

# Rural Power

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## KEC's Hot Line School teaches safety practices

Last month, KEC's Loss Control, Safety and Compliance Department (LCS&C) conducted a hot line and bucket truck training school at Pratt Technical College (Sept. 13-15) and Manhattan Technical College (Sept. 20-22).

The school is geared toward all utility linemen, and welcomes those of all experience levels including the vo-tech students.

Around 60 vo-tech students and 70 linemen participated in the two-and-a-half days of hands-on training.

"It's not only a review of established safe work practices, but also the opportunity to view new equipment, technologies and advanced work practices," said Larry Detwiler, LCS&C director.

The school focused on working on a simulated energized line. This training is essential for linemen because, while routine maintenance may be conducted with the lines de-energized, a new dependence on electronics and technology makes this much less desirable.

"More and more jobs will have to be done



Kaw Valley's John Burton (center) has taught at the KEC Hot Line School since 1995.

energized to satisfy the consumer's need for uninterrupted power," Detwiler said.

Cooperatives have provided the necessary equipment and volunteers to keep the school running for the past 40 years.

John Burton, a lineman from Kaw Valley, has been an instructor at the hot line school since 1995. He

believes this training offers linemen a unique opportunity to further their skills and gain valuable experience.

"They come to the hot line school and try things they wouldn't typically do. The more experience they have, the more comfortable they are, the safer they are and the more efficient they are," Burton said.

In turn, this experience benefits not only the linemen, but also the communities in which they serve.

"The better they become at working on the hotlines, the better the quality of their community members' electric power and the less likely they are to have an injured member of their community," Burton said.

## Sunflower announces wind energy contract power purchase with Infinity

Sunflower Electric and Infinity Wind Power LLC announced a 20-year contract for 104 megawatts of wind energy from Infinity's Shooting Star Wind Project to be located near Mullinville.

The contract was signed by Mid-Kansas Electric Company LLC, which was formed in 2005 by five of Sunflower's members and a wholly-owned subsidiary. Infinity recently purchased the development rights for the Shooting Star Wind Project

from Clipper Windpower LLC, which began developing the project in 2001. It is anticipated that the 104 megawatt wind farm will be operational by the end of 2012.

With the addition of the Power Purchase Agreement from the Shooting Star Wind Project, the combined Sunflower system will have a net renewable generation capacity equal to 29 percent of retail peak demand. This exceeds the state's renewable energy standard requiring electric

utilities to have at least 15 percent of their peak demand from renewable resources by 2016.

"The addition of this wind generation to our system, a contract that is the culmination of much hard work by Earl Watkins and Sunflower employees, will allow us to best meet our members' needs for reliable energy at the lowest possible cost," said Stuart Lowry, Sunflower's president and chief executive officer.

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A Time of the Electric Co-ops 1935-2011

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**First Siemens industrial site in Kansas to receive LEED® Gold designation**

Siemens Energy has been awarded LEED® Gold Certification for its recently opened wind turbine nacelle assembly plant in Hutchinson for its environmentally responsible design and efficient operating systems.

The 300,000-square-foot facility is Siemens' first certified production facility in the U.S. It also holds the distinction of being the first LEED® Gold new construction/industrial site in the state of Kansas. The LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification program is the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high-performance, green buildings.

SIEMENS ENERGY – 9/15/11

**BP announces plans for largest Kansas wind farm**

BP Wind Energy has announced plans for what it says will be the largest wind farm in Kansas. Gov. Sam Brownback joined company officials in Wichita to announce the \$800 million project.

BP says its 419-megawatt Flat Ridge Wind Farm will be spread over 66,000 acres in Barber, Harper, Kingman and Sumner counties. Associated Electric Cooperative will buy most of the energy.

ASSOCIATED PRESS – 10/4/11

**GOP tries to roll back regs**

House Republicans are moving ahead on two bills aimed at cutting what they consider harmful regulation.

The GOP has scheduled two bills for the floor this week: the EPA Regulatory Relief Act and the Cement Sector Regulatory Relief Act. Both bills have bipartisan support in the House, but the outlook in the Senate is unclear.

POLITICO – 10/3/11

**OCTOBER**

- 11-13 **NRECA Region 7 & 9 Meeting**, Denver, CO.
- 19-20 **KEPCo Board of Trustees Meeting**, KEPCo Headquarters, Topeka.
- 20-21 **Accountants Club Meeting**, Victory Headquarters, Dodge City.
- 21 **Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting**, Sunflower Headquarters, Hays.
- 26 **Touchstone Energy Brand Camp**, Homewood Suites, Wichita.
- 27-28 **KMSDA Meeting**, Homewood Suites, Wichita.
- 27 **MDM Meeting**, KEC Headquarters, Topeka.

