

# Rural Power

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

## KEC prepares for annual meeting, legislative reception

Representatives of rural electric co-ops from across the state will gather at the Capitol Plaza Hotel in Topeka from Jan. 20-23 for the 76th annual meeting convened by Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc.

The agenda features a variety of speakers. Representative **RON RYCKMAN**, Speaker of the House, will present a view from the statehouse. **CHUCK CONNER**, President and CEO of the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives will give a political and economic outlook. **PATTY CLARK**, Acting President/CEO of the Kansas Leadership Center, will share leadership skills. There will also be a legislative briefing and safety awards presentation by KEC staff.

**BRUCE GRAHAM**, KEC's CEO, will report on achievements and activities in the State of the Statewide presentation. **BRUCE REW**, Vice President of Operations for the Southwest Power Pool will give an SPP market impact update. There will also be a panel discussion regarding rural broadband opportunities and resources.

The luncheon program features the musical talents of the **PETERSON FARM BROTHERS**, siblings who farm together with their parents near Assaria, and who produce entertaining and educational videos. In addition, **TAYLOR GUNN**, Lead Economist at CoBank, will give a presentation on the future of distributed energy resources and the impacts they will have on the power industry. The program also includes Federated's **PHIL IRWIN**, presentations by CoBank and CFC, and concurrent roundtable discussions for trustees and managers.

### KEC Welcome Reception

A welcome reception with light snacks and beverages will be held on Sunday, Jan. 21 from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

### Legislative Reception

The Legislative Reception, hosted by Federated and the Kansas electric co-ops, will be from 5:30-8 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 22.

### Directors' Training

Three courses will be offered prior to the meeting. All courses will run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. On Saturday, Jan. 20, **WALLACE BARRON** will facilitate the CCD course *2610 Understanding the Electric Business*. **BETH KNUDSON** will facilitate the new *944.1 Giving and Receiving Effective Feedback*.

On Sunday, Jan. 21, **SCOTT LUECAL** will facilitate the revised BLC course *974.1 Rate Making Strategies and Policy Decisions for Electric Cooperative Boards*. This course was recently updated by NRECA and CFC.

### KCRE Silent Auction & Auxiliary Raffle

KCRE will host its annual silent auction on Monday, Jan. 22. To donate items, please contact KEC's Carol Dorr. The KEC Auxiliary will also raffle a handmade quilt donated by **CAROLYN MCNICKLE**, Twin Valley, and two child rocking chairs (to be raffled separately) donated by **DAVID MUELLER**, DS&O Director.

### "Catch" Breakfast on Tuesday

Chris Cakes of Wichita will cater breakfast on Tuesday, Jan. 23 from 6:30 to 7:45 a.m.

### Auxiliary

The KEC Auxiliary will meet from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 22. Sgt. **TRAVIS JEPSON**, Topeka Police Department, will share what actions to take in a crisis situation, and **RALPH HIPPI**, News Anchor/Reporter at WIBW Channel 13, will also give a presentation. In the afternoon, spouses are invited to play "BINGO" for fun and the chance to win prizes.



Tickets for the quilt and two rocking chairs (to be raffled separately) are available for \$1 each or six for \$5. Proceeds benefit KEC's youth programs. For tickets, contact Carol Dorr at 785-478-4554 or [cdorr@kec.org](mailto:cdorr@kec.org).



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## KEC hosts Youth Tour Coordinators meeting

Sixteen cooperatives were represented, either in person or via web conference, at the KEC Youth Tour Coordinators Round Table Meeting on Dec. 7 at the Wichita Marriott.

Topics covered included earlier deadlines for the youth winners to turn in information to KEC, an announcement that the 2018 forms will be online, and suggestions for additional opportunities for youth winners.

There was also discussion regarding selecting youth winners with special needs. NRECA is currently working on a special needs policy.

Also on the agenda was a series of “best practices” discussions where co-ops could share success stories. **DREW WAECHTER**, Pioneer; **ROBYN TURNEY**, Alfalfa; and **TRAVIS GRIFFIN**, Butler; shared their tips on how to promote the program, how to work with schools, and how to select winners.

For more information about this training or KEC's youth programs, contact Shana Read at [sread@kec.org](mailto:sread@kec.org).

## Kansas Cooperative Council names interim President/CEO

The Kansas Cooperative Council (KCC) announced **JOHN STRECKER**, Colby, as the Interim President/CEO.

