

# RuralPower

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

## Survivor's Holly Hoffman to speak at KEC Annual Meeting luncheon

"Nobody can go back and start a new beginning, but anyone can start today and make a new ending," stated **HOLLY HOFFMAN**, a professional motivational speaker and the author of *Your Winner Within*.

Hoffman will serve as the luncheon speaker for the KEC 75th Annual Meeting at the Maner Conference Centre in Topeka on Monday, Jan. 23.

Born and raised in Eureka, SD, Hoffman was the last remaining member of the Espada Tribe and the last woman standing on Season 21 of CBS' hit reality show "Survivor." Through her experiences, Hoffman was inspired to share her message of positivity, determination and confidence. She stepped up to be the KEC Annual Meeting luncheon speaker when Coach Jerry Kill had to cancel.

Hoffman rounds out a lineup of other quality speakers. The KEC Annual Meeting, which runs from Jan. 21-24, features a national industry update by **JIM MATHESON**, NRECA CEO, and Kansas State University's **BRIAN BRIGGEMAN**, Ph.D., will present an agriculture and economy outlook. There will be a discussion on "Lessons to Learn" by **DON HELLWIG**, retired DS&O Manager who served recently as Interim Manager at Macon Electric Cooperative.



Holly Hoffman

Filmmaker **DAVE KENDALL** will share stories about producing the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve documentary. There will be a legislative briefing and safety awards presentation by KEC staff. In addition, **ANDY NEIDERT**, ARCmedia, will discuss social media opportunities. The program also includes Federated's **PHIL IRWIN**, as well as presentations by CFC and CoBank.

## KCRE Silent Auction & Auxiliary Raffle

KCRE will host its annual silent auction on Monday, Jan.

23. KCRE hopes that each electric cooperative, as well as individuals, will contribute an item or two for the auction. These items will be placed on display, and bidding will take place throughout the day on Monday and will close just prior to adjournment of the legislative reception.

The KEC Auxiliary will raffle a handmade quilt donated by **CAROLYN MCNICKLE**, Twin Valley, and two child rocking chairs (raffled separately) donated by **DAVID MUELLER**, DS&O Director. Raffle proceeds benefit KEC's youth programs.

For raffle tickets or questions about the KCRE silent auction, contact Carol Dorr at 785-478-4554 or [cdorr@kec.org](mailto:cdorr@kec.org).

## Thank you to our 2017 KEC Annual Meeting sponsors

KEC is exceptionally grateful for generous and continuous support provided by our sponsors. Please help share our appreciation when you see representatives of these companies at the KEC Annual Meeting.

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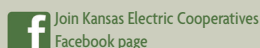
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## Tom Halverson appointed CoBank CEO

CoBank announced on Jan. 3 that its board of directors has appointed **TOM HALVERSON** as chief executive officer of CoBank. Halverson succeeds former CEO Bob Engel, who stepped down on Dec. 31, 2016.

"We are delighted to have Tom formally in his new role and leading CoBank forward into the next chapter of its history," said Everett Dobrinski, Chairman of the CoBank board of directors. "We're pleased to have successfully completed the CEO succession process and remain focused on ensuring the bank continues to fulfill its important mission in rural America."

Halverson joined CoBank in 2013 and previously served as chief banking officer, with responsibility for all lending operations. Prior to joining CoBank, he spent more than 16 years in a variety of executive positions with Goldman Sachs, including managing director and chief of staff for Goldman Sachs Bank USA, head of credit risk management for Goldman Sachs in Asia and executive director of credit risk management and advisory in London. Before joining Goldman Sachs, he served as principal credit officer for country risk at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Halverson holds a bachelor's degree from Wabash College in Indiana and a doctorate in war studies from King's College London.

## Order your commemorative print



KEC is making the print of Virgil Penner's painting, "Celebrating Our History & Bright Future," available for a \$25 donation to the KEC Foundation. Prints can be picked up at KEC or can be delivered to the KEC Annual Meeting. Contact Carol Dorr at [cdorr@kec.org](mailto:cdorr@kec.org).

