

# Rural Power

Electronic Edition

A newsletter for and about Kansas Electric Cooperatives

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## Electric Cooperatives Show Support for Greensburg

First known for being the home of the world's largest hand-dug well, Greensburg is now known as the town that suffered near total destruction from a massive EF5 tornado on May 4, 2007. The city's inhabitants are hoping that they will soon be known as the greenest community in our nation.

Despite the fact that approximately 95 percent of the town's buildings were demolished, city officials and area builders have devised a unique plan to rebuild Greensburg as a model of energy efficiency by using green building materials and technology.

Greensburg Green Town, the only non-profit organization dedicated to the rebuilding of the town, is working in conjunction with city, state and federal officials, as well as the local Greensburg Green Build Committee. To help promote the construction of energy efficient homes, Kansas electric cooperatives are some of many organizations working with Greensburg Green Town to offer a week-long Green Build Energy Show.

As part of the Green Build Energy Show, the 20 Touchstone Energy electric cooperatives in Kansas, along with GeoComfort Geothermal Systems and Central Fibers Cellulose Insulation, are co-sponsoring the nationally known energy expert Doug Rye. Rye is considered an expert in the home energy conservation field, and will speak in Greensburg on July 18, 2007.

"The Greensburg committee decided to make a week long Green Build Energy Show with the main event being An Evening of Energy Efficiencies with Doug Rye," said Travis Griffin, member services manager for Butler Electric. "With all the rebuilding that is going to happen due to the tornado in Greensburg and the flooding throughout Kansas, there is a real need to educate builders and homeowners about building energy efficient homes."

The event will be centered

on energy efficient products and construction practices.

"People in the green movement around the country really see Greensburg as the first model city," said Daniel Wallach, executive director of Greensburg Green Town. "This is really exciting because nothing like this in the world exists. The people of Greensburg are really embracing this idea, and we could get a lot of attention from around the country."

Part of the Greensburg Green Town plan is to construct a model home in the community that will be open to the public and serve as a teaching tool in green advancements.

"We'll be one of the first buildings in the new downtown," Wallach stated. "Our model home, we hope, will be like a museum. It will display the latest in green technology, such as solar cell wind generation, non-toxic paints, and every kind of energy efficiency technological advancements."

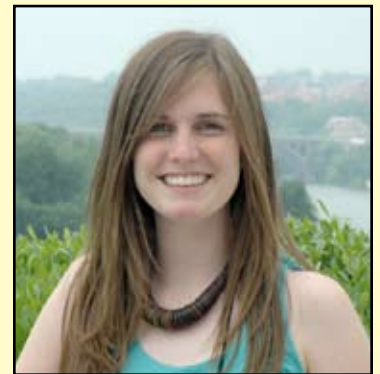
To learn more about Greensburg Green Town, please call Daniel Wallach at (620) 549-3732 or email [daniel@greensburggreentown.org](mailto:daniel@greensburggreentown.org).

## Bannister Selected to Youth Leadership Council

Abbey Bannister, the youth tour representative sponsored by Sumner-Cowley, has been selected to represent Kansas on NRECA's Youth Leadership Council (YLC).

Bannister will attend the YLC Conference, July 20-24 in Washington, D.C. The conference includes leadership training, meeting with congressional staffers who are youth tour alumni, and a competition for NRECA's National Youth Spokesperson.

"I'm very excited and honored to represent Kansas," Bannister said. "This trip will give me the opportunity to familiarize myself more with Washington, D.C., and how the government works."



Abbey Bannister

Bannister's co-op experience began when she attended the "Government in Action" Youth Tour in Washington, D.C.

All 45 members of the YLC, including Bannister, will participate in the 2008 NRECA Annual Meeting in Anaheim, CA.

## In Brief

### Opponents Gain Legal Assistance

Wind farm opponents mean business, and they've secured the services of a Wichita attorney and are discussing what action to take after the Ellis County Commission votes either to approve or deny the conditional-use permit requested by Competitive Power Ventures.

The Ellis County Environmental Awareness Coalition, a group organized in opposition to the proposed project, is preparing for a lawsuit in the event of commission approval.

*Hays Daily News – 6/18/07*

### Senate Passes Energy Bill

The Senate passed a sweeping energy legislation package last week that would mandate the first substantial change in the nation's vehicle fuel-efficiency law since 1975 despite opposition from auto companies and their Senate supporters.

The package, which still must pass the House, would also require that the use of biofuels climb to 36 billion gallons by 2022, would set penalties for gasoline price-gouging and would give the government new powers to investigate oil companies' pricing. It would provide federal grants and loan guarantees to promote research into fuel-efficient vehicles and would support test projects to capture carbon dioxide from coal-burning power plants to be stored underground.

