

# Rural Power

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

## Kansas co-ops take message to Capitol Hill

Kansas cooperative representatives met with the state's Congressional Delegation and their staff in Washington, D.C., as part of the NRECA Legislative Conference, April 23 to 24.

While at the conference, nearly 2,000 co-op leaders discussed priority issues with members of Congress and administration officials. Co-op representatives called on lawmakers to support investments in rural infrastructure, reduce barriers to maintenance and expansion, and renew tax credits for geothermal, nuclear and other technologies. Kansas representatives also participated in special meetings with FEMA, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Power Marketing Administration officials.

There was strong Kansas representation during the conference. KEC's **KIM CHRISTIANSEN** was a panelist at a session titled "Continuing to Build Our Political Strength." This session inspired other states to model the work done by Kansas on the Co-ops Vote program. Kansan **DARIN GURIES**, who staffs the Senate Agriculture Committee for Sen. Pat Roberts, was a panelist at a session that outlined the work ahead on the Farm Bill. During that session, the panel made

references to the importance of Kathy O'Brien's remarks at the recent Farm Bill Hearing, as well Midwest Energy's How\$mart program.

While the Kansas co-op delegation was in D.C., **RON ESTES** was sworn in as the Kansas 4th District Congressman and KEC representatives were invited to a special reception at the Congressman's new office. Congressman **ROGER MARSHALL** conducted a private tour of the U.S. Capitol for the group. Also new on the agenda this year, KEC hosted a luncheon for the Kansas Congressional Staff in the U.S. Capitol.

Representing Kansas cooperatives were: **JIM CHRISTOPHER**, DS&O; **STEVE FOSS**, FreeState; **KIM CHRISTIANSEN**, **BRUCE GRAHAM**, and **ALEX OREL**, KEC; **MARCUS HARRIS**, **WILLIAM RIGGINS**, and **PHIL WAGES**, KEPCo; **EARNIE LEHMAN** and **KEITH MILLER**, Midwest Energy; **JIM BELL**, **MICHAEL BREWER**, **MICHELLE BRUNGARDT**, **STEVE EPPERSON**, and **PERRY RUBART**, Pioneer; **ALLAN MILLER** and **KEITH ROSS**, Prairie Land; **CLARE GUSTIN**, Sunflower; **RON HOLSTEEN**, Twin Valley; **SHANE LAWS**, Victory; and **CHARLES AYERS**, **HERBERT GREBE**, and **BRUCE MUELLER**, Wheatland.

## Co-op representatives invited to "Feed the Funnel" at FFA Convention

Share a smile, put on a hairnet, crank up the music and plan to help out your fellow Kansan on Wednesday, May 31, by volunteering to assist Kansas Electric Cooperatives and Kansas FFA in relieving statewide hunger.

The event, co-sponsored by KEC and CoBank through the Sharing Success matching grant program, is titled "Feed the Funnel." There will be two sessions inside the Stanley Stout Center in Manhattan; the first beginning at 12:30 p.m., and the second starting at 1:45 p.m.

"It is with great pleasure that we invite you to join us at the 'Feed the Funnel' event," said Kansas FFA President and 2016 Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp Ambassador, **ELIZABETH MEYER**. "Our association consists of 186 dedicated chapters who have truly embodied what it means to *transform* this past year, which is our convention theme. We would be delighted to have you join us as we create another transforming experience that will

benefit others in our Kansas communities."

More than 100 FFA students are currently signed up for each shift, and co-ops are encouraged to send as many volunteers as possible. In just two hours, the volunteers will package at least 32,000 easy-to-prepare, nutritional meals to be delivered to local food banks.

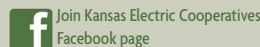
The dry-ingredient food will be prepared in an assembly line process pairing FFA students with co-op volunteers. Ingredients are poured into a funnel to fill a bag, weighed on a scale for accuracy, heat-sealed and boxed to be sent to local families in need.

"KEC is a proud, long-time sponsor of the Kansas FFA Foundation, and we look forward to working alongside these student leaders for this important community service activity," said KEC's CEO, **BRUCE GRAHAM**.

To volunteer for this event, please contact Shana Read at [sread@kec.org](mailto:sread@kec.org) by May 30.



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## KEC develops guide for newly-elected trustees

To help educate newly-elected board members, KEC has created a New Trustee Guide.

Designed for co-op managers to share with new board members, this guide includes information on the role of a trustee, a list and description of affiliated associations, resources and training available to board members, co-op history, and some of the more commonly used acronyms.