**NOVEMBER**

- 1 **KEC District 1 Meeting**, Flint Oak Lodge, Fall River.
- 2 **KEC District 3 Meeting**, Fox Pavilion, Hays.
- 3 **KEC District 4 Meeting**, Victory Headquarters, Dodge City.
- 4 **KEC District 2 Meeting**, KEPCo Headquarters, Topeka.
- 7 **Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Kansas Annual Meeting**, Wichita Marriott.
- 10 **MDM Meeting**, KEC Headquarters, Topeka.
- 15-17 **National Electrical Code Workshop**, Courtyard Marriott, Salina.
- 16 **KEPCo Annual Meeting**, dinner at 6 p.m., meeting following dinner, Prairie Band Casino and Resort, 12305 150, Mayetta.
- 16-17 **KEPCo Board of Trustees Meeting**, Prairie Band Casino & Resort, Mayetta.
- 18 **Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting**, Sunflower Headquarters, Hays.
- 21 **Midwest Energy Annual Meeting**, meeting at 1:30 p.m., Fort Hays State University, Robins Center, One Tiger Place, Hays.
- 24-25 **Thanksgiving Holiday**, KEC Office Closed.

upcomingtraining

**NRECA Regional Meeting to focus on “Building a Better World”**

The 2011 Regional Meeting showcases the theme — “Electric Cooperatives Build a Better World.” General sessions will focus on topics including technologies that transform co-ops, the co-op difference and building stronger co-op safety performance.

Regions 7 and 9 will have a joint meeting from Oct. 11-13 at the Sheraton Downtown Hotel in Denver.

The NRECA Regional Meeting is a checkpoint in setting the association’s legislative and policy agenda through the resolutions process. Regional

Resolutions Committees and voting delegates can consider proposed new resolutions and amendments to existing resolutions on vital issues such as “Cost Allocation of High Voltage Transmission Facilities” and “Securing Federal Funding for Clean Coal Technologies.” Meeting attendees can weigh in on these issues by participating in the Resolutions Committee meeting at 4 p.m. on Oct. 11.

Visit the Regional Meetings section of Cooperative.com for the full schedule and to register.

**KEC district meetings**

The annual KEC District Meetings will take place Nov. 1-4. See the above calendar for dates and locations.

As part of the meeting, CFC’s John Grant will give an industry update and will conduct a brief training session.

For more information about the District meetings, email Charlotte Provo-Blenden at cprovo@kec.org, or call 785-478-4554.

**Touchstone Energy Brand Camp**

Electric cooperative employees are invited to attend this free, hands-on workshop that’s geared to equip you with the statistics, game plans and team spirit to energize co-op teams.

The training will be held on Wed., Oct. 26, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Homewood Suites in Wichita. Make reservations by calling 316-260-8844. If you have any questions, please contact Shana Read, 785-478-4554.

## Heartland Rural Electric Cooperative copper thief caught by armed homeowner

A thief stealing copper from Heartland Rural Electric Cooperative's lines was caught in the act by a local homeowner who was armed with a gun.

On Sept. 8 the thief silenced a radio station when he attempted to steal copper wiring.

Heartland was alerted to the outage at 12:33 a.m. at a KRPS radio tower within a mile of Scammon.

By the time the KRPS engineer realized the signal was off the air, Heartland had already dispatched a crew. After inspection, it was determined that the tower had been vandalized – that someone had cut and stolen copper wiring, disabling radio transmissions.

A couple of hours later, the Cherokee County Sheriff's Office responded to a theft in progress at a residence north

of Columbus. The thief was interrupted by a homeowner who held the suspect at gunpoint until the officers arrived. Officers arrested the thief and discovered the copper wiring stolen from the radio tower in his vehicle.

An early damage estimate was between \$6,000 and \$8,000 to Heartland's equipment. No damage estimates were given by the radio station, but they were back on the air the following week after they ordered in parts to fix their damaged tower.

Heartland, like other electric utilities across the country, has experienced an increase in copper theft.

"Obviously, with the high price of scrap copper, this problem has been growing rapidly for us, as it has for all electric utilities," Heartland's Ron

Grabber said. "So far this year, thieves have cut and removed the copper ground wire from more than 400 utility poles in just Cherokee County, and in at least six locations, thieves have ripped off the energized meter loop assembly."

"Last month, thieves broke into our fenced substation near Parker and did approximately \$40,000 worth of damage to our equipment there as they were attempting to steal copper ground wire," he added.

Grabber pointed out that the thieves in Parker came close to killing themselves. The sparks from the attempted theft caused a fire so large, the thieves abandoned the wiring and ran.

Grabber reported that Heartland is switching to copper-clad steel, which has no resale value.

