

Rural Power

INSIDE

- 2 | Calendar
- 2 | Kansas Co-op Annual Meetings
- 3 | K-State's Electrical Power Affiliates Program
- 4 | KEC Annual Meeting

Speaker of the House, Attorney General part of KEC's 72nd Annual Meeting

Representatives of Kansas electric cooperatives gathered in Topeka Jan. 25-28 for KEC's 72nd Annual Meeting. The attendees discussed issues and challenges facing the co-ops, listened to a wide range of speakers and participated in special presentations and events.

The meeting opened Monday with Speaker of the Kansas House of Representatives, Ray Merrick, who reported on significant issues facing the 2014 legislative session, and he answered questions from the audience.

Derek Schmidt, Kansas Attorney General, reported on the State's response to regulatory overreach, and reviewed recent cases where Kansas led the effort in challenging EPA and other federal decisions impacting the utility business.

Schmidt said, "We are questioning whether EPA rules are legal. We've entered in a lawsuit against the cross-state air pollution rule. This is something the Supreme Court ultimately decides. This issue is about a transfer of wealth from the Midwest to the coasts. We believe energy decisions should be made by Congress and not the EPA."

The attendees had a short history lesson with Ted Case, Execu-



Speaker of the Kansas House of Representatives, Ray Merrick, kicked off the KEC Annual Meeting on Jan. 27 in Topeka.

tive Director of the Oregon Rural Electric Cooperative Association. In his book, *Power Plays*, Case reviewed the connection between co-ops and historical milestones. He recounted important relationships between electric cooperatives and several former Presidents, including Eisenhower, Johnson, Kennedy, FDR, and Truman. He then autographed copies of his book. Proceeds from the sale of his book went to support KCRE.

As featured in this month's *Kansas Country Living* magazine, Dr. Noel Shulz, Associate Dean for Engineering Research and Graduate Programs at Kansas State University, described the Electrical Power Affiliates Program (EPAP) and the Smart Grid Laboratory. The EPAP and Smart Grid Laboratory is a program that K-State is implementing to prepare engineering students for power industry careers. Shulz thanked KEC, KEPCo, Sunflower, and Midwest Energy for leading the co-op participation in this program.

During the annual meeting luncheon, speaker Steve Gilliland shared humorous stories and urged the more than 350 attendees to "Enjoy the Ride" in life. Bruce Graham presented the Power+Hope Award to two cooperative employees. Joe Heinen, LJEC, and Bryan Mulligan, Wheatland, were recognized for going above and beyond while showing commitment to the cooperative principles.

Additional speakers featured on the agenda included Melissa Brunner, WIBW news anchor,



The 2014 KEC Board officers were elected during the KEC board meeting. From left: Kathleen O'Brien, Vice President; Patrick Riley, Treasurer; Ralph Phillips, President; and Keith McNickle, Secretary.

Bryan Singleton, President of Practical Energies; Liz Sosa, Public Square Communities; and KEC's Dave Holthaus and Melissa Skelton who gave a legislative briefing. Bruce Graham reviewed results of a recent survey of Kansas's attitudes renew-
continued on p. 4



A Traditional Electric Cooperative

PO Box 4267
Topeka, KS 66604-0267
www.kec.org

Join Kansas Electric Cooperatives
Facebook page

inbrief

Governor Brownback and Kansas Senate Committee send message on Lesser Prairie Chicken

In the Kansas Statehouse, members of the Senate Natural Resources Committee endorsed legislation that would attempt to maintain management and control of the Lesser Prairie Chicken (LPC) in Kansas and supersede any federal action. SB 276 is in response to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) decision due by March 30 whether to list the LPC as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. Listing the LPC could have a devastating impact on the western Kansas economy.

