

# Electric Cooperatives Spark Interest in Safety at the Kansas State Fair

Kansas electric cooperatives sparked the interest of nearly 2,000 fair-goers at this year's Kansas State Fair with a high-voltage line safety demo.

Kansas electric cooperatives and the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Kansas co-sponsored the full-size, electric safety demonstration.

The demonstration, half-hour in length, was narrated by James Wright, Greg Swob, Les Loker and Brian Dreiling of Midwest Energy. The hot work was conducted by linemen from Lane-

Scott, Midwest Energy, Sedgwick County, Wheatland, and Victory. The linemen also demonstrated proper safety precaution, showed the protective gear linemen use, and answered questions from the audience.

The demonstration was offered free of charge, and was part of the State Fair's "Kansas Largest Classroom". As a bonus, the Touchstone Energy "Get Charged" kits were distributed to teachers who registered their 5<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> grade classes for the safety demonstration.



*From left: Les Loker, Midwest Energy; Marvin McCormick and Josh Schmidt, Victory; teach students at the fair how to stay safe around electricity. This is the second year that the Kansas electric cooperatives and Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Kansas have sponsored the high-voltage safety demonstration at the Kansas State Fair.*

## Co-ops Golf, Raise Funds in 12<sup>th</sup> Annual KCRE Tournament



*KCRE Golf Tournament organizers, Kirk Thompson, CMS, (left) and Doug Jackson, Rolling Hills, prepare for the golfers.*

More than \$6,600 was raised during the 12<sup>th</sup> annual Kansas Committee for Rural Electrification (KCRE) golf tournament. The event was held August 22 at the Salina Municipal Golf Course.

The KCRE golf tournament raises an amount of money approximately equal to 300 memberships and provides KCRE necessary funds to support those who support rural electric cooperative issues.

Flight winners included the teams from Kriz Davis, Stanion, Flint Hills, Lane Scott, Caney Valley, and Sedgwick County

Kevin Compton, Brown Atchison, recorded a hole in one on hole #8. 18 hole prizes were also awarded following the tournament.

The 13<sup>th</sup> Annual KCRE Golf Open scheduled for Friday, Aug. 28, 2009, at the Salina Municipal Golf Course.

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## Kansas Co-ops Send Crews for Hurricane Recovery

Immediately following Hurricane Gustav, more than 60 volunteer linemen with 42 trucks from 13 Kansas electric cooperatives headed for Louisiana to assist in restoring power in some of the worst hit areas.



Crews from 13 Kansas electric cooperatives gathered September 5 in Cherokee, KS, prior to heading to Louisiana to assist in recovery efforts from Hurricane Gustav.

Cooperative crews from Alfalfa, Bluestem, Butler, Caney Valley, Flint Hills, Heartland, Kaw Valley, LJEC, Nemaha-Marshall, Twin Valley, Victory, Western, and Wheatland, were in Louisiana for two weeks to help restore power.

The Kansas crews first reported to Dixie Electric Membership Corp. (DEMCO), headquartered in Baton Rouge. This electric cooperative estimated they had thousands of electric poles damaged or destroyed by the hurricane.

Hurricane Gustav caused significant damage and outages to Louisiana's electric co-ops.

"DEMCO, our largest co-op at roughly 100,000 meters, reported 100 percent outages with extensive damage to trees, homes and businesses," said Billy Gibson, Louisiana Electric Cooperatives.

DEMCO initially reported that they expected full restoration of their electric system in approximately six weeks.

"Because DEMCO brought in additional crews, we all helped to complete repairs in about two weeks," said Stacey Marston, KEC. "There were lines that they thought would be off for two or three days, but our crews had

them energized in one afternoon."

Despite the fact that some of the crews had to deal with snakes and even alligators, one of the biggest obstacles to restore power were the fallen trees.

"Trees were our

biggest challenge," Marston explained. "They made it difficult just trying to get around. It was really rough terrain."

Learning lessons from past storms, the line crews brought water and other essential supplies. Many of the linemen gained experience in this type of recovery effort following Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

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Linemen from Heartland and Butler discuss the removal of fallen trees from the lines.

## In Brief

### KAMO Transmission Line Gets OK

The Kansas Corporation Commission has approved an agreement to allow KAMO Electric Cooperative to build a controversial high-voltage transmission line through about 30 miles of Cherokee County. KAMO is planning to build a 345,000-volt transmission line from west of Jasper, MO, to near Pryor, OK, a distance of approximately 110 miles. Construction of the line is planned for next spring.