The guide incorporates information from what was previously delivered through several small brochures and information cards. It will be accompanied by a KEC Directory and samples of *Kansas Country Living* magazine.

Request an order form by emailing [sread@kec.org](mailto:sread@kec.org).

## Lynn Moore chosen to head Touchstone Energy

NRECA announced the hiring of **LYNN MOORE** as Executive Director of Touchstone Energy Cooperatives.

Moore, who joined Touchstone Energy on May 15, is an experienced co-op leader. She has developed and facilitated Touchstone Energy's educational programs and is a facilitator for the Strategy Execution System. Moore served as the Director of Member Relations and Development for Indiana Electric Cooperatives from 2000 to 2010. She succeeds Mary McLaury, who is retiring.



## co-opcalendar

### MAY

- 19 Sunflower Annual Meeting.** Lane-Scott Headquarters, 410 S. High, Dighton, meeting 8 a.m., meal 12 p.m.
- 23-25 Supervisor's Conference.** DoubleTree, Wichita
- 25 MDM Meeting.** KEPCo Headquarters, Topeka
- 29 Memorial Day.** KEC Office Closed

### JUNE

- 1-2 Kansas REC Managers Association Meeting.** Marriott Hotel, Wichita
- 7 Western.** Cooperative Headquarters, 635 S. 13th Street, WaKeeney, meal 12 p.m., meeting 1 p.m.
- 8-15 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour.** Washington, D.C.
- 16 Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting.** Sunflower Headquarters, Hays
- 29 MDM Meeting.** KEPCo Headquarters, Topeka

## KMSDA focuses on solar, safety, and social media

The Kansas Member Services Directors Association held its 2017 spring meeting from March 29 to 31 at the Courtyard by Marriott in Wichita.

The meeting kicked off with a preconference presentation by **MARK HORST**, CEO of King Solar, and **MARK BARBEE**, Vice President of Engineering at KEPCo, on the latest developments in residential, small commercial and utility-scale solar.

NRECA Leadership Communication Manager **JUSTIN LABERGE**, APR, opened with a presentation on leadership communication featuring tips on building relationships and adding value at your cooperative. **KRISTEN BRIGHTON**, founding owner of New Boston Creative Group, LLC, updated the group on what co-ops should know about

social media in 2017; **TIM DAVIS**, Ph.D., LCSW, provided a session on workplace safety and preventing violence; and **ANDY NEIDERT** from ARCmedia closed the day with a presentation on increasing member engagement on social media.

Conference attendees also held a round table discussion, followed by a presentation on the benefits of the Nest Thermostat by **STEVE HANSON**, NRTC's Regional Business Manager.

During the business meeting, the following officers were elected: Sunflower's **STEVE HAUSLER** as President, Lyon-Coffey's **MIKE TWEEDY** as Vice President, Bluestem's **KEVIN HEPTIG** as Secretary, and Heartland's **RON GRABER** as Treasurer. The next KMSDA meeting is scheduled for Sept. 6-8.

## KEC holds training events for HR professionals and IT specialists

KEC recently held two training events for cooperative employees: the HR Summit on April 27 and the IT Summit from May 4 to 5. Both events were located in Wichita.

Twenty-seven co-op employees representing 18 KEC member-systems attended the KEC HR Summit.

Speakers for the one-day training included **KRISTINA DIETRICK**, Creative Business Solutions, who discussed top HR trends; **DOUG FIERO**, NRECA, who gave a benefits update; and **KRISTIN BRIGHTON**, New Boston Creative Group, who showed how social media can expand the applicant pool. Also Kansas' new NRECA Field Service Representative, **MALACHI STURLIN**, was

in attendance and discussed the new veteran hiring initiative. **GARY GOELLER**, KCC Special Investigator, presented a class on the DOT Driver Qualifications Files and compliance with the Federal Motor Carrier safety regulations as well as KCC regulations.

The following week, 15 participants from Kansas and Nebraska cooperatives attended the IT Summit. Several registrants were unable to attend following the April 29 to 30 winter storm.

Topics of the training included cybersecurity, endpoint protection, using drone technology, and training and tools available through Touchstone Energy. The attendees also toured KEPCo's Prairie Sky Solar Farm.

## insympathy

### John P. Evans

John P. Evans, Lyon-Coffey Treasurer, died on May 12.

Funeral services will be May 20 at the United Methodist Church in Burlington.

Memorial contributions to the American Cancer Society's "Hope Lodge" or the Coffey County Cancer Support Group may be sent in care of Jones Funeral Home, P.O. Box 277, Burlington KS 66839.