In hopes of avoiding a federal listing of the LPC, state wildlife officials in Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas have proposed a five-state conservation plan. But during his testimony on January 23, KEC CEO Bruce Graham told Senators that the plan would impose significant mitigation costs for any development in the LPC habitat. Graham pointed out that mitigation costs would double the price of constructing electric transmission lines and significantly raise the cost of distribution lines. In separate action, Governor Sam Brownback issued a letter of concern to the USFWS officials on January 30 that threatens judicial action if the species is listed.

Senate approves co-op pension plan bill

A bill that prevents unnecessary cost increases and funding volatility for electric cooperatives that participate in the NRECA Retirement Security Plan has unanimously passed the Senate and is headed to the House of Representatives.

The Cooperative and Small Employer Charity Pension Flexibility Act, a co-op legislative priority, cleared the Senate on Jan. 28. Sen. Pat Roberts and Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) led this effort for electric cooperatives. Sen. Jerry Moran was also an early co-sponsor of the legislation.

co-opcalendar

FEBRUARY

- 19-20 **KEPCo Board of Trustees Meeting**, KEPCo Headquarters, Topeka
- 21 **Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting**, Sunflower Headquarters, Topeka

MARCH

- 2-5 **NRECA Annual Meeting**, Nashville, TN
- 12-13 **KEC Board of Trustees Meeting**, Marriott Courtyard, Salina
- 19 **KEPCo Board of Trustees Meeting**, Wichita Marriott

annualmeetings

FEBRUARY

- 20 **Brown-Atchison – lunch at 11 a.m.**, meeting at 12:45 p.m., Cooperative Headquarters, 1712 Central Avenue, Horton

MARCH

- 4 **Nemaha-Marshall – lunch at 11:30 a.m.**, meeting at 1 p.m., Axtell American Legion, 205 5th Street, Axtell
- 10 **Bluestem – meeting at 7 p.m.**, United Methodist Church, Family Life Center, 5th & Clarke, Clay Center
- 13 **Butler – dinner at 5:30 p.m.**, meeting at 7 p.m., Circle High School, 905 Main St., Towanda
- 13 **Heartland – meeting at 7 p.m.**, Ft. Scott Community College, Ellis Arts Center, 2108 S. Horton, Fort Scott
- 15 **Pioneer – lunch at 11:30 a.m. meeting at 1 p.m.**, Grant County Civic Center, 1000 W. Patterson, Ulysses
- 25 **Ninnescah – dinner at 6 p.m.**, meeting after dinner, Pratt Municipal Bldg., 117 W. 3rd, Pratt
- 25 **Prairie Land**, lunch at 12 p.m., meeting at 12:45 p.m., Cooperative Headquarters, 14935 U.S. Highway 36, Norton
- 27 **Doniphan – dinner at 6 p.m.**, meeting at 7 p.m., Midway School, Hwy 20 West, Denton
- 27 **Flint Hills – dinner at 5 p.m.**, meeting at 7 p.m., Centre High School, 2382 310th St., Lost Springs
- 31 **Lyon-Coffey – dinner at 6 p.m.**, meeting at 7 p.m., Emporia Civic Auditorium, 111 E. 6th Avenue, Emporia

