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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Cooperatives: United We Stand

March 28, 2003

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Brownback Legislation Supports Rural Kansas

U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback confirmed his commitment to rural Kansas communities with the introduction of the New Homestead Economic Opportunity Act, an important economic relief bill for rural communities.



Sen. Brownback

"The New Homestead Act addresses the plight of rural America and the fact that these areas are suffering," Brownback said. "We must encourage and support intellectual creativity and enterprise – and the area in which this has been most neglected has been our rural communities.

"Every year rural communities become more desolate as fewer and fewer people remain. This out-migration of youth to more urban areas is due to the lack of economic opportunities in rural communities.

While the majority of America was originally rural, things have changed dramatically over the course of the past century. Today, after decades of decline, less than two percent of the population live in rural areas.

"In Kansas over half of the counties are suffering from this out-migration. Towns and counties are dwindling in terms of population.

This is not only devastating to a state like Kansas, where we rank sixth in the nation of high out-migration states, but also to the entire mid-section of the country.

"This problem cannot be ignored, and I am

confident that this bill we are introducing will provide the much-needed incentives that rural America desperately needs to survive.

"We must revitalize within our heartland the spirit of creativity and enterprise that has always allowed our nation to grow and adapt. It has long been the key to our success both philosophically and in the wealth of our nation. The Congress has an obligation to ensure the economic viability of these rural communities, even in light of the major problems and out-migration these areas are suffering," Brownback said.

The legislation provides: 1) New homestead opportunities for individuals who locate in high out-migration counties, including repayment of up to 50 percent of college loans, \$5,000 tax credits for home purchases, and Individual Homestead Accounts to help build savings; 2) New incentives for businesses to expand or locate in high out-migration areas such as Rural Investment Tax Credits and Micro-Enterprise Tax Credits; 3) New \$3 Billion Homestead Venture Capital Fund to promote business development in high out-migration areas.

"The cooperatives in Kansas are gratified that Sen. Brownback is taking a leadership role to jump start rural America and specifically rural Kansas," said Barry Hart, KEC Executive Vice President. "We will assist Sen. Brownback any way we can in getting such positive rural economic development legislation passed. We have already made contact with NRECA to make sure they are aware of Sen. Brownback's New Homestead Economic Opportunity Act."



Have an idea or a story for Rural Power?

Call (785) 478-4554

Fax (785) 478-4852

or Email

sholsteen@kec.org

Cooperative Calendar

April	11	Kansas Line Supervisors Assoc. Meeting, Heart of America Inn, Salina
	11	Apparatus Testing Committee, Heart of America Inn, Salina, 1:30 p.m.
	15-16	Energy Everywhere 2003 in Scottsdale, AZ.
	17	KEPCo Board of Trustees Meeting, KEPCo Hdqtrs, Topeka, 8:30 a.m.
	18	Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting, Sunflower Hdqtrs, Hays, 8:30 a.m.
	24	Eastern MDM Meeting, KEC Headquarters, Topeka, 10:00 a.m.
May	30	KEC Standing Committee Meetings Holiday Inn, Great Bend
	1	KEC Board of Trustees Meeting, Holiday Inn, Great Bend, 8:30 a.m.
	1	KEC Women's Executive Committee, Holiday Inn, Great Bend 8:30 a.m.
	3	ElectoRally Race, Dodge City.
	4-7	NRECA Legislative Conference, Washington, D.C.
	4-5	NRECA's National Orientation for New Communicators, Arlington, VA.
	5-9	NRECA's Human Resource/Benefit Conference, Myrtle Beach, SC.
	16	KEPCo Board Meeting, Holcomb Rec Center, Holcomb, 8:30 a.m.
June	16	Sunflower Board Meeting, Holcomb Rec Center, Holcomb, 8:30 a.m.
	21-23	KEC Marketing Conference, Radisson Broadview, Wichita.
	22	Eastern MDM Meeting, KEC Headquarters, Topeka, 10:00 a.m.
	5-6	Kansas REC Managers Association Meeting, Salina.
July	12-19	"Government In Action" Youth Tour, Washington, D.C.
	13-16	MMS&C Conference, Reno, NV
August	19-25	Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp, Steamboat Springs, CO.
	7-8	Kansas Material Managers Assoc. Meeting, Country Inn & Suites, Salina

State Fair Day Sponsorship

The Kansas electric cooperatives is expanding our presence at the 2003 Kansas State Fair to better interact with our members and to tell our story. By sponsoring a day, we will have a corporate tent for our members; post our banners at every pedestrian gate; be listed in the State Fair program (400,000 distribution), the daily schedule of events, and on the state fair website; play commercials and announcements at the grandstand; and greet the fair-goers.

Please save the date!