### LJEC involves members through advisory group

LJEC has found a new way to educate its members and promote membership involvement through the creation of their Member Advisory Group.

The group was established more than a year ago and meets once every three to four months. Each session has a different topic, designed to give members in attendance a better understanding of their co-ops.

In addition to being an educational tool, the group acts as a focus group and gathers member feedback.

"It's a two-way street—we're educating them, but they're also educating us on what we're doing well and what we're not. That's very important for us," Jennifer Fisher, LJEC's public relations and marketing specialist, said.

The next meeting for the group has not yet been scheduled, but a tour of a power plant is being considered.

"A lot of people look at their bill on a monthly basis and they don't have a clue what it takes for the electricity to get from the power plant to their light switch," Fisher said.

### Sunflower's wind energy contract, cont.

"Anytime we can harness the Kansas wind at an affordable price from a project that will provide many economic benefits to the region, it's a great move for our members," Lowry added.

The wind project will provide royalty revenue to landowners in excess of \$10 million over the life of the contract, and it will generate approximately 250,000 hours of construction labor.

Infinity has also established a community benefits fund for

deployment in Kiowa County. When the project is fully constructed, this fund will allow the county to address its most pressing concerns and needs.

"The community near the Shooting Star Wind Project has been incredibly supportive over the years, and we look forward to providing the economic benefits that come with wind power construction and operation," said Matt Riley, Infinity's chief executive officer.

### Sedgwick County's Alan Henning to retire

Sedgwick County's general manager, Alan Henning, has announced he will retire early next year.

At a special board meeting on September 12, Sedgwick County's Board of Trustees hired the NRECA Executive Search Group to conduct a candidate search for Henning's replacement. The Board hopes to have a new general manager hired by March 2012.

In the 26 years that Henning has served as manager, the cooperative has almost doubled in number of services and more than tripled in total plant investment. Henning also oversaw the construction of a new headquarters facility that was built in 2003.

### Lyon-Coffey's Schmidt serves as parade marshal



Lyon-Coffey board member, Richard Schmidt, and his wife Catherine served as the Hartford Harvest Day parade marshals. The Schmidts, who are considered as pillars of the community, have had ties with Hartford for more than 50 years. The annual September event drew hundreds of people who enjoyed the sunshine, food, a parade, music and competitions designed to celebrate the coming of autumn.

## Cooperative linemen delivered safety message at Kansas State Fair

Linemen who volunteered at the Kansas State Fair on Sept. 12 -16 started each day with a grapefruit, but it wasn't part of breakfast.

As part of the Kansas electric cooperatives' High Voltage Line Safety Demonstration, the linemen ran 7,200 volts of electricity (standard line voltage) through a makeshift dummy with a grapefruit for a brain and a hot dog for a heart. After some fireworks, the electrocuted grapefruit fell to the ground and a volunteer lineman cut it in half to show the crowd of fair-goers its burned insides.

The goal of the demonstration was to teach people about safety around high voltage electricity. Linemen displayed proper safety procedures around power lines, showed visitors the protective gear they wear and explained how and why it is used. The exhibition gave people a visual of the effects high voltage has on tissue.

"Unfortunately, most people get electrocuted because they do things that aren't always the smartest things to do. We use our dummy to demonstrate that," said Brian Drieling, Midwest Energy's manager of electric services.

The demonstration, which included brief flames and arcs that could jump four to seven feet, was effective at catching fair goers' attention.

"People get complacent around electricity because it's always there and because it doesn't make any noise or anything. When you show them what kind of power is actually there, it really gets their attention," said James Wright, Midwest Energy lineman.

The demonstration was a part of the "Kansas' Largest Classroom" program, which combines classroom learning with a fieldtrip to the fair. Teachers who planned on bringing their students to the fair could go online to find a lesson plan



Midwest Energy's Brian Drieling (right) demonstrates the effect of electricity on a grapefruit to children at the Kansas State Fair last month.

that covered the basics of electricity, a simple way to incorporate themes from the demonstration into the classroom.

Students seemed to be paying attention. Drieling said a class who had seen the demonstration a year ago was able to answer many safety questions.

"They remembered it. Everyone else was wondering how those kids knew what to do," Drieling said.

Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. and the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Kansas co-sponsored the demonstration, which

has been running for five years. Midwest Energy has been running the safety demonstration locally for more than 15 years. It is part of their larger public education program that promotes safety around electricity and educates around 10,000 people a year.

A grapefruit a day might not be what keeps the doctor away, but with the High Voltage Line Safety Demonstration, it might keep people safe around power lines.



Cooperative linemen from Midwest, Sedgwick County, Lane-Scott, Butler and Wheatland (shown above) volunteered at this year's fair.



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