

Rural Power

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Midwest Energy awarded outstanding achievement in energy efficiency

Midwest Energy won the “Outstanding Achievement” award in Energy Program Design or Implementation for the fourth consecutive year at the Association of Energy Services Professionals national conference January 17-20th in Orlando, FL.

“Midwest Energy is extremely excited to win the Outstanding Achievement Award from AESP,” said Michael J. Volker, director of regulatory and energy services.

Midwest Energy’s How\$mart® program is designed to overcome the barriers preventing economical energy efficiency measures from being installed in small commercial and residential buildings.

“For a company our size, serving less than 90,000 electric and natural gas customers in central and western Kansas, it is really an honor to be recognized nationally with this very prestigious award,” Volker said. “We’re proud of our How\$mart® Program and how it provides sig-

nificant energy savings for our customers, lowers their monthly bills and reduces the impact on the environment.”

Midwest Energy’s How\$mart® program invests in measures that improve the energy efficiency of its members homes or businesses, including new heating and air equipment installation, insulation and air sealing. Members then repay the investment with part of the savings on their energy bill. The program has nearly quadrupled the number of Midwest’s energy audits that are completed yearly.

Midwest Energy’s How\$mart® program was recognized in 2008 as a Utility Best Practice by Chartwell. The Environmental Defense Fund named How\$mart® as one of the 2009 “Environmental Innovations in Business.”

In 2010, Midwest Energy received an “Ace Award for Outstanding Conservation & Stewardship” from Apogee Interactive for the How\$mart® program.



Kansas Electric Cooperatives promotes grassroots advocacy program

As the Kansas electric co-ops enter into annual meeting season, KEC staff prepare to invite members to join the KEC grassroots advocacy program.

This program, created through the KEC Legislative Committee, was formed to encourage cooperative members to join the conversation with elected officials about government activities that could impact their electric bills.

Members will be asked at the co-ops’ annual meetings to become advocates by filling out a post card. Once the card is filled out, their names will be entered into the national database.

“The members may then receive informational emails to let them know what is happening with energy policy or other issues that could affect their electric service,” said KEC’s manager



Members will be encouraged to become an advocate through the grassroots program by filling out post cards at their annual meetings.

of government relations, Dave Holthaus. “Or we may ask them to write their elected officials about a specific issue.”

This initiative will support NRECA’s “Our Energy, Our Future” program – a national grassroots campaign that engages members about how to achieve energy issues while keeping electricity affordable.

“Kansas currently has just over 1,100 advocates currently signed up,” Holthaus explained. “We’d like to see that number grow in case we ever have an issue where we’d need to ask our members to help.”

The Kansas cooperative managers will be contacted by KEC staff to coordinate the distribution of the post cards, and the process for the creation of the member email database for each cooperative.



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Smart Grid panel agrees on data-exchange standards for electricity usage

The governing board of the public-private Smart Grid Interoperability Panel has voted in favor of a new standard important for two-way data communications between utilities and their customers, bringing the next-generation “smart” electrical power grid a step closer to reality. The data standard will allow utilities and customers to exchange detailed information about electricity usage in a consistent format. This will enable consumers to track their electricity usage and help them better manage their energy consumption and costs.

EE ONLINE – 2/18/11

New transmission lines solving wind industry’s biggest problem

ITC Holdings’ Green Power Express is a network of transmission upgrades across the Midwest. President Obama recently highlighted one key part of the new system – a high voltage line connecting windy North Dakota with Chicago. The Green Power Express is expected to spur construction of hundreds of megawatts of new wind power from developers with pending projects in the Dakotas.

RW TOWT & ASSOC – 2/17/11

Nebraska Public Power District to offer voluntary, early retirement program

The Nebraska Public Power District announced it is offering a voluntary early retirement incentive program to a select group of eligible employees. The voluntary, early retirement incentive program is available to approximately 360, eligible, non-nuclear employees. NPPD hopes to save \$10 million in labor savings from the program.

NPPD – 2/14/11

MARCH

- 3-11 **NRECA Annual Meeting**, Orlando, FL.
- 18 **Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting**, Sunflower Headquarters, Hays.
- 23-24 **KEC Board of Trustees Meeting**, Marriott Courtyard, Salina.
- 31 **MDM Meeting**, KEC Headquarters, Topeka.

