

Rural Power

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

Kansas co-op officials prepare for virtual legislative conference

Thirty Kansas electric cooperative leaders registered for the 2021 NRECA Legislative Conference to connect virtually with policymakers on issues important to electric co-op. Virtual events will be held April 19-23.

NRECA will convene its portion of the 2021 Legislative Conference on April 19. The conference begins with virtual advocacy training in preparation for online meetings with members of Congress and administration officials. NRECA will offer virtual briefings on priority policy issues impacting the electric co-op industry, and attendees will have the opportunity to network with their electric co-op peers.

On April 20-23, KEC will schedule online visits with the Kansas congressional delegation. Meeting invitations with login information will be emailed to registered attendees. These virtual meetings will be set in 30-to-60-minute blocks.

Like office visits in past years, this is a valuable opportunity for co-op advocates to engage with elected officials.

Cooperatives registered to attend the conference include Bluestem, Butler, CMS, DSO, Heartland, KAMO, KEC, KEPCo, Midwest Energy, Nemaha-Marshall, Pioneer, Sumner-Cowley, Sunflower, Victory, and Tri-County.

Conference and schedule details are available on the Legislative Conference page on cooperative.com. KEC has emailed meeting details and links to Fact Sheets on issues we plan to cover with the delegation. Fact Sheets will also be posted to BoardPaq.

If you have questions about the Kansas visits or need log in assistance, please contact KEC's Leslie Kaufman at lkaufman@kec.org, or Carol Dorr at cdorr@kec.org.

Co-ops support KidWind Challenge

Despite the pandemic, Kansas continues to see growth in the KidWind Challenge program.

Coordinated by K-State's Kansas Energy Program, the Kansas KidWind Challenge has gone virtual this year. A total of 26 teams from across the state competed in the regionals event held March 17-19. This event is part of a national program that encourages students to explore the power of wind by building and testing their own wind turbines.

Teams in both the 4th-8th grades division and the 9th-12th grades division submitted a project presentation, created a design notebook, and participated in a virtual trivia event.

Electric cooperative employees were among those asked to serve as judges for this online event. Representing the co-ops were **JEFF ADAMS**, Butler; **SHANA READ**, KEC; and **MIKE TWEEDY**, 4 Rivers retiree.

The top 12 teams of the regional contest were invited to the virtual State Challenge, scheduled for April 22. These teams represent the following schools: Beloit Jr-Sr High School, Dighton Middle School, Kepley Middle School, Green Tech Academy, Wheatland High School, Paola Middle School, and Iola High School.

State winners will be invited to compete in the virtual National KidWind Challenge in June.

Kansans reminded to look up and live




A Kansas farmer dangerously parks a self-propelled sprayer directly under a power line.

When farming equipment gets too close to powerlines, results can be fatal. KEC wants to bring awareness of the dangers of overhead powerlines. This photo, which will now join other images in KEC's *Deadliest Safety Catch* public service announcement campaign, was taken this month north of Oakley. **LARRY DETWILER**, KEC's director of loss control, safety, and compliance, saw the farm equipment parked under a powerline and visited with the local farmer about the potential danger.

For those who use machinery such as tip trucks, over-height vehicles, excavators, cranes, or augers, consider the motto "look up and live" before commencing work. Be aware that powerlines may be above you and pose a risk to you and others nearby.



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KMSDA holds virtual spring meeting, elects officers

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

During the KMSDA business meeting, members voted on amendments to the bylaws and discussed fall meeting options. Officers were elected at this meeting: **SARAH FARLEE**, FreeState, president; **NOLAN NUMRICH**, Western, vice president; and **APRIL ENGSTROM**, 4 Rivers, secretary/treasurer.

Topics for the meeting included 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 were updates from KEC, KEPCo, and Sunflower; and a roundtable discussion on co-op annual meetings.

