

# Rural Power

## INSIDE

- 2 | Calendar
- 2 | **Butler's Pony Meadows Solar Farm dedication set for July 25**
- 3 | **Sunflower breaks ground on largest solar project in Kansas**
- 4 | **Law Enforcement museum, government officials highlight 59th Youth Tour**

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

## KEC's CEO Bruce Graham announces retirement plans

**BRUCE GRAHAM** announced his plans to retire as Chief Executive Officer of KEC at the May 2019 Board Meeting in Wichita.

"It has been a privilege to work with the electric cooperative family since joining the KEPCo staff in 1987. KEC is well-positioned and well-staffed for the future, and I believe this is an ideal time personally and professionally to begin the transition to new association leadership," Graham said.

In providing a full year's notice to KEC, Graham stated his willingness to work through the 2020 session of the Kansas Legislature but also noted that if the membership identifies a new leader in advance of that date, he would work with the Board on an earlier transition process if desired.

"I think we all know 2020 will be a critical session of the Kansas Legislature. I also believe it would be important to complete my term on the NRECA Resolutions Committee. My appointment was made by the NRECA President and is a significant responsibility and privilege that also benefits Kansas," Graham added.

That appointment expires at the NRECA Annual Meeting in March 2020.

Graham's professional career will span 40 years of association and cooperative experience. He graduated from Kansas State University in January 1980 and began working for the Kansas

Motor Carriers Association as communications director and a registered lobbyist. His next step at KEPCo spanned 17 years where he was eventually named Vice President of Member Services and External Affairs. He then had the opportunity to lead the association for electric cooperatives in Indiana from 2006-2012 and was named KEC CEO in 2012.

"KEC is one of the best trade associations in Kansas and I believe the best electric cooperative association in the country. The KEC Chief Executive Officer position will attract many talented candidates who will be blessed to work with such an excellent staff and a supportive membership and Board," Graham said.

The KEC Board has appointed an Executive Search Committee. Committee members are: **MARK SCHEIBE**, Heartland; **KATHY O'BRIEN**, Nemaha-Marshall; **CHUCK LOOK**, Prairie Land; **KIRK THOMPSON**, CMS; **KEITH MCNICKLE**, Ark Valley; **TERRY HOBBS**, Western; **CRAIG KOSTMAN**, Doniphan; **TERESA MILLER**, Ninnescah; **GARY HILL**, Butler; **RALPH PHILLIPS**, FreeState; **JOHN BLACKWELL**, Midwest Energy; **PAT MORSE**, Victory; and **GREG LEE**, KEC Counsel. Thompson was named Chair of the Committee and first steps will be to identify search consultants, craft and issue a request for proposals, and evaluate those responses for consideration by the KEC Board.

## KEC's Summer Meeting to offer a diverse lineup of speakers

Final preparations are being made for the 2019 KEC Summer Meeting, which will be held Monday, Aug. 5 at the Overland Park Marriott.

Speakers for this year's meeting include author and lecturer **ROBERT BRYCE** who will share his thoughts on utility issues such as electricity poverty, the future grid, and why electric co-ops still matter. **ADAM SCHWARTZ** of The Cooperative Way will discuss how co-ops can anticipate and react to the changing market and member expectations. **DAVID TOLAND**, Kansas Secretary of Commerce, and **ZACHARY MANNHEIMER** of McClure Engineering

will focus on rural revitalization and creative placemaking in rural communities. **DAVID CARTER**, Kansas State University's Energy Specialist, will review K-State's Energy Program and the KidWind Challenge. **SUSAN OLANDER**, Federated, will share how co-ops can protect themselves against the misuse of publicly available information and cyber attacks. Luncheon speaker **SCOTT DAVIS** will entertain with comedy and magic.

The KEC Spouses Program on Aug. 5 will include a Commitment to Community project that will benefit a local homeless veteran shelter, a chocolate presentation by Russell Stover Chocolates, and music Bingo.



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

Join Kansas Electric Cooperatives  
Facebook page

## NRECA Names Finkel to Lead Advocacy Strategy

NRECA has named **LOUIS FINKEL** to lead its advocacy programs.