## co-opcalendar

### JANUARY

- 18 **Kansas Cooperative Council Legislative Action Day**
- 20 **Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting**, Sunflower Headquarters, Hays
- 21 **NRECA BLC Course 924.1**, When Disaster Strikes: Continuity Management and Emergency Response Planning for Directors, Capitol Plaza Hotel, Topeka, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
- 21 **NRECA CCD Course 2630**, Strategic Planning, Capitol Plaza Hotel, Topeka, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
- 22 **NRECA BLC**, Course 961.1, The Evolution of Electric Cooperative Power Supply, Capitol Plaza Hotel, Topeka, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
- 21-24 **KEC Annual Meeting**, Capitol Plaza Hotel/Maner Conference Center, Topeka
- 24 **KEC Board Meeting**, upon adjournment of the KEC Annual meeting, Topeka
- 24 **KEPCo Board of Trustees Meeting**, Capitol Plaza Hotel, Lunch is in Emerald II, Meeting is in Emerald III-V, Topeka (following KEC Board of Trustees Meeting)

### FEBRUARY

- 16 **MDM Meeting**, KEPCo Headquarters, Topeka
- 17 **Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting**, Sunflower Headquarters, Hays
- 26-3/1 **NRECA Annual Meeting**, San Diego, California

### MARCH

- 8-9 **KEC Board of Trustees Meeting**, Marriott Courtyard, Salina
- 13 **Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting**, Holcomb Station, Holcomb
- 14-15 **KEPCo Board of Trustees Meeting**, Hyatt Regency, Wichita
- 23 **MDM Meeting**, KEPCo Headquarters, Topeka

## upcomingtraining

### Key accounts training

KEC is offering a two-day NRECA key accounts course on Feb. 16 and 17 at the Courtyard Wichita at Old Town.

The course, **487.2 MANAGING YOUR ELECTRIC CO-OP'S KEY ACCOUNTS**, provides an exploration of key accounts fundamentals, including best practices for building and managing a program that targets the strategic and operational concerns of key accounts.

**BRYAN SINGLETARY** will facilitate this course that also counts toward the NRECA Key Accounts Certification.

Make your reservations at Courtyard Wichita at Old Town for the KEC group rate of \$139/night (which includes breakfast and parking) by calling 866-522-8909. The room block expires on Jan. 25.

Registration information has been emailed to all cooperatives. For more information, contact Shana Read at [sread@kec.org](mailto:sread@kec.org).

### 2017 IT Summit

KEC has planned the next IT Summit for May 4 and 5 at Courtyard Wichita at Old Town.

To make a hotel reservation, call 866-522-8909, and ask for the KEC group rate of \$144 (which includes breakfast and parking). The room block expires on April 13.

Registration will be sent out in a few weeks. For more information, contact Carrie Kimberlin at [ckimberlin@kec.org](mailto:ckimberlin@kec.org).

### 2017 HR Summit

KEC's 5th annual HR Summit is scheduled for April 27 at the Wichita Marriott. Speakers for this one-day training will include **KRISTINA DIETRICK**, President and Owner, Creative Business Solutions, who will discuss top HR trends; **GARY GOELLER**, KCC Special Investigator, will review the requirements of the DOT Driver Qualifications files; **DOUG FIERO**, NRECA Financial & Field Services, who will present an NRECA benefits update; and **KRISTIN BRIGHTON**, New Boston Creative Group, who will discuss how to use social media to expand your applicant pool.

For more information, contact Shana Read at [sread@kec.org](mailto:sread@kec.org).



# Earl Watkins selected as 2017 Cooperative Hall of Fame Inductee

Retired Sunflower Electric Power Corporation President and Chief Executive Officer Earl Watkins will be inducted into the Kansas Cooperative Hall of Fame in 2017. The Hall of Fame awards ceremony will be held on March 15 at 5 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency in Wichita.

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

“Earl’s career left an indelible mark on more than just Sunflower and its employees. He dedicated time and energy to improving the quality of life in rural Kansas, national projects of importance such as ACES, and many legislative initiatives,” said Bruce Graham, KEC’s CEO. “He is a deserving choice for the Kansas Cooperative Hall of Fame.”