*The Kansas electric cooperatives and Touchstone Energy day will be on **Saturday, Sept. 13**. Please make plans to join us to positively interact with fair-goers, spread our message more effectively, and make an impact with our members!*

KEC Marketing Conference

The KEC Marketing Conference and Vendor Trade Show will be held May 21-23, 2003, at the Radisson Broadview Hotel in Wichita, KS!

This conference is designed for managers, member services managers, and co-op employees.

Watch the mail for your invitation to this event!

Upcoming Workshops

NFEC Annual Conference

The Annual Conference for National Food and Energy Council (NFEC) will be held April 7-9 in San Antonio, TX. With the theme "Adding Value For Customers... Electrically" participants will learn about fuel cells, utility programs for key accounts, successful "green power" strategies, and new electric technologies. For more information, go to www.nfec.org/calendar.

KCCED Annual Conference

The Conference for KS Center for Community and Eco. Devo. will be April 9-10 at the Plaza Hotel in Hutchinson, KS. To attend, call Carol Gould at (785) 532-6868.

Energy Everywhere Conference

Energy Everywhere in Scottsdale, AZ, April 15-16, is designed to update co-ops on business opportunities and technology development, with an emphasis on green power and propane. Hosted by Energy Co-Opportunity (ECO). Go to www.eco.coop for more information.

Summer School for Directors

Summer School is a great way to learn about roles and responsibilities, governance issues and board-manager relations. Courses are June 6-11 in VA; July 18-23 in WY; and Aug. 15-20 in MO. Develop your schedule by selecting courses from both the CCD series and the Board Leadership series. For more information contact NRECA or Shana Holsteen at KEC.

NRECA's MMS&C Conference

Attend NRECA's Marketing, Member Services & Communications (MMS&C) Conference, July 13-16 in Reno, NV to learn about marketing and communication tools that enables you to produce better results for your co-op! For more information go to www.cooperative.com!

News from Kansas Cooperatives

Nemaha-Marshall holds Annual Meeting

400 members, families and guests were present at the Nemaha-Marshall annual meeting held on March 11.

Through the reorganization election, Gene Holthaus was re-elected as president; Darlene Frerking was re-elected as treasurer, and Bob Rottinghaus was re-elected as secretary. Galen Bauman was elected as vice-president.

Darlene Frerking, Larry Donahue, and Tom Niehues were re-elected to serve on the board for another three years.

Butler Receives Education Award



Butler REC was presented with a Friends of Education Award from the Confidence in Kansas Public Education Task Force for their involvement in area High Schools and for supporting the ElectroRally. The award was presented to Bob Nichols and Richard Pearson at a Mulvane School Board meeting. Pictured (L to R): Pearson, Harold Stapp, Nichols, Gregg Oblinger.

Heartland Electric Selects Sorority

Heartland Electric selected the Girard Chapter of Theta-Epsilon Sorority to prepare the co-op's annual meeting reports for mailing. The philanthropic sorority raises money for those who face overwhelming financial circumstances.

"Heartland is proud to have the Theta-Epsilon Sorority assist us in preparing the report for our members," said Heartland's member services director, Tom Spurgeon. "They are a giving, worthwhile organization."

The Girard Chapter is part of the 77-year-old Phi Tau Omega Sorority that has approximately 500 members in 36 chapters nationwide. Since its inception two years ago, the 21-member Girard Chapter has raised approximately \$20,000. This organization has assisted the Girard Hospital Foundation by serving meals; providing monetary and material gifts through the Adopt-A-Family Christmas program; and providing assistance to individuals who have faced catastrophic medical expenses.

"We're always helping somewhere," said Alice Smirl, a member of the Theta-Epsilon Sorority.

"We're pleased to offer our assistance with Heartland's project," added sorority member Missy Scott. "We hope as our membership grows our projects and fundraising opportunities will grow as well."



Heartland's Tom Spurgeon (R) presents a check to sorority members Missy Scott (L) and Alice Smirl.

NFEC Electrical Safety Information

The National Food and Energy Council (NFEC) has the following articles for co-ops to pass along to their members. Both articles may be customized for your co-op use and may be used in newsletters or other publications.

"Safety Tips For Rural Homeowners" is an article to educate consumers on electrical safety and proper wiring in rural areas. It helps members avoid dangerous situations. To access the article, go to www.nfec.org and click on "Electrical Wiring and Safety."

With recent ice storms in several parts of the country, utility customers are looking for information on selecting a standby generator. To help co-ops assist their members, key issues are highlighted in "How To Select A Standby Generator". It's also available at www.nfec.org. Click on "Ideas To Improve Your Electricity Use."