*The Joplin Globe – 9/13/08*

### World's First Really Clean Coal Plant Gets A Try-Out In Germany

Next week, German officials will flip the switch and turn on the world's first coal-fired power plant to use carbon capture and storage technology, in which carbon dioxide is stripped out the plant's emissions and pumped deep underground. This "clean coal" technology has been hailed as a possible way to get cheap energy without further contributing to global warming.

The 30 megawatt power station, built and operated by Swedish power company Vattenfall, will produce power along with 10 tons of highly concentrated CO<sub>2</sub> an hour. The CO<sub>2</sub> will be taken to a nearby gas field for sequestration. The Vattenfall plant is a pilot project intended to test the viability of carbon capture and storage.

*Discover – 9/5/08*

### Missouri Renewable-Energy Initiative Will Be On Nov. 4 Ballot

Missourians will get a chance to vote on a renewable energy initiative on the Nov. 4 ballot. Initially, it was kept off the ballot because local election officials determined that it was 526 signatures short of the 14,860 signatures required. But a judge concluded that a sufficient number of valid signatures had been submitted.

The initiative will ask voters whether state law should be amended to require electric utilities to generate or buy at least two percent of the electricity they sell from renewable sources such as solar, wind, biomass and hydropower by 2011 and at least 15 percent by 2021.

*Kansas City Business Journal – 9/10/08*

## Cooperative Calendar

September	19	Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting, Sunflower Headquarters, Hays.
	23	KEC Loss Control and Safety Committee Conference Call, 9 a.m.
	24	KEC Committee Meetings, Marriott Hotel, Wichita. 11 a.m. Communications 1:30 p.m. Apparatus Testing 4 p.m. Legislative and Regulatory Review and Tax
	25	KEC Executive Committee Meeting, 7 a.m., Marriott Hotel, Wichita.
	24-25	KEC Board of Trustees Meeting, Marriott Hotel, Wichita.
	24-26	Kansas Member Services Directors Association (KMSDA) Meeting, Hotel at Old Town, Wichita.
October	1-3	NRECA Region 7 Meeting, Hilton/Qwest Center, Omaha, Nebraska.
	6	ElectroRally, Kansas Speedway, Kansas City.
	15-16	KEPCo Board of Trustees Meeting, KEPCo Headquarters, Topeka.
	17	Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting, Sunflower Headquarters, Hays.
	22	KEC District 1 meeting, Lamplighter Inn, 4020 Parkview Dr., Pittsburg.
	24	KEC District 2 meeting, KEPCo Headquarters, Topeka.
	28	KEC District 3 meeting, Fox Pavilion, 1202 Main St., Hays.
	29	KEC District 4 meeting, Dodge City.
	30	MDM Meeting, KEC Headquarters, Topeka.

### Student Teams to Race in KAN-AM Electric Challenge

Soon the sounds at the Kansas Speedway in Kansas City, KS, will not be the familiar roar internal combustion engines. The sounds will be more like a buzz and a whoosh.

That's because the cars racing at the KAN-AM Electric Challenge on October 6, will be all electric.

The Challenge was created by the Kansas ElectroRally's executive committee, whose goal is to give electric car teams

the thrill of racing on a real NASCAR track.

The event is nationally sanctioned by Electrathon America. The teams will come from across Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri, and Oklahoma.

In the spirit of good sportsmanship and fun,

Kansas ElectroRally invites electric car racing teams to the KAN-AM Electric Challenge. For information, visit [www.kansaselectrorally.org](http://www.kansaselectrorally.org).



### Kansas Country Living Credited for Barn Survey Success

An article in KEC's *Kansas Country Living* is receiving much praise and is credited with the success of a statewide barn survey completed in 2007.

The article, written by KEC's Bob Jennings, resulted in more than 700 responses from barn owners in Kansas. KEC received considerable credit in the Kansas Historic Barns Survey Summary Report and also in *Kansas Preservation*, published by the Kansas State Historical Society.

Brenda Spencer, a Bluestem member who the Kansas State Historical Society put in charge of the survey, wrote, "The overwhelming response to the *Kansas Country Living* article altered the approach to the survey in that I had an advance contact for each barn to be

surveyed. The first 300 plus calls resulted in barns identified in over 80 of the 105 counties providing good geographic representation across the state."

As a direct result of this survey, seven Kansas barns were nominated to the National Register. These barn owners will now be eligible for income tax credits to provide financial assistance in maintaining and restoring their barns.