*The Washington Post – 6/22/07*

### Wind Farm Developers Optimistic About Tax Break

Federal tax benefits for wind power development may be scheduled to lapse next year, but wind farm developers proposing local projects are unfazed.

The federal government provides about \$2.57 million per year in tax breaks for wind farm development. Wind Farm developers say that while the production tax credit has not yet been renewed by Congress, they still are expecting it. Tax breaks give wind power companies \$19 per MWh of electricity produced a year.

*Tribune Business News – 6/17/07*

## Cooperative Calendar

July	4	Holiday - KEC office closed.
	10	Lane-Scott Annual Meeting. Dinner at 6:30 p.m., Meeting at 7:30 p.m., Dighton Fair Grounds.
	18-19	KEPCo Board of Trustees Meeting, KEPCo Headquarters, Topeka.
	20	Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting, Sunflower Headquarters, Hays.
	26	MDM Meeting, KEC Headquarters, Topeka, 10 a.m.
	28-30	Summer Board Meeting, Marriott Hotel, Overland Park.
	29	Management Evaluation Committee, Marriott Hotel, Overland Park, 8 a.m.

## Pioneer Honored by Kansas Department of Commerce

Pioneer Electric Cooperative earned top honors at the June 13 Kansas Department of Commerce's Kansas Business Appreciation Month Southwest Regional Awards ceremony in Ulysses.

The cooperative was one of 32 southwest Kansas businesses that were recognized for contributions to their communities and the state economy.

At each ceremony, one company in each of three categories (Manufacturing/Distribution, Service and Retail) is awarded a Business Excellence Award,



DOC's David Kerr (left) presents the award to Pioneer's Ed Wiltse and Darlene Lucas.

and Pioneer received the top award for the Service and Retail category.

"The award criteria encompassed nearly every Touchstone Energy cornerstone, especially commitment to community," said Darlene Lucas, Pioneer's member

services representative. "They look what type of services we offer, how we impact the general public, employment, and several other areas."

This year, 270 companies were nominated for BAM Awards.

### Executive and Administrative Assistants Conference

The NRECA Executive and Administrative Assistants (E+AA) Conference is scheduled for Oct. 7-10, 2007, in Indianapolis.

This conference is designed for cooperative office professionals, including executive assistants, department secretaries, administrative professionals and support staff.

Attendees will learn about resources to work more effectively and efficiently, will be given information about health and wellness, will learn about new office technologies and business practices, will have a forum to keep up on changes taking place in the utility industry, and will be given opportunities to build a professional network among co-op office professionals.

For reservations, contact the Westin Indianapolis at (317) 262-8100 before Sept. 5. Ask for the NRECA rate of \$149.

### NRECA Managing Your Money and Investments Workshop

The NRECA workshop *Managing Your Money and Investments* will be held Aug. 21 - 22 at the Hotel at Old Town, Wichita. To make reservations, call 1-877-265-3869 and ask for the Kansas Electric room rate of \$105 before July 30. Workshop registration will be mailed directly from NRECA to each cooperative. For more information, contact Leilani Todd, KEC, at (785) 478-4554.

### NRECA Retirement Planning Seminar

The NRECA *Retirement Planning Seminar* will be held Nov. 27-28 at the Clubhouse Inn and Suites, Topeka. Call 785-273-8888 and ask for the Kansas Electric room rate of \$66 before Nov. 12. Workshop registration will be mailed directly from NRECA to each cooperative. For more information, contact Leilani Todd, KEC, at (785) 478-4554.

## Cooperatives Successfully Appeal Property Valuation

Property taxes are just one of the expenses electric cooperatives face in their daily operation. Several cooperatives reduced their tax burden with successful appeals of their property tax valuations.

Working with Doug Shepherd, KEC's vice president of member services, Brown-Atchison, Ninnescah, Prairie Land and Sedgwick County electric cooperatives had their valuations lowered between 4.3 percent and 8.1 percent. This lower valuation will result in a combined annual property tax savings of approximately \$88,000.

These cooperatives requested conferences with the Kansas Department of Revenue's Property Valuation Division (PVD) to appeal their appraised values. Shepherd first reviewed the appraisals to

identify points of contention, and then represented these cooperatives at the informal conferences. All four of these cooperatives received amended notices lowering their appraised value. KEC also represented Butler, but that cooperative did not receive a reduction in value this year.

"Utility property values are highly correlated with income in Kansas," Shepherd explained. "We look for things that might cause the PVD staff to overestimate future income streams. If a cooperative's income goes up, so will its valuation and ultimately so will its property taxes."

By successfully appealing their valuations, the cooperatives help hold the line on their expenses.