APRIL

- 1 **Ark Valley – dinner at 6:30 p.m.**, meeting after dinner, Kansas State Fairgrounds Main Street entrance, Sunflower Bldg., Hutchinson
- 2 **Kaw Valley – dinner at 5 p.m.**, meeting at 6:30 p.m., Cooperative Warehouse, 1100 SW Auburn Road, Topeka
- 2 **Wheatland – lunch at 11:30 a.m.**, meeting at 12:30 p.m., Holcomb Community Center, 106 Wiley, Holcomb
- 3 **Radiant – dinner at 5:30 p.m.**, meeting at 7 p.m., Cooperative Headquarters, 9346 Jewell Rd., Fredonia
- 4 **Alfalfa – dinner at 5 p.m.**, meeting at 7 p.m., Cherokee High School, 412 E. 5th, Cherokee, OK
- 5 **Sumner-Cowley – lunch at 11:30 a.m.**, meeting at 1:15 p.m., Wellington High School, East Highway 160, Wellington
- 8 **DS&O – Registration at 6 p.m.**, dinner at 6:30 p.m., meeting at 7 p.m., Sterl Hall, 619 N. Rogers, Abilene
- 8 **Sedgwick County – dinner at 6:30 p.m.**, meeting at 7 p.m., The Cotillion, 11120 W. Kellogg, Wichita
- 10 **CMS – dinner at 5:30 p.m.**, meeting at 7 p.m., High School, 409 School Addition, Meade
- 15 **Victory – dinner at 6 p.m.**, meeting at 7 p.m., Western State Bank Expo Center, 11333 Highway 283, Dodge City
- 22 **LJEC – meeting at 7 p.m.**, High School Auditorium, 217 Summit Street, McLouth
- 24 **Twin Valley – dinner at 6 p.m.**, meeting at 7 p.m., Labette County High School, 401 S. High School, Altamont
- 25 **Rolling Hills – dinner at 5:30 p.m.**, meeting at 6:30 p.m., NCK Technical College, East U.S. Highway 24, Beloit

MAY

- 6 **Caney Valley – dinner at 5:30 p.m.**, meeting at 7 p.m., Cedar Vale School Gymnasium, 508 Dora, Cedar Vale
- 14 **Western – lunch at 12 p.m.**, meeting at 1 p.m., Cooperative Headquarters, 635 S. 13th Street, WaKeeney
- 16 **Sunflower – meeting at 8 a.m.**, lunch at 12 p.m. Victory Headquarters, 3230 N. 14th Avenue, Dodge City

NOVEMBER

- 19 **KEPCo – meeting at 4 p.m.**, dinner at 6 p.m., Marriott Hotel, 9100 Corporate Hills Drive, Wichita

Kansas co-ops, K-State's Electrical Power Affiliates Program connects students to power industry

Kansas State University's Electrical Power Affiliates Program (EPAP) is closing ties between academics and the electric utility industry.

"K-State has this program to connect students to the career that they want close to their homes," said Dr. Noel Schulz, Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Programs. As the workforce for

electrical engineers gets closer to retirement, KSU is realizing the importance of giving students opportunities to be involved in the industry so they can fill the job market.

KEC, KEPCo, Sunflower and Midwest Energy have recently partnered to become affiliates of the program.

"We are coordinating the electric cooperative participation in EPAP by assuring our cooperatives are active in program leadership, working committees, and student outreach opportunities," said Bruce Graham, CEO of Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc.

Schulz says she has seen in a

short time how EPAP has helped to fill needed holes in the electric power industry.

"It is important that students gain practical experience through participating in research projects and working closely with representatives in the power industry," she said. "The Electrical Power Affiliates Program is connecting students to the tech-

nology and the resources they need to have great careers."

An important component of the EPAP is the Smart Grid Laboratory—a place for students to be exposed to state-of-the-art technology. The purpose of the Smart Grid Lab, which was dedicated in 2012, is to allow faculty and students to be involved in programs, as well as an opportunity to link electric power, communications, controls, and computer science.

One advantage of EPAP is the opportunity for students to return home after graduation to begin a career.

"The call to return home can be

very powerful. When given that opportunity, those employees are often the most committed to the cooperative and become community anchors as well," said Graham.

Thanks to EPAP and the Smart Grid laboratory, there has been an increase in students in all fields of engineering. "More students are in electrical power classes. I think it has to do with the resources that are provided," Schulz said.

"There are career opportunities in rural Kansas and the electric cooperatives are steady and strong employers," Graham added. "In fact, they are such steady employers, there haven't been many opportunities in the past decade. Our workforce is aging and retirements are pending. We want to make sure the cooperatives are forefront in the mind of graduates."



Dr. Noel Schulz (right) poses with her students at KSU's Smart Grid laboratory on the cover of the February issue of *Kansas Country Living*.

Co-ops help members "Kill-A-Watt"

Electric co-ops are helping members to save energy and money by tracking usage.

