

Rural Power

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State of the Electric Cooperatives presented to Senate Utilities

KEC provided an informational briefing to the Senate Utilities Committee on Feb. 24.

"The briefing provided an opportunity for us to share with the committee about KEC, our members, and co-op structure, and governance," said **LESLIE KAUFMAN**, vice president of government relations and legal counsel. Kaufman also explained the functions of the statewide to the committee members.

CONI ADAMS, CEO of Sumner-Cowley Electric Cooperative, highlighted one of the seven co-op principles, "Concern for Community," during a portion of the presentation. Adams spoke of the co-op's recent experience in securing Rural Economic Development Loan/Grant (REDLG) funds for re-opening an emergency room in Wellington. She noted other REDLG success stories from across the state. The presentation had been scheduled well ahead of winter storm Uri which impacted much of the central U.S. Understandably, with the briefing following just days after the storm, legislators had ques-



From left: Sen. Michael Fagg (R-El Dorado), Sumner-Cowley CEO Coni Adams, Sen. Marci Francisco (D-Lawrence) and Sen. Utilities Chair Mike Thompson (R-Shawnee) discuss the State of the Cooperatives following the Utilities Committee meeting on Feb. 24.

tions about electric service, the Southwest Power Pool, and potentially high electric bills. **STUART LOWRY**, president & CEO of Sunflower Electric Power Corp., joined the meeting virtually and fielded several questions from committee members.

Electric cooperative staff named to leadership organizations

This month, three electric cooperatives representatives have been named to two leadership organizations.

The Kansas Chamber recently announced that

SUSAN CUNNINGHAM,

KEPCo's senior vice president of regulatory and government affairs and general counsel, and **MARK SCHEIBE**, Heartland's CEO, among its 2021 Leadership Kansas class. This nationally recognized program which is celebrating its 42nd year focuses on developing and motivating Kansas leaders from across the state.

A selection committee chose 42 individuals from among the more than 600 nominations for the 2021 program. Sessions run from April through October and provides opportunities for the class to interact with a variety of experts and

community leaders. The diverse discussion topics include business, education, agriculture, public policy, societal health, economic development, and government.

Leadership Greater Topeka, a program of

the Greater Topeka Partnership, has announced its 2021 class which includes **DOUG SHEPHERD**, KEC's vice president of management consulting services.

For the past 38 years, Leadership Greater Topeka has selected outstanding leaders from the community. Class members attend a retreat and eight day-long sessions. During these classes, participants learn about opportunities and challenges facing Topeka and Shawnee County and how they can work to influence important community issues.



Susan Cunningham



Mark Scheibe



Doug Shepherd



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Save the Date: 2021 IT Summit

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, all day 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.

KEC staff holds weekly legislative calls

During the 2021 legislative session, KEC staff is hosting a series of weekly visits with member cooperatives to outline KEC action for the coming week. Members will continue to receive a summary of weekly activities through the *Capitol Connections* newsletter.

The legislative calls are scheduled for Friday afternoons and will highlight hearings and expected action in the coming week along with KEC staff's recommended course of action. Members will have the opportunity to discuss issues and provide input on the recommendations.

The calls will be held via Microsoft Teams each Friday during session at 2 p.m. A call-in option is also available. The next call is set for March 19.

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.

► KEPCo seeks an Information Systems Specialist II.

► Sunflower has multiple openings.

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

MARCH

- 23-24 **Kansas Member Services Directors Association (KMSDA) Spring Meeting**, virtual
- 23-24 **Online NRECA Directors Conference**
- 25 **MDM Meeting**, KEPCo Headquarters, Topeka, 10 a.m.
- 26 **KEC Legislative Call**, virtual, 2 p.m.
- 30 **Heartland Annual Meeting**, drive-in meeting, Heartland headquarters, Girard, 6 p.m.

APRIL

- 6-9 **KEC HR Summit**, virtual
- 9 **Rolling Hills Annual Meeting**, Rolling Hills Headquarters, Beloit, 10 a.m.
- 9 **Alfalfa Annual Meeting**, Cherokee High School Gymnasium, Cherokee, OK, Drive-through registration begins at 2 p.m., meeting at 7 p.m.
- 13 **Ark Valley Annual Meeting**, Sunflower Building, Kansas State Fairgrounds, Hutchinson, meal at 6:30 p.m., meeting at 7 p.m.
- 14 **Wheatland Annual Meeting**, Great Bend Events Center, Great Bend, meal at 11:30 a.m., meeting at 12:30 p.m.
- 15 **KEPCo Board Meeting**, hybrid meeting, KEPCo Headquarters, Topeka, 9:30 a.m.
- 19-23 **NRECA Legislative Conference**, virtual
- 20 **Victory Annual Meeting**, Western State Bank Expo, Dodge City, meeting at 6 p.m.
- 21 **Sunflower Board Meeting**, Sunflower Headquarters, Hays, 8:30 a.m.
- 21-22 **KEC Virtual Oil Spill Workshop**, virtual
- 22 **Doniphan Special Meeting**, Doniphan warehouse, time TBD
- 27 **KEC Virtual Oil Spill Workshop**, virtual
- 27 **FreeState Annual Meeting**, virtual, time TBD
- 27 **Sedgwick County Annual Meeting**, drive-through meeting, Sedgwick County headquarters, Cheney, 3-7 p.m.

upcomingtraining

KMSDA plans virtual spring meeting, March 23-24

The Kansas Member Services Directors Association (KMSDA) will hold a virtual Spring Meeting March 23-24.