The goal of the Register is to keep these icons of the plains from disappearing. Because of the success of the survey, Spencer anticipates that more Kansas barns will be nominated to the Register.

KEC will be a sponsor of the upcoming Barn Fest '08 September 26-27 in Goessel. The yearly event is sponsored by the Kansas Barn Alliance.

# Utility Dispute with FEMA Unresolved, Appeals Likely

Twenty-six Kansas utilities providing electric service to over 300,000 Kansans have been unable to resolve differences with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that would enable them to make permanent repairs to electric facilities damaged in the December 2007 ice storm.

Meetings held in July with municipal and cooperative electric utilities and FEMA were aimed at resolving vast differences of opinion between FEMA contractors and Kansas licensed professional engineers representing the utilities on what permanent repairs remain to be completed.

“Each of the utilities has line sections that are so badly damaged that the engineers have concluded the conductor needs to be replaced, but FEMA disputes the extent of the damage,” said Stuart Lowry, KEC. “FEMA has proposed additional inspections by the utilities to identify visual evidence of damage.”

Colin Hansen of Kansas Municipal Utilities said, “Our primary concern is to get these damaged systems back and operating at pre-disaster conditions very soon. Unfortunately, the process outlined by FEMA does not get us to that point.”

According to Lowry, the inspections will take months or even a year, given the level of detail required under FEMA’s proposed inspection process. He said FEMA’s process of inspecting the damaged conductor will require an inch-by-inch examination of the damaged conductor to identify visual evidence of damage.



*Heartland lineman, Jerry Cochran, repairs lines during the 2007 ice storm.*

“We have already provided FEMA with photographs, engineering studies, inspection reports, inventory reports, outage data and other information to document the extent of the damage, so we certainly don’t welcome the additional delay the new inspections will cause,” Lowry said. He noted that no similar process has been required in nearby states that suffered damage from the same storm system.

Another concern is whether FEMA will authorize conductor replacement recommended by the engineers even after the damage is documented yet again. The electric utilities proposed the development of objective criteria to evaluate the condition of the conductor that could be applied by engineers in the inspection process.

“Even after the damage is documented to FEMA’s satisfaction, they want to perform cost analysis for each proposal to ascertain the least-cost option,” Lowry said.

He added that tests of the process at three utilities revealed that FEMA did not capture the costs of all repairs, or changed repair costs in a way to alter the result.

“There is not openness or transparency in the process FEMA proposes,” Hansen said. “There is no clear end result from the process FEMA proposes. While we support the concept of choosing the least cost option, under the law the options must be equal from the standpoint of engineering integrity.”

Lowry and Hansen both indicated that absent a change in the approach by FEMA, appeals of the decision were likely.

## Volunteers Still Needed For Greensburg Rebuilding Efforts

With the summer season passing, students and vacationers have returned to their regular routines and the volunteer workforce in Greensburg has dwindled to just a few good Samaritans.

With the recent groundbreaking of 10 additional homes to be constructed under the USDA Rural Development-supported *Greensburg Community Self-Help Housing Program*, and the announcement that funding has been secured to allow for the construction of 30 additional affordable single-family ‘green’ homes under this sweat-equity program, there is still a lot of work that needs to be completed.

Funding for the *Greensburg Community Self-Help Housing Program* is a result of the first-ever partnership between

the United Way of the Plains in Wichita and USDA Rural Development. This cooperative funding arrangement allows the City of Greensburg to work with Mennonite Housing Rehabilitation Services to oversee the construction of affordable single-family homes. A total of 50 affordable ‘green’ homes are planned.

The *Greensburg Community Self-Help Housing Program* includes the involvement of 19 non-profits and faith-based organizations, national energy experts, government agencies, and trade associations to help reduce the cost of the houses being built to replace those homes lost from the devastating May 4, 2007, tornado that struck Greensburg and the region.

## Hurricane Recovery, *Cont.*

“The damage that we saw following Gustav was not as severe as what we saw after Katrina,” Marston said.

The Kansas line crews were able to work in both historical and extremely poor areas.

“It was cool knowing that we were energizing 200-year-old plantations. Then in other places we were helping poor areas. We would take extra food and drop them off in those areas. They were very appreciative folks.”

Several Kansas line crews voluntarily extended their stay to restore power at Jefferson Davis Electric Cooperative in Jennings, LA. The crews were released on Sept. 17.