annualmeetings

MARCH

- 1 **Nemaha-Marshall**, lunch at 11:30 a.m., meeting at 1 p.m., American Legion, 207 5th Street, Axtell.
- 14 **Bluestem**, meeting at 7:30 p.m., United Methodist Church Family Life Center, 5th & Clarke, Clay Center.
- 17 **Flint Hills**, dinner at 5:30 p.m., meeting at 7 p.m., Center High School, 2382 310th (Junction of Hwy 77 and 310), Lost Springs.
- 17 **Butler**, dinner at 6 p.m., meeting at 7 p.m., Circle High School, 905 Main Street, Towanda.
- 21 **Lyon-Coffey**, dinner at 6 p.m., meeting at 7 p.m., Burlington High School, 830 Cross Street, Burlington.
- 22 **Prairie Land**, lunch at Noon, meeting at 12:45 p.m., co-op headquarters, 14935 U.S. Hwy 36, Norton.
- 24 **Doniphan**, dinner at 6:30 p.m. meeting at 7:30 p.m., Doniphan West School, Highway 20 East, Denton.
- 25 **Rolling Hills**, dinner at 5:30 p.m., meeting at 6:30 p.m. NCK Technical School Gym, 3033 U.S. Highway 24, Beloit.
- 26 **Pioneer**, meeting at 10 a.m., lunch at 12 p.m., Civic Center, 1000 W. Patterson Avenue, Ulysses.
- 29 **Ninnescah**, dinner at 6 p.m., meeting at 7 p.m., Municipal Building, 117 West Third, Pratt.
- 29 **Heartland**, meeting at 7 p.m., Ft. Scott Community College, Ellis Family Fine Arts Center, 2108 S. Horton, Fort Scott.

APRIL

- 1 **Alfalfa**, dinner at 5 p.m., meeting at 7 p.m., Cherokee High School Gym, 412 E. 5th, Cherokee, Oklahoma.
- 2 **Sumner-Cowley**, lunch at 11:30 a.m., meeting at 1 p.m., High School, East U.S. Highway 160, Wellington.
- 5 **DS&O**, dinner at 6:30 p.m., meeting at 7:30 p.m., Sterl Hall, 619 N. Rogers Avenue, Abilene.
- 6 **Wheatland**, (central time) lunch at 11:30 a.m., meeting at 12:20 p.m., Scott County Fairgrounds, William Carpenter Bldg., Scott City.
- 6 **Kaw Valley**, dinner at 5 p.m., meeting at 6:30 p.m., co-op headquarters, 1100 SW Auburn Road, Topeka.
- 7 **Radiant**, dinner at 5:30 p.m., meeting at 7 p.m., co-op headquarters, Hwy. 400 & Jewell Road, Fredonia.
- 7 **CMS**, dinner at 5:30 p.m., meeting 7 p.m., High School, 409 School Addition, Meade.
- 12 **Sedgwick County**, dinner at 6:30 p.m., meeting at 7 p.m., Cotillion Ballroom, 1120 West Kellogg, Wichita.
- 12 **Ark Valley**, dinner at 6:30 p.m., meeting following dinner, State Fair Grounds, Sunflower North Building, 2200 N. Main, Hutchinson.
- 12 **Victory**, dinner at 6 p.m., meeting at 7 p.m., Civic Center, 2110 First Avenue, Dodge City.
- 14 **KAMO Power**, reception at 5:30 p.m., dinner at 6:30 p.m., meeting at 7:30 p.m., Chateau on the Lake, 415 North State Highway 265, Branson, Missouri.
- 21 **Twin Valley**, dinner at 6 p.m., meeting at 7 p.m., Labette County High School Cafeteria, 601 S. High School, Altamont.
- 27 **LJEC**, meeting at 7 p.m., McLouth School Auditorium, 217 Summit Street, McLouth.

MAY

- 3 **Caney Valley**, dinner at 5:30 p.m., meeting at 7 p.m., Chautauqua County Fairgrounds, North Park Avenue, Sedan.
- 11 **Western**, lunch at 12 p.m., meeting at 1 p.m., co-op headquarters, 635 S. 13th Street, WaKeeney.
- 13 **Tri-County**, dinner at 5:30 p.m., meeting at 6 p.m., Texas County Activity Center, 5th Street and Sunset, Guymon, Oklahoma.
- 20 **Sunflower**, meeting at 8:30 a.m., Lane-Scott Headquarters, 410 S. High Street, Dighton.

NOVEMBER

- 16 **KEPCo**, dinner at 6 p.m., meeting following dinner, Prairie Band Casino and Resort, 12305 150, Mayetta
- 21 **Midwest Energy**, meeting at 1:30 p.m., Fort Hays State University, Robins Center, One Tiger Place, Hays

Electric co-ops participate in Topeka farm show

After 12 years away from the Topeka Farm Show, four member co-ops, Bluestem, Kaw Valley, Lyon-Coffey and LJEC joined together and sponsored a booth to educate and talk with their members and the public.

The event lasted three days and over 300 exhibitors including the Kansas Highway Patrol and AM 580 WIBW Radio were in attendance. An estimated 30,000 people showed up despite wintery weather conditions that plagued the area during the week.

The co-ops ran a joint booth at the show which included a display of the electric usage of CFL and incandescent light bulbs, as well as a ticket booth to win an electric barbecue grill. Linda Hamilton, a member of Bluestem, took home the door prize.

Joe Heinen, Assistant Manager at LJEC, spearheaded the co-ops involvement with the show. Heinen said the



Ella Gantz, whose parents are members of LJEC, stopped by the electric cooperative booth at the Topeka Farm Show.

other area co-ops were very interested in exhibiting at the show and that the event was very helpful for members. "I met several co-op members in person that I had talked to over the phone, said Heinen. It provided a very good opportunity for members to talk to someone from their respective co-op."