Strecker has spent the past 45 years serving Kansas co-ops. He started his career as a bookkeeper with the Offerle Co-op and most recently spent 25 years as the General Manager at the Hi-Plains Co-op in Colby.

KCC is currently accepting applications through Jan. 15, 2018, for the position of President/CEO. For more information, visit [www.kansasco-op.coop](http://www.kansasco-op.coop).

## insympathy

### Pauline Hall

Pauline Hall, mother of KEC's Bob Hall, died on Nov. 25.

Memorial services were held Dec. 2 at the Penwell-Gabel Southwest Chapel, Topeka. Memorial contributions may be made to Gage Park Baptist Church, P.O. Box 4050, Topeka, KS 66604.

## co-opcalendar

### DECEMBER

25 **Christmas holiday**, KEC Office closed

### JANUARY

1 **New Year's Day Holiday**, KEC Office closed

19 **Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting**, Sunflower Headquarters, Hays

20 **KEC Directors Training**, 944.I Giving and Receiving Effective Feedback and 2610.I Understanding the Electric Business, Capitol Plaza, Topeka from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

21 **KEC Directors Training**, 974.I Rate Making Strategies and Policy Decisions for Electric Cooperative Boards, Capitol Plaza, Topeka from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

22-23 **KEC Annual Meeting**, Maner Conference Center, Topeka

23 **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

15 **MDM Meeting**, KEPCo Headquarters, Topeka

16 **Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting**, Sunflower Headquarters, Hays

25-28 **NRECA Annual Meeting**, Nashville

## Kansas Electric Cooperatives to host Day on the Hill

KEC invites cooperative representatives to attend the “Day on the Hill” event, scheduled for Feb. 7, 2018, in Topeka.

The day begins at 7:30 a.m. and will conclude late morning. Attendees will meet with legislators and staff over breakfast, attend committee and legislative sessions, and visit elected officials at the Capitol.

“We hope co-op managers, employees and trustees will attend this event,” said Alex Orel, Manager of Govern-

ment Relations. “If we want to make an impact, showing our numbers in force is a simple way to do that.”

KEC will send hotel reservation information and other details directly to the cooperative managers.

The “Day on the Hill” event will be in addition to KEC's annual Legislative Reception held in conjunction with the January Annual Meeting.

For more information, contact Leslie Kaufman at [lkaufman@kec.org](mailto:lkaufman@kec.org) or Alex Orel at [aorel@kec.org](mailto:aorel@kec.org).

## upcomingtraining

### Leadership Skills for the Front-Line Employee

KEC is coordinating a new workshop titled **LEADERSHIP SKILLS FOR THE FRONT-LINE EMPLOYEE** on March 27, 2018. The training will be held at Butler's headquarters in El Dorado from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

This training, which will be facilitated by Bryan Singletary, is designed for line crews, supervisors, and any other cooperative employee who is a vital player in the operation of a safe and reliable electric system.

Today's co-ops face a growing management challenge—replacing a core leadership team of baby boomers as they prepare to retire. Unlike other businesses that have large turnover, co-op employees often complete their entire career at one system. This means that one person may have occupied the

supervisor/foreman seat for many years, and there may be little room for cross training and special assignments. The result is a new supervisor/foreman with little experience or training when he/she steps up to a leadership position.

This interactive, one-day course is designed to help the new leaders as well as the veteran supervisor/foreman to better understand the roles and responsibilities of front line leadership.

Cost for this training is \$275 per attendee. Registration information was emailed to each cooperative.

Following the adjournment of the course, Wendy McAdoo, Butler REC Accountant, will lead a work order discussion from the Operations viewpoint. There is no cost to attend this optional one-hour session.

## Governance Task Force work nearly complete

Earlier this year, KEC CEO **BRUCE GRAHAM** was appointed by NRECA and CFC to a Governance Task Force. The group held its kickoff meeting in February 2017 at the 75th NRECA Annual Meeting, and is expected to release its final report in conjunction with the NRECA Annual Meeting in February 2018.

The task force, a group of 20 cooperative representatives, has met regularly throughout the year, both in person and by conference call. The group consists of delegates from each region from distribution cooperatives, statewide associations, and G&Ts appointed jointly by NRECA CEO Jim Matheson and CFC CEO Sheldon C. Petersen.

Based on the principle that cooperatives are democratic organizations owned and controlled by their members, the task force was asked to examine current governance practices. Among the areas of review were director nominations, director elections,

board meetings, board composition, responsibilities of a board of directors, director qualifications and compensation, and member access to meetings and co-op information.