Earl Watkins

difficult endeavor for several reasons such as financing, division of territories among Sunflower’s members and, most significantly, the short bidding time,” Lowry said.

Following the acquisition, Watkins developed and implemented the 21st Century Leadership program to facilitate and develop a culture of unity among employees and the membership.

“Earl’s management style shaped the co-op culture in a way that emphasized respect, competency, accountability, and personal growth,” said Charles Ayers, Sunflower’s Board Chair.

“The formation of MKEC is truly a cooperative success story,” Lowry said. “Aquila’s employees were welcomed into Sunflower and, most importantly, thousands more Kansans now reap the benefits of being served by a member-owned electric cooperative.”

## Achievements at Sunflower

During his 34 years at Sunflower, Watkins moved from the position of Legal Counsel to President and CEO and was a leader in the ever-evolving electric industry.

“Earl took very seriously the responsibility entrusted to him by Sunflower’s Board to be one of the co-op voices at the local, state, and national levels and to protect the way of life in rural Kansas,” said Stuart Lowry, Sunflower’s President and CEO. Lowry nominated Watkins for the Hall of Fame.

Watkins was extensively involved in the construction of Holcomb Unit No. 1—Sunflower’s coal-fired generation facility. The plant was completed on August 16, 1983, and was ahead of its time in regards to environmental controls.

“Sunflower’s Holcomb Unit No. 1 coal plant was built on what was at the time the world’s largest reserve of natural gas; therefore, it would have been cheaper, and more advisable, to build a natural gas plant. However, President Carter believed that we were running out of natural gas and federal laws at that time prevented it,” Lowry explained. “While energy policy changed throughout his career, Earl’s leadership was steady, with every decision being informed by what would bring benefit to the member-owners of Sunflower’s co-ops.”

In addition to aiding in the construction of Holcomb Unit No. 1, Watkins perfected the water rights of H2, H3, and H4 and was instrumental in obtaining a permit for the construction of the 895-megawatt Holcomb Expansion Project.

## Mid-Kansas Electric Company

In 2005, six Sunflower member electric cooperatives purchased Aquila’s Kansas Electric Network and formed Mid-Kansas Electric Company, LLC (MKEC), essentially doubling the service territory, generation assets, transmission assets and cooperative members.

“Though it was a good business opportunity, it was a dif-

## National Achievements

Just as the MKEC acquisition echoed Cooperative Principle 6—Cooperation Among Cooperatives—this value was at the forefront of Watkins’ inspiration for establishing the National Renewables Cooperative Organization (NRCO).

After recognizing that the Renewable Electricity Production Tax Credit put cooperative utilities at a disadvantage, Watkins aided in the creation of NRCO. Watkins was a member of the bylaws committee that formed the governing rules of NRCO, and in 2008, Sunflower joined with 23 other power supply co-ops across the nation to establish NRCO.

Ron Harper, former CEO of Basin Electric Power Cooperative and chairman of NRCO’s transitional board said, “We’re a cooperative, and we want to help cooperatives.”

Similarly, upon partnering with NRCO, Watkins said, “I’m optimistic that cooperatives in the region with good renewable wind potential can help cooperatives in parts of the country that aren’t so blessed.”

His initiative has proved successful: NRCO continues to facilitate access to cost-effective, joint development of renewable resources nationwide.

## Rural Communities Advocate

Watkins continually used his leadership roles as a platform to be an advocate for Kansas rural communities and electric cooperatives.

Watkins served as Sunflower’s Legal Counsel from 1977 to 2000, as Executive Vice President and Legal Counsel from 2001 to 2003, and as President and CEO from 2004 to 2011, as well as President and CEO for MKEC from 2005-2011.

He dedicated his time to statewide organizations, the Kansas Chamber of Commerce and KEC; regional co-op organizations, Western Fuels, ACES, SPP; and national co-op organizations, NRCO, NRECA, G&T Bar Association and G&T Managers’ Association.