By using the "Kill-A-Watt EZ" Monitoring Meter," members can identify which appliances use the most electricity – and where money can be saved by cutting usage.

The meters can be purchased for approximately \$35, but both Pioneer and Wheatland have made the devices available through the libraries within their service areas.

"Becoming aware of how your home uses energy is key to reducing usage and costs," said Wheatland Manager, Bruce Mueller. "We're excited to offer this free resource."

The Kill-A-Watt device simply plugs into a wall outlet and then members can plug their appliances or electronic devices into the monitor. Kill-A-Watt then displays both the usage and the cost associated with that usage.

insympathy

Joan Ayers

Joan Ayers, wife of Sunflower and Wheatland board member Charles Ayers, died Feb. 2, 2014, at Swedish Medical Center in Denver. Arrangements will be announced Friday afternoon by Price & Sons Funeral Home in Leoti. Online condolences may be shared at www.priceandsons.com.

congrats

KEC's Kimberlin welcomes daughter

Carrie Kimberlin, KEC's Communications Specialist, her husband Ryan, and their son Wyatt welcomed the birth of daughter Stella Leigh on Jan. 6. Stella was 8lbs 14oz and measured 21 inches long.



KEC's Doeblin weds Skelton

Melissa Doeblin, Manager of Government Relations for KEC, married Joshua Skelton on December 21, 2013, in Lawrence, Kansas. It was a snowy Winter Solstice, but the couple happily celebrated with family and friends.



KEC's 72nd annual meeting, cont.

able energy. The attendees also heard reports from Keith Ross, NRECA Director; Ed Wiltse, KCRE; Tom Beamon, CFC; Phil Irwin, Federated; Seth Hart, CoBank; Gordon Hibbard, Kansas 4-H Foundation; Joyce Blanka, KEC Auxiliary; and Catie Crosley, NRECA Youth Leadership Council.

The KEC Loss Control, Safety and Compliance Department recognized cooperatives that earned "No Lost Time" Accident Awards, and those that received Safety Achievement Certificates for 2013.

Kansas legislators were the focus of the evening during KEC's Annual

Legislative Reception. Approximately 80 members of the Kansas Legislature dropped by the reception to visit with cooperative constituents. Many other state officials were in attendance, as well.

The KCRE silent auction raised \$4,540. The KEC Auxiliary raffle and quilt auction raised \$1,173 for KEC's youth programs.

The KEC Board of Trustees elected officers for 2014, which included Ralph Phillips, LJEC, as President; Kathleen O'Brien, Nemaha-Marshall, as Vice President; Keith McNickle, Ark Valley, as Secretary; and Patrick Riley, Wheatland, Treasurer.



Bruce Graham (right) presents John Blackwell with a meter lamp as a thank you for his two years of service as KEC Board President.

Prior to the meeting, two board leadership courses were offered to the Trustees. Bryan Singletary facilitated New and Emerging Technologies and Continuity Management and Emergency Response Planning for Directors.

KEC hosted its ninth annual Expo, as well as a breakfast that featured a professional pancake flipper from Chris Cakes of Wichita. Available this year were two Expo breakout sessions that featured the BoardPaq app. KEC staff also offered a tablet "help desk" for those with new iPads or other tablet devices.

In addition, the KEC Auxiliary held its own program on January 27. Gary Clarke, Cowabunga Safaris, took the board spouses on a virtual safari with a humorous presentation. Also Debbie Lyons-Blythe, 2012 Farm Mom of the Year, shared her goals for building consumer appreciation for agriculture. Blythe encouraged the women to watch her debut in the Monsanto "Begins With a Farmer" Super Bowl commercial.



Rural Power

Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. • PO Box 4267 • Topeka, KS 66604-0267



Rural Power is published every three weeks on Fridays. This electronic version is provided to you as a service of KEC. If you would like to receive personal e-mail notice of this publication in electronic format or discontinue such notice, please email sread@kec.org.