## Sumner-Cowley

Sumner-Cowley's annual meeting drew 219 registered members on April 8 at Wellington High School. Hog Wild Pit BBQ catered lunch to 400 people.

Youth Tour winners were introduced and \$14,000 in scholarships were awarded. The co-op recognized three retiring board members: **CHUCK RIGGS**, **GENE BEARD**, and **EDMOND GARDINER**.

**JOHN BEARD** was elected to the Board.

## Sedgwick County

Sedgwick County held its annual meeting on April 10 at the Cotillion Hall & Ballroom in Wichita. Nearly 780 members and guests enjoyed a meal catered by Ray's Countryside Catering.

New rates were discussed and will go into effect May 2018. Youth Tour winners, **BRYAN SEILER** and **CHAYAN FOX**, were introduced.

Re-elected to the Board were **CINDY FOSTER**, **ALAN SMARSH**, and **REX SMITH**.

## Victory

Victory's 72nd annual meeting was held April 11 at the Western State Bank Expo in Dodge City. Approximately 531 members were present, and more than 800 people were served a steak dinner.

In addition to the business meeting, members heard presentations from Board President **JOHN LEIS** and the 2016 Youth Tour winners. The 2017 Youth Tour winners and the Lightner Community Spirit Scholarship winners were also introduced.

Re-elected to the Board were **JOHN LEIS**, **JIM IMEL**, **KENNEY WEHKAMP**, and **RANDY QUINT**.

## Ark Valley

Ark Valley held its annual meeting on April 11 at the Fair Grounds in Hutchinson. A barbecue dinner was served to nearly 600 members and guests by Ray's Countryside Catering.

Scholarships were awarded to three local high school students.

Re-elected to the Board were **LARRY FROESE**, **KEITH MCNICKLE**, and **DAN SCHNURR**.

## Wheatland

Wheatland's 69th annual meeting was held April 19 at the Wichita County Community Building in Leoti. More than 100 members and guests attended the event.

The 2017 Youth Tour winners and 11 scholarship winners were announced.

During the manager's report, **BRUCE MUELLER** announced that the cooperative will pay out \$750,000 in capital credits.

Sunflower's **STUART LOWRY** also presented at the meeting.

Re-elected to the board were **KATIE EISENHOUR**, **VIC CASE**, **STACEY ADDISON-HOWLAND**, and **JOHN KLEYTEUBER**.

## Twin Valley

Approximately 250 guests attended the Twin Valley annual meeting on April 20 at the LCHS Cafeteria in Altamont. The meal was catered by Pichler's Chicken Annie's and was served by the co-op employees.

Reports were presented from **RON HOLSTEEN**, CEO; **DAN PETERSON**, President; and **DARELD NELSON**, Treasurer. Youth Tour winners were announced.

**RODNEY BAKER**, **TOM ELLISON**, and **DARELD NELSON** were re-elected to the Board.

## Rolling Hills

More than 120 members attended Rolling Hills' annual meeting at the cooperative's headquarters in Beloit on April 21.

**GARY FRIELING** received a certificate of appreciation from KEC for serving 20 years on the KEC Board.

In addition to the business meeting, the board discussed a strategic plan that focuses on the cooperative's efficiency.

**ERIC ANDERSON**, **LARRY KENDIG**, **TOM MARR**, and **COREY DLABAL** were elected to the Board via mail-in ballot.

KEC's Doug Shepherd (right) presents Gary Frieling with a certificate of appreciation for serving 20 years on the KEC Board. Frieling stepped down after reaching his term limit on the Rolling Hills Board.

## CMS

A total of 265 members and guests attended the CMS annual meeting at Meade High School on May 11.

Special guests at the meeting were KEC's **DOUG SHEPHERD**, KEPCo's **MARCUS HARRIS** and **MARK DOLJAC**, and former General Manager **JERRY RUMBAUGH**.

Scholarship winners announced were **KEITH EVANS**, **BAILEY LEWIS**, **KODY STOCKTON**, **PAYTON WELSH**, **MIKAYLA JELLISON**, and **SIDNEY MONROE**. Each recipient was presented a certificate and pen set.

**GARY WARDEN**, **LINDA TOMLINSON**, and **KEITH RANDALL** were re-elected to the Board.

## KAMO

KAMO held its annual meeting on May 11 at the Chateau on the Lake in Branson. Nearly 290 members and guests enjoyed a meal.