The fall meeting is scheduled for Oct. 27-29 at the Courtyard Wichita at Old Town. Make your hotel reservation by calling 316-264-5300 before Oct. 8 to get the \$133 KMSDA group rate.

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.
- ▶ KEC seeks summer intern.
- ▶ KEPCo seeks an information systems specialist II.
- ▶ Sunflower has multiple openings.
- ▶ Wheatland seeks an apprentice or journey lineworker for its Garden City location.

Send your open position listings to ruralpower@kec.org.

co-opcalendar

APRIL

- 19-23 **NRECA Legislative Conference**, virtual, a detailed schedule will be sent out to registered attendees
- 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, 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- 22 **Doniphan Special Meeting**, Doniphan warehouse, time TBD
- 23 **KS Line Supervisors Association Meeting**, DSO Electric, 10 a.m.
- 27 **KEC Virtual Oil Spill Workshop**, virtual, 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- 27 **FreeState Annual Meeting**, virtual, 7 p.m.
- 27 **Sedgwick County Annual Meeting**, drive-through meeting, Sedgwick County headquarters, Cheney, 3-7 p.m.

MAY

- 4 **Prairie Land Annual Meeting**, 2 locations, in-person at the Norton headquarters with a live feed at the Concordia American Legion, meeting at 2 p.m.
- 5 **KEC Committee Meetings**, Hybrid, Wichita Marriott
- 6 **KEC Board Meeting**, Hybrid, Wichita Marriott
- 7 **Safety Coordinators Meeting**, DSO Electric, time TBD
- 11 **KAMO Annual Meeting**, Chateau on the Lake Hotel and Convention Center, Branson, MO, meal at 6 p.m., meeting at 7 p.m.
- 12 **Western Annual Meeting**, WaKeeney headquarters, meal at 12 p.m., meeting at 1 p.m.
- 12 **PCB/SPCC Seminar**, in-Person, Rolling Hills Electric, 8 a.m.

Touchstone Energy cooperatives host state ElectroRally races

The Kansas ElectroRally is made up of a series of races held for electric vehicles (EV). Kansas high school teams design, build, and race EVs and compete to complete the most laps in one hour.

Three ElectroRally races will commence this spring, bringing together high school teams from across the state.

- ▶ Touchstone Energy West Race was held in Hoisington, Wednesday, April 14.
- ▶ Sunflower Electric ElectroRally will be in Scott City, Thursday, April 22.

▶ Touchstone Energy East Race will be at the World War I Memorial in Kansas City, Monday, May 3.

The EVs are powered by batteries and are single-driver, lightweight, aerodynamic, and highly efficient. Races are won by the EVs that complete the most laps in one hour. Kansas co-ops have sponsored both individual teams and racing events since 1999.

For more information on the ElectroRally program, please contact Sunflower's Steve Hausler at shausler@sunflower.net.

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.

Billing clerks, accountants, CSRs, and co-op attorneys are encouraged to attend this session. Registration information will be emailed to the cooperatives.

For more information, contact Shana Read at sread@kec.org.

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.

KEC virtual HR Summit highlights pandemic policies, employee engagement resources

From April 6 through 9, 30 employees representing 20 electric cooperatives attended KEC's virtual HR Summit. The online conference was held 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. each morning.

Sessions of this virtual event included Defensive Driving in a Dangerously Distracted World by Right-Lane's **DONNA BAYLESS** and **SHARON WINTER**, a benefits update by NRECA's **MALACHAI STURLIN**, a discussion of pandemic policies and best practices by HR Partner's **KRISTINA DIETRICK**, The Fund Company Built for Cooperatives by RE Investment Corporation's **BRIAN ALLEN**, a review of onboarding and employee engagement resources by NRECA's **HOLLY WETZEL**, an employment law update by attorney **LISA MARTIN**, and a discussion of how to protect employees and cooperatives from fraudulent unemployment claims from Western's **VALERIE SCHNEIDER**. In addition to the sessions, a roundtable discussion of other topics was facilitated by KEC's **MINDI PFANNENSTIEL**.