The majority of people at the show were from rural communities that are served by the KEC, making it a perfect place to answer questions and discuss their business. Ron Dickey, member services manager of Bluestem, said he got the chance to discuss rates, optional services his co-op has including lightning protection and meter reading, as well as answer questions and address complaints. "It's about the customer, said Dickey. We were not selling anything. It's not about what we took away from the show; it's about what they took away from the show."

congrats

Gary Smith retirement party

Gary Smith retired January 1, 2011 as the Community Program Director for USDA Rural Development.

Smith invites everyone to join him, his family and friends in Topeka on Saturday, March 12, to celebrate his 38½ years of Federal Service.

Cost is \$14.00 for the meal. If you would like to contribute toward the gift, please include that as well. Any stories or photos are encouraged. Please RSVP no later than March 1 to gayle.smith@casconstruction.com.

KEC's Holsteen weds Read



Congratulations to Shana Holsteen, KEC's director of communications. She married Randy Read of Rossville on Feb. 11 in Hawaii.

NRECA, CFC, Federated and NRTC annual meetings set for Orlando

Thousands of cooperative leaders are expected to converge in Orlando, March 3 - 9, 2011, to set NRECA's policy agenda for the year at NRECA's Annual Meeting, and the annual meetings of CFC, Federated and NRTC.

Trustees will set the course for electric co-ops in the year ahead by delving into resolutions from the membership and participating in the business meeting. They will listen to world-class speakers and cooperative leaders share their valuable insights about our industry, and they will learn more about critical issues.

NRECA's Glenn English will address the assembly with compelling commentary on the 2011 theme, "Our Members - Our Power." English will give his outlook on the future of energy in the U.S. and how grassroots action must serve as



Melinda Becker

a foundation for the success of our rural electric systems. Secretary of Agriculture Thomas Vilsack will keynote with a message about the current administration and how electric cooperatives fit into our nation's future.

Attendees will hear Scott Pelley, "60 Minutes" investigative reporter offering inspiring stories via a multi-media trip around the world.

Representing Kansas on the NRECA Youth Leadership Council (YLC) is Melinda Becker. Sponsored by Prairie Land and KEC, Becker will join high school students from 44 other states in assisting with NRECA's annual meeting. She will work at the NRECA Congressional Action Center to encourage cooperative members to contact their Senators and U.S. Representatives on key co-op issues, and she will provide assistance to NRECA staff and participate in educational forums.

The schedule of the NRECA Annual Meeting has been changed slightly this year. The entertainment night, featuring Clint Black, is now on Tuesday, March 8; and the TechAdvantage Expo will be open March 8-11.

Place Your Ad HERE!

We are excited to announce a new advertising opportunity in the *Rural Power* newsletter.

Advertisers will reach 900 cooperative decision-makers in Kansas each month in this very space.

Advertising in *Rural Power* will be sold on a first-come, first-serve basis. Space in each issue for advertising is limited.

If you know a business that would like to advertise in this space, e-mail ckimberlin@kec.org.

RuralPower

Bluestem project selected for USDA funding

Bluestem Electric Cooperative was selected to receive funding from the USDA Rural Economic Development Loan Program.

The cooperative's project will receive a loan of \$192,000 to pass through to Kansas Hardwoods, Inc., a manufacturing company and saw mill in Belvue. These funds will be leveraged with a Kansas Hardwoods, Inc. contribution of \$48,000, for the construction of a new facility to allow for growth and expansion of their existing facility.

Their current product line and services, which include kiln drying, inter-

national sales of treated lumber, pallets, and shipping material, will expand to also include sales of mulch and products for bio fuel. Reaching new markets and attracting new customers will create an additional eight jobs in the community of Belvue which has a population of 228 people.

USDA Rural Economic Development funds can be used for a variety of purposes, including community facilities and infrastructure, improving access to local medical care and other projects that encourage a favorable climate for job creation and economic growth.

Training funds available for electric distribution co-ops

The Kansas Department of Commerce has made training funds available for electrical and gas transmission and distribution companies in Kansas.

The State Energy Sector Partnership and Training Grant (SESPT) has set aside funds to pay or partially pay for the training of workers new to the energy transmission industry.

All funds are distributed based on an application form that can be found on the Kansas Department of Commerce website at www.kansascommerce.com/sespt. This website also provides an overview of other grant activities.

For more information or to apply for these funds, call Joey Frederickson at the Kansas Department of Commerce at 785-296-2283 or email jfrederickson@kansascommerce.com.

Additionally, funding is available through both the RA Works and the RA Scholarships grant. Funding from these grants can be used to offset the costs of the related technical instruction of eligible participants working in a registered apprenticeship.

The SESPT application will serve as an application for RA Works and RA Scholarship funds.

The Kansas Department of Commerce Registered Apprenticeship Program has funding available to help support the cost of Related Technical Instruction for RA sponsors/employers in advanced manufacturing and energy industries who hire new employees through their local workforce center. The new employees must be identified as WIA eligible by local workforce staff.



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