"Other than winning a reduced valuation, the cooperative has little control over the property taxes it pays," added Shepherd. "This tax goes right to the bottom line affecting the member immediately, either through a smaller capital credit allocation or higher electric rates."

Each year, Shepherd has spearheaded appraisal appeals that have saved millions in property taxes for the electric distribution cooperatives in Kansas.

While KEC is not the only organization to represent Kansas cooperatives' appeals, Shepherd has an extremely successful record. This year, his work achieved an overall 4.4 percent reduction compared to last year's 3.9 percent reduction.

## KEC Sponsors State FFA Degree Awards

KEC sponsored the awards for 163 Kansas State FFA Degree recipients representing 54 Kansas high schools during the 2007 Kansas State FFA Convention on June 1, 2007.

More than 2,000 students and FFA advisors traveled

to Manhattan to attend the 79<sup>th</sup> annual convention May 30-June 1.

As a part of the state degree ceremony, each recipient received a certificate and a golden charm, symbolic of their degree of FFA membership. KEC's Carrie Kimberlin congratulated and presented each student winner with the award.



KEC's Carrie Kimberlin (left) congratulates an FFA state degree winner and presents his award at the Kansas State FFA Convention in Manhattan.

personally toward establishing themselves in an agricultural career.

"As a former FFA member and officer at Jefferson West (Meriden), I know how hard these students have worked to earn their state degree and it is an honor to sponsor the State FFA Degree charms," said Kimberlin, KEC's communications specialist.

According to the Kansas FFA Association, the State FFA Degree is the second highest degree of membership that can be achieved as an FFA member. This step in the FFA Degree system encourages students to grow and achieve per-

## Four States Pass Tougher New Laws for Copper Thieves

Kansas was one of four states to pass new legislation to prevent copper theft. With the rising cost of copper, cooperatives across the nation – including Kansas – have experienced copper thefts from poles and substations.

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius signed a law that takes effect on July 1 that will put more responsibility on salvage dealers to identify sellers of scrap materials.

The new law establishes conditions under which it is legal for persons who are not scrap metal dealers to sell regulated scrap metal for over \$25. S. Sub 2035 applies only to scrap metal dealers who operate from a fixed location and who deal in regulated scrap metal, including any form of copper.

Two other states have legislation that will take effect on July 1. Georgia's new law will make it easier to charge copper thieves with felony charges, and stealing copper in Hawaii will be considered a felony with a sentence of up to five years in prison or a fine of up to \$10,000.

Alabama's law limiting cash payments and requiring scrap dealers to keep a registry of information for their purchases takes effect September 1.

## Congratulations



### KEC's Seele Weds Howard

Congratulations to Angela Seele, KEC's accounting assistant. Angela married Jacob Howard on May 12.

### Kansas Co-ops Hire Employees

Heartland hired Ron Graber as its member service/communication specialist in Girard. Graber has a newspaper publishing background.

Sunflower hired Cindy Hertel as a communications specialist. Hertel has taught English and journalism at Ellis High School for many years, and will be responsible for communications, photography, and publications.

## Kansas Students Attend National Cooperative Youth Tour

Youth from across Kansas recently traveled across the country to attend the 47th Annual Electric Cooperatives "Government in Action" Youth Tour in Washington, D.C.

The 29 Kansas delegates enjoyed a week long tour of the nation's capitol June 7-14, 2007. The delegates had the opportunity to visit with Senators Pat Roberts and Sam Brownback, and Reps. Jerry Moran and Todd Tiahrt, meet youth from other states, and learn about our nation's history and government. The youth also toured the memorials, Arlington National Cemetery, Smithsonian, Ft. McHenry, Holocaust Memorial Museum, and Mt. Vernon.

Kansas was one of 45 states to send a youth delegation to the annual electric cooperative youth tour. Nearly 1,500 high school students attended the 2007 NRECA Youth Day.

Since 1964, the nation's electric cooperatives have sponsored the trips of more than 40,000 high school students to visit elected officials, participate in energy and education sessions, and tour the area.

"The Kansas electric cooperatives believe that this program is an invest-

ment in our local youth," said Shana Holsteen, KEC's director of communications. "Our hope is that these students will gain some awareness of how our nation's government works and how important it is for our delegates to be involved in their local communities."

"The kids were an exceptional group of young people who knew why they were there, knew they wanted to learn and were really an enjoyable bunch," said Bob Helm, Midwest Energy's manager of corporate communications and one of this year's chaperones. "I would recommend this trip to anyone who has a child eligible or to a chaperone who has the opportunity to travel with this great group."

To see the photos from this year's tour or to learn more about the program, go to [www.youthtour.coop](http://www.youthtour.coop).



Senator Roberts visits with the Kansas delegates during the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour on June 12 in Washington, DC.

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