Finkel will serve as Senior Vice President for Government Relations and a member of the association's senior leadership team. He has demonstrated extensive federal and state advocacy leadership in executive positions with CVS Health Corp., American Petroleum Institute, and the Grocery Manufacturers Association.

Finkel most recently served as Vice President, National State Government and Public Affairs at CVS Health Corp., where he directed the company's state advocacy programs and public affairs initiatives.

He also served as Executive Vice President at the American Petroleum Institute, where he was responsible for leading the organization's governmental affairs programs. He directed an integrated advocacy program comprised of governmental affairs, grassroots and multi-platform communications in Washington D.C. and 34 states.

Finkel was also Executive Vice President of Government Affairs at the Grocery Manufacturers Association. On Capitol Hill, he served as Chief of Staff for the House Science and Technology Committee as well as the committee's Director of Policy and Outreach.

## 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@cec.org](mailto:ruralpower@cec.org). Positions will be posted on the website for one month, unless otherwise directed by the co-op.

- ▶ Heartland has an opening for a Journeyman Lineman.
- ▶ Sunflower has openings for a Journey Line Technician, Line Technician Apprentice I-IV, Relay Supervisor (Substation Automation and Protection Supervisor), Senior Manager of Application Integration Management, Transmission Engineer I and II, and a System Operations Engineer I and II.

## co-opcalendar

### JULY

- 4-5 **Independence Day**, KEC Office Closed
- 12-19 **Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp**, Steamboat Springs, CO
- 16 **Lane-Scott Annual Meeting**, Lane County Fairgrounds, 147 W. Long Street, Dighton. Meal starts at 6:30 p.m. Meeting at 7:30 p.m.
- 17-18 **KEPCo Board of Trustees Meeting**, KEPCo Headquarters, Topeka
- 19 **Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting**, Sunflower Headquarters, Hays
- 25 **Butler's Pony Meadows Solar Farm Open House**, 16502 SW 140th, Rose Hill – 10 a.m.
- 25 **MDM Meeting**, KEPCo Headquarters, Topeka
- 26 **Co-ops Vote**, Lyon-Coffey & Radiant Electric Cooperatives, 2731 Milo Terrace, Lebo – 11:30 a.m.
- 29 **Co-ops Vote**, Wheatland Electric Cooperative, 2005 W. Fulton St., Garden City – Noon
- 29 **Co-ops Vote**, Lane-Scott Electric Cooperative, 410 S. High, Dighton, KS – 5 p.m.
- 30 **Co-ops Vote**, Victory Electric Cooperative, 3230 N. 14th, Dodge City – 8 a.m.

### Pony Meadows Solar Farm dedication set for July 25

Butler Electric Cooperative invites all co-op board members, managers, and staff to attend the dedication of Pony Meadows Solar Farm on July 25. Please RSVP by July 15 to [openhouse@butler.coop](mailto:openhouse@butler.coop).

The ceremony will begin at 10 a.m. at the solar farm located at 16502 SW

140th Street, Rose Hill. The 1-megawatt farm, which became operational in December 2018, is owned and maintained by Butler.

There is a hotel block reserved at the Holiday Inn Express in Andover. Please call 316-733-8833 to reserve your room.

### KEC shows support for 91st Kansas State FFA Convention

Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. participated in a trio of events at the 91st Kansas FFA Convention May 29-31 at the Kansas State University campus. The theme for this year's convention was "Just One."

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. **SHAYLEE ARPIN**, KEC's Multimedia Communications Specialist, shook the hands of 252 Kansas high school students who earned this honor.

KEC, through the CoBank Sharing Success Grant program, also sponsored two community service events. The first,



During the FFA State Degree ceremony, KEC's Shaylee Arpin (left) presents a golden charm to Abby Johnson, Salina. Johnson also attended the 2019 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, sponsored by DS&O.

"Give Lunch" service event was held on May 29. FFA students assembled 5,000 shelf-stable meal packets for those affected by recent floods and tornadoes.



FFA students package meals during a community service event sponsored by KEC and CoBank's Sharing Success grant program.