As a result of the HR Summit, KEC is planning a series of virtual roundtable discussions to be held quarterly. If you have questions or topic ideas for these roundtable discussions, please contact Shana Read at sread@kec.org.

insympathv

Bob Jennings

Bob Jennings, retired KEC employee, died on April 1. Jennings retired in Jan. 2016 after serving KEC for 35 years.

He started his KEC career as a communications specialist, designing centerspreads and writing articles. He transitioned into the position of editorial assistant and then to manager of publishing services, where he worked closely with KEC's member co-ops assembling annual reports, creating logos and advertisements, and building websites.

Services are pending.

Midwest Energy joins EV charging collaboration

Midwest Energy announced it has joined a collaboration group with nine investor-owned utilities, promoting the construction of a multi-state network of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations throughout the Midwestern U.S.

Midwest Energy signed a memorandum of cooperation with the other utilities, pledging that the co-op would pursue the completion of a foundational EV charging network, to soon allow EV owners to drive from Detroit to Colorado, or from northern Michigan to Texas, knowing they can charge their vehicles along the route.

"Automakers worldwide are committing huge investments in electric vehicles, with some signaling they're

phasing out fossil fuel engines by 2030," said Patrick Parke, Midwest Energy's CEO. "EVs are coming quickly, and by joining this group, Midwest Energy is better positioned to serve not only our customers once EVs become commonplace here, but also visiting drivers across western Kansas."

Midwest Energy does not currently own or maintain any EV chargers, but has worked with private companies, including Electrify America and Tesla to install fast chargers in parking lots along Interstate 70. Parke said that joining the collaboration group is well-timed, as electric vehicle strategies are a part of the co-op's business plans.

annual meetings

Heartland

Heartland held a drive-in annual meeting at its headquarters in Girard on March 30. This year, 142 members registered. Each received a \$25 bill credit and was entered into a drawing for \$1,000 in cash prizes held the following day.

After registration, members were invited to watch the meeting from their vehicles where the meeting could be heard by tuning into a local FM broadcast, or they could watch a livestream on Facebook and YouTube.

During the meeting, Heartland honored board member **BERNIE O'BRIEN** who stepped down after almost 45 years of service.

Re-elected to the board were **ERNEST TROTH** and **STEVE MCFARLAND**. The seat previously held by Mr. O'Brien will not be filled as the board now consists of eight members as stipulated by the cooperative's bylaws.

Rolling Hills

Rolling Hills had an abbreviated annual meeting at the co-op headquarters in Beloit on April 9. Out of concern for member health, restrictions on gatherings, and related issues, attendance at the annual meeting was limited to co-operative board members and staff. This was the last meeting for Board President **BOB FREDRICKSON**, as he has retired from his position. He was presented a meter lamp to

commemorate his years of dedication.

The board election was held via mail ballot. Newly-elected was **SARAH GOSS**. Re-elected were **PAUL WILSON** and **JUSTIN TROST**. Rolling Hills hopes to host an informational meeting and dinner for members this fall if pandemic conditions improve.

Alfalfa

Alfalfa's drive-through annual meeting was held at the Cherokee High School Gymnasium in Cherokee, OK, on April 9. The co-op had 514 members register, and each received a thermal tote bag and a 6-port USB charging station.

For the members to register, they at the option to register at the co-op's truck barn, the Cherokee High School sports complex, or at the high school just prior to the start of the meeting. Members could attend in person or listen to the meeting by tuning into a local FM station which could be heard throughout most of the town of Cherokee.

Meeting topics consisted of Operation Round Up, the February winter event, and the new headquarters facility. Alfalfa also retired more than \$2 million in capital credits this year, the most significant refund in the co-op's 85-year history.

Re-elected to the board were **LARRY DEWITT**, **JOHN REGIER**, and **STEVE ECK**.