Topics for the meeting include NRECA's Rural Cooperative Cybersecurity Capabilities (RC3) program, a review of the February winter event and communications resources offered by KEC, NISC's customer engagement platform, digital advertising tactics and analytics, and a presentation on how the SPP is working to change the way for which transmission costs

are paid.

In addition to industry topics, there will also be updates from KEC, KEPCo, and Sunflower; a roundtable discussion on cooperative annual meetings; and the KMSDA business meeting. The KMSDA business meeting will feature a vote on amendments to the bylaws, officer elections, and options for the fall meeting.

The detailed program and meeting links have been emailed to the cooperatives.

Registration open for KEC's virtual HR Summit

Registration is now open for KEC's virtual HR Summit. The online conference will be held 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. from Tuesday, April 6 through Friday, April 9. The platform will open at 8:30 a.m. each morning for "Coffee and Chitchat."

Topics include safe driving practices, an NRECA benefits update, a policy discussion on pandemic best practices, a review of the Homestead Funds, onboarding and employee engagement resources, employment law updates, tips on how to protect your

employees from fraudulent unemployment claims, and a roundtable discussion. A detailed program will be sent out as we near the event.

Registration is \$200/attendee, and invoices will be sent after the event. The registration link was emailed to the cooperatives and closes after March 23. Registrants will receive an email invitation to join us on Microsoft Teams.

Contact Shana Read at sread@kec.org or 785-228-4620 if you have any questions or need to register.

Lindhahl named Butler CEO

On March 1, **TIM LINDHAHL** joined Butler Electric Cooperative as CEO. Most recently, Lindahl served as CEO and general manager of Wheat Belt Public Power in Sidney, NE. He succeeds Dale Short, who retired Feb. 28 from the co-op after 31 years.



Tim Lindahl

"With experience in both the electric and broadband telecommunications industries, Lindahl is well-positioned to serve Butler," said Jerry Staab, Butler's board president.

Lindhahl began his career as a co-founder and leader of a small business technology group that brought dial-up and fixed wireless internet service to rural Colorado communities. He joined Wheat Belt in 2005 as an information technology specialist and was named CEO in 2008. While CEO, Lindahl was appointed to and served on a variety of task forces and councils involving advances in broadband communications and electrical service to rural areas.

"I am extremely excited for being offered the opportunity to serve the members, board of trustees, and team at Butler," Lindahl said. "Butler is a very well-respected utility in the nation with a very strong team."

CFC Board Selects J. Andrew Don as CEO

The CFC Board of Directors has selected Chief Financial Officer **J. ANDREW DON** to be CFC's fourth chief executive officer. Don will assume his new role on May 3, succeeding long-time CEO Sheldon C. Petersen who in July 2020 announced his plan to retire. Global executive search firm Korn Ferry led the search process for a replacement.

As senior vice president and CFO since

2013, Don has had oversight of CFC's treasury and finance group and the generation and transmission portfolio management function. Before that, he served as treasurer, vice president of capital market relations, and director of loan syndications. He managed all funding operations for CFC, investor relations, banking relations, rating agency liaison and syndications on behalf of CFC members.

KEC honors retirees Hall and Provo-Blenden



Lee Tafarielli (left) presents Bob Hall with a Paul Revere Bowl in honor of his service to KEC.

On Feb. 26, KEC said thank you to two retirees with a surprise retirement party. **BOB HALL**, director of finance, retired after more than eight years at KEC, and **CHARLOTTE PROVO-BLENDEN**, manager of administrative services, retired after 45 years of service.

Following a staff safety meeting,



Charlotte Provo-Blenden poses with a quilt gifted to her by Rae Jean Amy, Victory Electric.

the spouses of the retirees were invited to join the staff for a luncheon. Other family members joined directors and managers online to virtually celebrate with the group.

Lee Tafarielli, CEO, presented each of the retirees with a Paul Revere bowl, as well as other gifts.

Nemaha-Marshall

Nemaha-Marshall kicked off the annual meeting season at the Axtell American Legion on Feb. 23. This year, 195 members were registered.

The annual meeting guest speaker was KEC CEO **LEE TAFANELLI**.

Several employees were recognized for milestone service anniversaries including **KATHY O'BRIEN** for 30 years, **MIKE RONNEBAUM** and **SANDY BUESSING** for 25 years, **GREG STRATHMAN** for 20 Years, and **BLAKE RONNEBAUM** for 15 years.

Re-elected to the board were **MELVIN KRUSE** and **TOM NIEHUES**. **JAMES**

CAFFREY was newly-elected to the board. Caffrey replaces Harry Moser who did not stand for re-election. Moser was presented a retirement watch and plaque.

Following the annual meeting, the board held an organizational meeting. The new officers are **DAVID J. KOCH**, President; **DAVID J. RONNEBAUM**, Vice-President; **ROBERT L. VOET**, Secretary; and **JAMES G. BORGERDING**, Treasurer.

Brown-Atchison

On Feb. 25, Brown-Atchison held its 83rd annual meeting as a drive-in event at the fairgrounds in Horton.

annualmeetings

There were 101 members registered, along with 30 signed proxies. Each registered member received a \$25 bill credit.

Cooperative employees helped members and guests park and directed them to tune their vehicles' radio to the appropriate FM station so they could listen to the annual meeting.

The meeting agenda included the necessary readings of the minutes and financials, the director election, and comments from General Manager **JIM CURRIE**.

DAVID HINTON, **DARYL SALES**, and **JOE TALIAFERRO** were re-elected to the board.