On May 31, FFA students created oatmeal packets during the "Something to Eat" event. Nearly 15,000 easy-to-prepare meals were donated to hunger relief groups across Kansas. Chapters who assisted with the event had the opportunity to take a portion of the packets back to their community.

## KEC hosts 2019 Supervisors Conference

Kansas Electric Cooperatives recently hosted the 2019 Supervisors Conference, June 11-13 in Kansas City.

The 2019 Supervisors Conference was held in conjunction with the Southern Area Instructors Association (SAIA). SAIA is a professional association comprised of electric utility safety instructors from the southern regions of the United States, representing 13 states. The organization's purpose is to empower members to perform their duties in safety and training.

KEC's Loss Control, Safety, and Compliance Department developed the program that brought together 76 cooperative safety professionals.

Speakers for the two-and-a-half day conference included **BRYAN SINGLETARY**, Practical Energies; **GAIL HERMESCH**, Strategic Impact; **BRUCE** and **DARLA SUMP**, Association of Missouri Electric Cooperatives; **SUSAN OLANDER**, Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange; **MARTHA DUGGAN**, NRECA. Topics ranged from safety disconnect, how to handle work-life balance, electric burns, how to catch a thief, and a regulatory update.



Bryan Singletary presents to safety instructors at the Supervisors Conference in Kansas City.

## Sunflower breaks ground on largest solar project in Kansas

Sunflower Electric Power Corp. celebrated the groundbreaking of the 20-MW Johnson Corner Solar Project on June 17, 2019.

The cooperatively operated wholesale generation and transmission utility, through a commonly owned Mid-Kansas Electric Company Inc., has signed a 25-year power purchase agreement with Lightsource BP, an independent power producer that will finance, build, own and operate the solar facility.

"The Johnson Corner Solar Project will be the largest solar project in Kansas, and that's definitely something to celebrate," said Congressman **ROGER MARSHALL** who attended the event. "I congratulate Sunflower, Mid-Kansas, Lightsource BP, and NRCO on their successful collaboration to launch this project."

The facility, which will be located approximately two miles southwest of Johnson City is scheduled to be energized in first quarter of 2020.

"The solar project is an example of fuel diversification to generate electricity," said **STEVE EPPERSON**, Mid-Kansas chairman of the board and Sunflower board member. "As locally elected boards of directors, we have a responsibility to employ the right



Congressman Roger Marshall (center) and dignitaries from Sunflower, Mid-Kansas, Lightsource BP, and the National Renewables Cooperative Organization attended the groundbreaking of the Johnson Corner Solar Project on June 17.

combination of traditional and renewable generation resources that protect both the affordability and reliability of electricity."

The facility will produce approximately 55,500 megawatt hours annually, powering more than 4,900 homes across central and western Kansas and comprising one percent of the Mid-Kansas and Sunflower combined-system's energy.

"Our system is summer peaking, which means energy demand is highest during those months," said **STUART LOWRY**, President and CEO of Sunflower and Mid-Kansas. "In contrast to wind facilities, which generate the most energy during winter night hours, this project will generate energy on hot, summer days, providing protection against high market prices during those times."

## Q Beyond creating annual reports, what services does KEC Publishing Services provide?

A We love that our member co-ops think of us when they are gearing up for annual meeting, and we now have additional ways to get your annual meeting materials in front of your consumer-members. In addition, KEC Publishing Services is available year-round to help our member co-ops create professional communications and marketing pieces. Many times, cooperatives will have an idea and we help them determine the appropriate communications channel to meet their goal by walking them through the message, audience and budget... [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

## insympathy

### Bud Norwood

Fenton "Bud" Norwood, retired manager from Nemaha-Marshall, died on May 30. He worked at the co-op for 29 years, serving as manager from 1995 to 2004.

A funeral service was held June 5 at the United Methodist Church in Axtell. Attendees were encouraged to wear Kansas City Royals, Kansas City Chiefs and KU Jayhawks attire to the service to represent Norwood's favorite teams.

Memorials may be sent in care of Axtell-Landreth Funeral Home, 205 4th St, Axtell, KS 66403.

# Law Enforcement museum, government officials highlight 59th Youth Tour

"It has never been as evident as it has been on this trip that this is a city of rich history," said **LONDON DINKEL**, a youth delegate sponsored by Midwest Energy, about his experiences on the 59th annual Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., held June 13-20.