"Task force members sought input from electric co-ops across the country regarding governance efforts, practices, and challenges throughout the entire cooperative community," said Graham. "The task force's work will build on existing governance practices that are essential parts of the cooperative model."

The task force was created following the NRECA Board resolution in December 2016 recommending that NRECA and CFC create and support the member task force. The CFC Board adopted a similar resolution.

The selections to the task force were made with attention toward diversity in geography, demography, length of board or cooperative service, system size, professional background, and other factors.

## Cooperatives work to fix pension act oversight

Co-ops are working at the federal level to build support for action on a bill entitled the *Rightsizing Pension Premiums Act* (HR 3596). This bill would finish the task began in 2014 when Congress passed the Cooperative and Small Employer Pension Flexibility Act.

Cooperatives and charitable organizations saw significant premium relief from that legislation but, because of an oversight, are still required to pay the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) premium. That premium costs electric cooperatives nearly \$40 million annually with approximately \$1 million from Kansas cooperatives.

Currently, HR 3596 has 117 sponsors. "I am pleased to report that Kansas is one of just three states to have full delegation sponsorship of the bill," said Bruce Graham, KEC's CEO. "In addition, Congressman Ron Estes is on a subcommittee reviewing pension issues and, in a recent hearing, submitted questions and comments on the issue directly to PBGC Director Tom Reeder."

## KEC's headquarters efficiency and improvement project underway



With carpet and fixtures removed, the HVAC and electrical work at KEC's headquarters begins.

After the KEC Board gave the green light for the KEC headquarters efficiency and improvement project at the October Board Meeting, staff relocated to the lower level of the FreeState Electric Cooperative office in Topeka.

During the month of November, staff cleaned out personal office spaces, closets, and other storage areas.

Construction officially started on December 4. The construction timeline calls for completion around the end of May 2018.

## Retiring managers honored at KEC Board Meeting



From left: Dale Coomes, Heartland; Bob Reece, Flint Hills; Ken Maginley, Bluestem; and Earnie Lehman, Midwest Energy; receive an appreciation gift from Bruce Graham, KEC's CEO, at the KEC Board Meeting on Dec. 7.

"This meeting begins a number of transitions and is part of a historic year at KEC," said KEC's CEO Bruce Graham at the December Board Meeting.

One of those transitions was the slate of retiring managers. **DALE COOMES**, Heartland; **EARNIE LEHMAN**,

Midwest Energy; **KEN MAGINLEY**, Bluestem; and **BOB REECE**, Flint Hills; were honored at the meeting. Graham presented them with appreciation gifts.

The managers, representing a combined 136 years of electric cooperative service, plan to retire in early 2018.





## Twin Valley employees light up the season

Twin Valley employees joined other local businesses and organizations in the Parsons Chamber of Commerce Christmas Parade on Dec. 7. This event, known as the largest parade in Parsons, featured many floats and vehicles decked out in lights. Twin Valley staff drove one of their bucket trucks decorated with Christmas lights in the parade.



Photo by Halee Kennett

Twin Valley's special cheering section at the parade includes (from left): Corbin, son of Line Superintendent Adam Myers; Tenlee, daughter of Crew Foreman Tyler Kennett; and Breah, daughter of Apprentice Lineman Jordan Robinson.

## Flint Hills employees show spirit of giving



Flint Hills employees pose with a check showing their donations raised to support community Christmas programs.

'Tis the season, and Flint Hills employees know all about the meaning of giving.

"Flint Hills employees set up an employee's club fund years ago for funeral memorials, hospital flowers, and anything else that might be needed for fellow employees and families," explained Diann Diehl, Flint Hills' Member Service Manager.

The club is funded through an optional \$2 monthly employee payroll deduction, with a matching amount donated by the cooperative.

"In addition to the employees club, we started passing the hat at our yearly November safety meetings to raise funds

specifically for Christmas donations. The employees club then matches that dollar amount," Diehl explained. "This year was our largest Christmas donation to date with a total of \$960."

Half of the amount was donated to the Morris County Care and Share organization, which buys items for children and needy families during Christmas. The organization also helps struggling families pay their winter heating bills and assists with rent payments.

The other half was donated to the Silver Angel Tree in Marion County which assists elderly citizens with necessary items such as clothing, coats, personal items, and food.