Deadline Approaches for .Coop Rebate

Until March 31, utility cooperatives will receive a 20 percent rebate on all .coop web addresses they buy at the regular price. .Coop, which joined .com and .org on the Internet last year, is the Internet domain exclusively for cooperatives.

For each name purchased, the offer provides a savings of \$40 for two-year registrations or \$99 for five-year registrations. To date, more than 500 utility co-ops have purchased .coop domain names.

“While .coop remains a value at the regular price, this special offer allows rural utilities to enjoy substantial savings (and) get all the names they want at an affordable price,” said Paul Hazen, president and CEO of the National Cooperative Business Association. NCBA is the primary reseller of .coop domain names.

To take advantage of the offer, U.S. credit unions and rural utility cooperatives must register their names before April 1, 2003, at www.domains.coop using the standard registration system. Co-ops and credit unions that take advantage of the offer will receive a rebate check from NCBA after March 31, 2003.

For more information on this offer, contact Richard Dines at (202) 383-5444 or rdines@ncba.coop. For more information about .coop, see www.coop.

NCBA is a Washington, DC-based national, cross-industry membership association representing cooperatives of all types, including credit unions.

dotCoop is a wholly owned subsidiary of NCBA that sponsors the .coop domain. NCBA also serves as the primary reseller of .coop domain names in the U.S. and Canada.



KEC Hires Leonard Allen

Leonard Allen will be joining the KEC family as a Communications Specialist on March 31. Leonard, a Kansas native, brings with him much communication and graphic design experience.

He will be working with the member systems on the *Kansas Country Living* center spreads, as well as other communications department activities.

KEC Members' Annual Meetings

April	1	Ark Valley – Dinner at 6:30 p.m., Meeting following dinner at Hutchinson Memorial Hall, Hutchinson.
	1	DS&O – Dinner at 6:30 p.m., Meeting at 7:30 p.m. at BiCentennial Center, Salina.
	1	Ninnescah – Dinner at 6:00 p.m., Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at Pratt Municipal Building, Pratt.
	2	Wheatland – Dinner at 11:30 a.m., Meeting at 12:30 p.m., at Syracuse 4-H Building, Syracuse.
	3	Lyon-Coffey – Dinner at 5:30 p.m., Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at Burlington High School, Burlington.
	3	Radiant – Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at Fredonia High School, Fredonia.
	4	Alfalfa – Dinner at 5:00 p.m., Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at Cherokee High School, Cherokee, OK.
	4	CMS - Dinner at 5:30 p.m., Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at South Central Middle School, Protection.
	8	Bluestem - Meeting at 7:30 p.m., Rock Creek High School, St. George
	8	Prairie Land – Dinner at 12:00 p.m., Meeting at 1:00 p.m. at Co-op Headquarters, 1101 West Highway 36, Norton.
	9	Kaw Valley – Dinner at 5:00 p.m., Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at Kaw Valley office, 1100 SW Auburn Rd., Topeka.
	10	Sedgwick County – Dinner at 6:30 p.m., Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at Cotillion Hall, Wichita.
	12	Sumner-Cowley – Dinner at 11:30 a.m., Meeting at 1:00 p.m. at Wellington Senior High School, 605 North A Street, Wellington.
	15	Victory – Dinner at 6:00 p.m., Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at Knights of Columbus Hall, 800 W. Frontview, Dodge City.
	25	Twin Valley – Meeting at 6:30 p.m. at Harrison Auditorium, Labette County High School, Altamont.
25	Rolling Hills - Dinner at 5:30 p.m., Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at the NCK Technical School in Beloit.	
May	6	Caney Valley – Dinner at 5:30 p.m., Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at Chautauqua County Fairgrounds, Sedan.
	14	Western – Dinner at 6:00 p.m., Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at Cooperative Office, 635 S. 13th St., WaKeeney.
	16	Sunflower Annual Meeting, Holcomb Rec Center, Holcomb, 8:00 a.m.
July	15	Lane-Scott – Dinner at 6:30 p.m., Meeting at 7:30 p.m. at Lane County Fair Grounds, Dighton.
September	10	Leavenworth-Jefferson – Dinner at 6:00 p.m., Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at McLouth High School Purple Gymnasium, McLouth.
November	19	Kansas Electric Power Cooperative (KEPCo) – Dinner at 6:00 p.m. Meeting immediately following Dinner, Holiday Inn, Salina.

Kansas Represented at NRECA Annual Meeting

Throughout the NRECA Annual Meeting held March 2-5, 2003, in Nashville, TN, several Kansas faces were highly visible. Among those who helped with the NRECA program were Stuart Lowry, KEC Corporate Counsel; Dean Hillman, Sedgwick Trustee; and Shiloh Dutton, Lyon-Coffey Youth Leadership Council representative.

