioner.

Magician Scott Davis also gave a sampling of his “Making Accidents Disappear” safety show. KEC sponsored Davis’ safety presentation at 10 elementary schools across the state during the week where approximately 1,500 children learned how to stay safe around electricity. Host co-ops, who made arrangements for the magic shows at local schools, included Bluestem, Butler, Flint Hills, Kaw Valley, Midwest Energy, Sedgwick County, and Victory.

## Kansas trustees earn credentials

Last month, 18 trustees and employees from Kansas electric cooperatives received the Credentialed Cooperative Director and/or the Board Leadership certificates.

Present at the NRECA Region 7 & 9 meeting to receive their BLC certificates in front of more than 750 co-op officials from NRECA’s CEO Jo Ann Emerson were Jim Chistopher and Ronald Seyfert, DS&O; Jim Ehrlick, Rolling Hills; and Keith Leddy, Sumner-Cowley.

Names were read of those who attained the CCD certificate but were unable to attend the meeting: Michael Brewer, John Jury, and Charles Milburn, Pioneer; David Childers, Sedgwick County; and Kathleen Eisenhour, Wheatland.

Additionally, names were read of those who earned the BLC certificate: Kevin Gigstad and Harrison Idol, Brown-Atchison; Riley Walters, Butler; David Evans and Coral Magnus, Caney Valley; Edward Gough, Lane-Scott; Daniel Thimesch, Sedgwick County; and John Leis and Kenneth Schulte, Victory. The BLC recognizes those who continue their professional development after becoming a CCD. Directors who have attained the Board Leadership certificate have completed 10 credits in advance, issues-oriented courses.

The Omaha meeting was the fourth in a series of five regional meetings convened by NRECA in 2014. The regional meetings continue the co-ops’ grassroots policy making process, which begins at the local co-op level and culminates at NRECA’s 2015 Annual Meeting, to be held in Orlando, FL, Feb. 20 – 23, 2015.



NRECA CEO Jo Ann Emerson presents the Board Leadership certificate to Rolling Hills Trustee Jim Ehrlich at the Region 7 Meeting.

## After 64 years of print, *Rural Power* goes digital

Rural Power will transition to a solely electronic newsletter at the end of the year. The decision to go all-digital was made earlier this year in order to allow the newsletter to be

more timely and efficient and also to reduce

overall printing and distribution costs.

In 1950, Rural Power started as a one-page newsletter known as “the yellow sheet.” Over the decades, it then transitioned into “the green sheet.”

“The newsletter will continue to bring articles and pertinent information about the electric cooperatives in Kansas,” said Shana Read, KEC’s Director of Communications. “The only change will be the format.”

The digital newsletter will be sent via e-mail and also archived on KEC’s website.

To ensure delivery of the newsletter, send your e-mail addresses to [ruralpower@kec.org](mailto:ruralpower@kec.org) before the end of the year.



## Co-op Hall of Fame nominations sought

Nominations are now being accepted for the Kansas Cooperative Hall of Fame.

The Hall of Fame, sponsored by the Kansas Cooperative Council, is important for recognizing the contributions of co-op pioneers and honoring those who have gone “above and beyond the call” in advancing the cooperative philosophy.

The showcase display at the Kansas State Fairgrounds in Hutchinson also plays a significant role in educating others about the uniqueness of the cooperative business model by highlighting the achievements of our state’s great co-op leaders and preserving our co-op history.

Since it was established in 1999, 36 individuals from all types of cooperatives have been inducted into the Kansas Cooperative Hall of Fame. Each December, the Council asks for nominations for additional inductees.

To download the nomination form, visit [www.kansasco-op.coop](http://www.kansasco-op.coop). The deadline is Dec. 5.

The statewide newsletter has had many looks over the decades.



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