After the business update, a video showing what life is like for a rural electric cooperative member on a fixed income, emphasizing why it was so important for cooperatives hold costs down.

Re-elected to the Board were **ROBERT BURK**, **DAVID TROGDON**, and **JOHN HIBDON**.





# Spring blizzard becomes a multi-state relief effort for Kansas co-ops

Heavy snow and high winds in parts of Western Kansas downed trees, power lines, and transmission poles, leaving tens of thousands of electric cooperative members without power. The spring blizzard affected CMS, Lane-Scott, Midwest Energy, Pioneer, Prairie Land, Tri-County, Sunflower, Western, and Wheatland.

"There was an estimated 17 inches of snow in Scott City, Elkhart had snow drifts up to eight feet, and the Kansas Division of Emergency Management activated the State Emergency Operations Center in response to the severe winter storm affecting the western region of the state and flooding in southeast Kansas," said **LARRY DETWILER**, KEC's Director of Loss Control, Safety and Compliance who coordinated the Mutual Aid efforts on behalf of Kansas electric cooperatives.

As crews worked their way through muddy conditions to assess the damage, electric co-ops from Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, and Missouri sent linemen, equipment, and materials to assist with restoration efforts which took weeks in some areas. In addition to 11 out-of-state co-ops, Kansas co-ops that provided assistance included: Ark Valley, Bluestem, Butler, Caney-Valley, FreeState, Heartland, DS&O, Flint Hills, Lyon-Coffey, Nemaha-Marshall, Ninnescah, Radiant, Rolling Hills, Sedgwick County, Sumner-Cowley, Twin Valley, and Victory.

"Road conditions were so severe, that for all practical purposes,



FreeState's truck sinks in the mud while restoring service. Many co-ops used tractors or bulldozers to get trucks to the damaged areas.

heavy equipment helped line crews navigate the terrain.

"Our customers understood why this was a tough outage to work," said Midwest Energy's **MIKE MORLEY**. "They had to drive the same muddy roads to leave their homes. And once they did, they instantly saw how challenging it was to make repairs in those conditions."

While the restoration was slow, the dedicated linemen continued to work around the clock.

"We had crews working for 15 straight days on outage restoration before they took their first break," said Wheatland's **SHAWN POWELSON**. "We proudly recognize all of the linemen for their service to keep power on for our members and our cooperative family when in need."

## Kansas co-op communicators shine at CONNECT

Nearly 600 cooperative staff participated in this month's NRECA's 2017 CONNECT Conference in Tampa, Florida, which brought together electric co-op communications for 2 ½ days of information-packed sessions and networking opportunities.



Victory's Shane Laws and Kennedy St. George pose with a Spotlight Award.

Attending from Kansas: Butler's **TRAVIS GRIFFIN**, FreeState's **SARAH FARLEE**, Heartland's **RON GRABER**, KEC's **SHANA READ** and **JACKIE KAMPHAUS**, Prairie Land's **ANNA FOLEY** and **BARRY MADDEN**, Sunflower's **STEVE HAUSLER** and **DORIS COLLINS**, and Victory's **JERRI IMGARTEN** and **KENNEDY ST. GEORGE**.

During the opening session, Imgar-

ten gave the invocation on behalf of the Council of Rural Electric Communicators board. She later served on a panel, discussing Victory's results of developing a communications plan to inform members of an upcoming rate change.

During the Spotlight on Excellence Celebration, St. George received a gold award for her work on a program and services guide for the cooperative.

While at the conference, 17 communicators completed the Certified Cooperative Communicators exam, including three Kansas communicators.

Several other Kansas communicators who were expected to attend the conference were forced to change their plans due to the April 30 winter storm and restoration efforts.

## jobmarket

### FreeState seeks qualified applicants for several positions

FreeState has openings for an Engineer, Maintenance Technician, and Tree Crew/ Groundsman. A high school diploma or GED is required for the Maintenance Technician and Tree Crew/Groundsman positions. For the Engineer opening, a university accredited degree in electrical engineering is required.

Applicants must possess a valid driver's license and a Class "A" CDL for the Maintenance Tech and Tree Crew/Groundsman listings. Applicants must also have electrical line construction knowledge and be familiar with the NESC and RUS Materials Specifications.

Find complete job descriptions and applications at [www.freestate.coop](http://www.freestate.coop) under Contact Us, Employment Opportunities. Send resume and completed employment application to Chelsea Renyer, Human Resources Generalist at [chelsea.renyer@freestate.coop](mailto:chelsea.renyer@freestate.coop). Applications accepted until position is filled.