# Wheatland staff helps give local middle school students a dose of reality

Applying concepts and strategies learned in the classroom to real life situations is a goal of any good educational system. Getting students to think about and prepare for their future is a goal of parents and educators alike. It can be difficult for youth to understand just what it takes to support themselves in the real world, but Reality U helps provide them with that perspective.

Reality U is a program offered through the Pando Initiative, headquartered in Wichita, that provides support to students by helping them connect education and their futures. Wheatland recently helped sponsor a session at Great Bend Middle School with **TERESA MAZOUCH**, Member Services Representative, serving at the utility booth.

Prior to attending Reality U, stu-

dents complete a survey by answering questions about where they see themselves at age 26. The questions cover everything from jobs to family status to shopping and entertainment preferences. The answers are paired

with school performance records to create a profile for each student, and each student is assigned fictional jobs, salaries and families.

Then the fun begins. Students must make ends

meet using their salaries to purchase all of the necessities of life: home, transportation, utilities, groceries, student loan payments, and childcare (if they have been assigned children). Each "necessity" has a booth the student must visit. The students carry a passport (much like a checkbook register) to keep track of their spending and ensure they do not end up with a negative balance after visiting

all of the necessary booths. If the students are "married," they must find their assigned spouses and work together to make decisions on major purchases such as home and transportation.

The program includes scenarios to represent real life situations. For example, some students are "divorced" and must budget for alimony or child support; some are in the military; and some have dolls representing babies (that cried often). If students go over budget, there is a booth to help them with options, whether it be returning a purchase or getting a second job.

Most students walk away from the exercise with a clearer understanding of what it means to be an adult. It can serve as a wake-up call for those who realize that working harder and improving school performance can help them down the road. Students begin to understand that they can take control of their own futures. Teachers surveyed four to six weeks after their students have attended Reality U have reported marked increases in classroom attendance and good behavior.

Reality U is recommended for students in 9th or 10th grade. Each session lasts a minimum of 75 minutes and can accommodate up to 75 students.



Teresa Mazouch, Wheatland's Member Services Representative, helps students sign up for electric service during the Reality U session at Great Bend Middle School.

## jobmarket

### Victory Electric seeks IT Analyst, Apprentice/Journeyman Lineman

Victory Electric Cooperative, headquartered in Dodge City, KS, is seeking a full-time IT Analyst and a full-time Apprentice/Journeyman Lineman.

Visit [www.victoryelectric.net/content/careers](http://www.victoryelectric.net/content/careers) for the complete position descriptions. Both positions will remain open until filled.

Pre-employment drug screening and a physical is required. Victory Electric is an equal opportunity-affirmative action employer.

Please send cover letter & résumé to: Victory Electric Cooperative, Attn: Amy Grasser, PO Box 1335, Dodge City, KS 67801, or Fax to 620-227-8948, or email [amy@victoryelectric.net](mailto:amy@victoryelectric.net). No phone calls, please.

## KEC's Bruce McAntee completes certificate program

Bruce McAntee, Instructor for KEC's Loss Control, Safety, and Compliance Department (LCS&C), has completed NRECA's Safety Internship. McAntee is now a Certified Loss Control Professional (CLCP) instructor.

"This certification most benefits our membership and employees in providing a well-rounded instructor that has specific working knowledge and technical expertise in the utility industry," said Larry Detwiler, LCS&C Director.

In order to complete his training, McAntee completed four, one-week long seminars covering topics including state and federal regulations, environ-



Bruce McAntee

mental issues, violence in the workplace, disciplining safety violations and leadership principles.

Along with the seminars, McAntee developed a project which was then approved by an advisory committee. His topic focused on public safety and awareness of the dangers of electricity.

"Safety doesn't stop when we leave work," McAntee said. "My project was designed to help make sure that other linemen go home at night."

His project will be included in NRECA's online library of more than 250 topics to be used by CLCP participants. He also had to complete 10 and 30 hours of OSHA training, in addition to the seminars and project, to achieve the certificate.

"This program allowed me to work with and learn from others in the industry from around the nation," he added.