Stuart Lowry served on a panel that discussed emerging regulatory issues and addressed the topic of the electric cooperative trustee as a "regulator."

"Kansas law that allows cooperatives the opportunity to deregulate on a local option basis and affording cooperative boards the opportunity to set rates and otherwise regulate many of areas previously regulated by the KCC," Lowry said. "The panel discussed boards serving in this 'regulatory' role."

Also helping to keep the national meeting running smoothly were Dean Hillman and Shiloh Dutton. Hillman served as a sergeant-at-arms for the sessions. Dutton worked at the NRECA Congressional Action Center, encouraging delegates to contact their Senators and U.S. Representatives on key co-op issues, including protecting electricity consumers and future generations of cooperative members.

The NRECA Annual Meeting drew more than 12,000 electric co-op leaders from around the country.



Top: The panelists for the *Emerging Regulatory Issues* session were (L to R): Wallace Tillman, NRECA's Chief Counsel and Vice President of Energy Policy; Stuart Lowry, KEC's Corporate Counsel; Jay Downen, Director at Flathead Electric Cooperative; and James Kerr, commissioner for the North Carolina Public Service Commission.

Right: Dean Hillman serves as sergeant-at-arms at the NRECA Annual Meeting.

Below: Shiloh Dutton (circled) poses with the Youth Leadership Council members representing 42 states.



NRECA Sponsors Mini-Grant Program

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) sponsors and works jointly with the National Rural Education Association (NREA) to provide ten (10) mini-grants of \$500 each to rural schools.

Following is a full description of eligibility requirements. Local co-ops are encouraged to send this information to their local schools. Any K-12 classroom teacher is welcome to apply if a rural electric cooperative serves their school, community or students' homes. Entries should be postmarked by May 1, 2003.

If you have any questions concerning the mini-grants program, please contact Shana Holsteen or NRECA's Laura Marshall at (703) 907-5717 or laura.marshall@nreca.org.

FAQ's for the 2003 Mini-Grant Program

WHO MAY APPLY FOR THESE GRANTS?

Any rural K-12 classroom teacher whose school or community is served by a local Rural Electric Cooperative (REC), or whose students' homes are served by a local REC.

HOW DO I QUALIFY FOR A GRANT?

Your school, community, or your students must be served by a local REC.

HOW MUCH ARE THE GRANTS?

There will be ten Mini-Grants of \$500 each to be expended during the 2003-2004 school year for student-based projects. Each Mini-Grant will be funded at the beginning of the 2003-2004 school year.

HOW WILL THE APPLICATIONS BE JUDGED?

All applications will be screened by the NREA Teacher Activities Committee to select fifteen finalists. The National Rural Electric Association will select the ten winners from the fifteen finalists. Applications will be judged on the following criteria:

1. A project design that demonstrates cooperation between students, teachers, and the community;
2. Appropriateness for age and grade levels;
3. A project design that encourages a high level of student involvement;
4. A project design that indicates coordination with your local REC;
5. A project design that focuses on student learning;
6. Overall quality of the application and adherence to grant guidelines.

ALL ENTRIES MUST BE POSTMARKED BY MAY 1, 2003.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE FOCUS OF A PROPOSAL?

An eligible project should feature an investigation of the science of energy or electricity. Project ideas could include a study of the local geology, the history of hydroelectric generation in your community, or alternative sources of energy for the next generation. The project should be limited only by the imagination of your students and the resources you have available.

EACH PROPOSAL MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

- The name and address of your school district;
- The name, school address, phone number, and email address of the participating teacher(s);
- The summer address and phone number for the participating teacher(s);
- The grade level(s) and size of participating class or classes;
- A brief one to two-page description of your project, which addresses each of the six criteria listed above;
- Estimated timeline for your project during the 2003-2004 school year;
- A budget detailing expenditures of at least \$500;
- The name, address, phone number, and contact person for your local REC;
- A copy of the letter you sent to the manager of your local REC in which you report that you have submitted an application to the 2003 NREA Mini-Grant Program.

WHAT CAN I USE THE MONEY FOR?

The money must be expended in compliance with your proposal for the 2003 NREA Mini-Grant Program.

MAY THE GRANT BE USED TO EXTEND/EXPAND AN EXISTING PROJECT?

Yes, but in that case, clearly indicate the scope of the original project and for what part of the original project you plan to use the NREA Mini-Grant.

WHAT KIND OF DOCUMENTATION OR "FINAL REPORT" IS REQUIRED?

Each Mini-Grant winner must submit a written final report on their project. The final report must be mailed to the NREA Mini-Grant Program, 820 Van Vleet Oval, Room 227, Norman, Oklahoma, 73019, by February 1, 2004.