Dinkel, along with 35 other high school students from Kansas and four from Hawaii, first met in Topeka where State representatives **STEVEN JOHNSON** and **DR. BRENDA DIETRICH** spoke at the opening banquet before leading the students on a private tour of the State Capitol.

While still in Kansas, the group was treated to bucket truck rides, a safety demonstration, and a co-op career fair by the employees at FreeState.

The group, many of whom were first-time flyers, traveled to Washington, D.C., where they toured sites including many of the memorials, the White House, the Holocaust Memorial Museum, Fort McHenry, and the new National Law Enforcement Museum.

"At the Law Enforcement Museum, we watched a video on first responders during 9/11. When we turned around, we met two NYPD officers who had assisted civilians after the attack. It made me realize how much terrorism can change America and our law enforcement," said **RACHEL TUREK**, sponsored by Sumner-Cowley.

The students also toured Arlington National Cemetery that included a stop at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

"Witnessing the Changing of the Guard allowed me to reflect and think of what all of those men and women have done for our country to grant us our freedom," said **KAYLYNN HENDRICKS**, sponsored by Prairie Land.

**NOAH HEFTY**, sponsored by Brown-Atchison, commented on his experiences. "As I observed each memorial, I realized that freedom was not really free. When I saw the WWII memorial, when I saw the walls of the Korean War Veterans Memorial



Thirty-six Kansas delegates meet with Congressmen Ron Estes, Roger Marshall, and Steve Watkins at the U.S. Capitol as part of the 59th annual Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. View more photos at <http://bit.ly/DCYT2019>

shimmer, when my hand glazed the wall of names who fell in Vietnam, and when I saw the guard protecting the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, it truly settled upon me; the sacrifice that got this country to where it is today."

The Youth Tour delegates also attended a Washington Nationals game, a musical at the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts, a dinner/dance cruise on the Potomac, a trip to the Smithsonian museums, and a tour and high tea at the National Cathedral.

Perhaps most memorable for the group was the candid conversations with government officials and their staff. Students met with Senator **PAT ROBERTS**, and Congressmen **RON ESTES**, **DR. ROGER MARSHALL** and **STEVE WATKINS**. They also met with **JORDAN EBERT**, a staff member for Sen. Jerry Moran, and **DYLAN JONES**, staff member for Congressman Watkins.

**TAYLOR O'BRIEN**, sponsored by Heartland, stated that the opportunity

to meet with the Kansas officials affected him. "The conversations that we had changed the way that I look at politics. It made me want to take a more active role," he said.

"Being able to meet Senator Roberts was so impactful," added **AINSLEY SMITH**, sponsored by Nemaha-Marshall. "He was so kind to us and made a point to tell us that the U.S. Capitol was *our* capitol—not congress; not the President's, ours—and I had never thought of it that way."

While in D.C., the Hawaii-Kansas delegation elected **BRAYDEN SCHMIDT**, sponsored by Alfalfa, to serve as the 2019-20 Kansas representative to the NRECA Youth Leadership Council. The group then joined 43 other states with 1,833 high school students. During the Youth Day program, NRECA CEO **JIM MATHESON** told the students they can help make a difference by joining others in their communities engaged on civic issues and speaking up about what is important to them.

Keynote speaker **MIKE SCHLAPPI**, a four-time Paralympic Medalist and two-time world wheelchair basketball champion, shared his inspiring message, "Just because you can't stand up doesn't mean you can't stand out!"

"I have never realized what is possible for my future, but this trip has inspired me to become more involved in my community, state, and country," expressed **PAYTON LYNN**, sponsored by FreeState.

After some reflection, **SOPHIA DAWSON**, sponsored by Southern Pioneer, stated, "When I arrived, I had the idea that entering politics meant that you came from a prominent family with a history of politics. This week, Dylan Jones inspired me to become involved as much as possible. My new goal this year is to learn more about electricity and political sciences."

Chaperones for this year's trip included **WAYNE** and **BETH PAGEL**, Brown-Atchison, and **TARA MAYS** and **SHANA READ**, KEC.