

# Rural Power

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## Kansas co-op leaders deliver key messages to Congressional staff

This week, 25 electric cooperative employees and directors, representing 15 cooperatives, met with the staff of the Kansas Congressional Delegation while in Washington, D.C., for NRECA's Legislative Conference.

The two-day summit gave 1,500 co-op officials the training they need to speak on issues critical to maintaining affordable and reliable electric service to 42 million co-op members nationwide. In addition, NRECA's new CEO Jo Ann Emerson, held a series of "town hall" meetings to listen to member co-op priorities and address questions.

This year's program featured nine education sessions that explained key issues in depth to strengthen participant ability to communicate effectively on the Power Marketing Administrations, cybersecurity, rural broadband, and more.

"This annual event creates visibility for our program on Capitol Hill and gives us a chance to bring voices from home that can put a grass-



From left: Perry Rubart, Wes Campbell, Stuart Lowry, Phil Wages, Dave Childers, Ken Maginley, Carol Dorr, Dave Holthaus, Melissa Doebelin, Don Hellwig and Scott Whittington were part of the Kansas delegation at the NRECA Legislative Conference held April 28-May 1.

roots perspective on the issues. For example, Woody Barnes, a Wheatland Director, is also a home-builder. He spoke directly about how a DOE proposal to mandate heat pump water heaters would negatively impact

co-ops as well as home buyers," said Bruce Graham, KEC's CEO.

The Kansas group held its traditional and popular Monday lunch for Kansas Congressional office staff. On Tuesday, they visited with key energy staff about RUS loans, coal ash regulation, electric water heater efficiency standards, maintaining the co-op pole attachment exemption from FCC regulation, and the Endangered Species Act.

Besides those pictured above, the Kansas contingent included: Woody Barnes, John Blackwell, Joe Conley, Dale Coomes, Bruce Graham, Clare Gustin, Seth Hart, Ron Holsteen, Keith Miller, Bruce Mueller, Randy Quint, Bill Riggins, Keith Ross, and Daryl Tieben.

## Bluestem to train bus drivers after students escape encounter with power lines

On April 22, parts of Kansas experienced winter weather as sleet and snow fell. A school bus driver within Bluestem's service territory hit a slick spot and the bus – loaded with three school children – went off the road.

A utility pole fell across the bus, but fortunately the lines were not energized. Despite potential danger, the driver proceeded to have the students exit the bus.

Bluestem first learned of the accident when they started to receive outage calls. Bluestem's operations foreman, Courtney Grater, was the first to respond.

"We are so thankful that no one was hurt," said Grater. "I was the first one there, and the kids had already left on another bus. The driver was talking with a deputy."

"The accident happened southwest of Wakefield," explained Grater. "The driver went into the ditch hitting the pole on the passenger side of the bus."

As a follow-up to this accident, Bluestem's staff is

scheduling a safety demonstration for the bus drivers. For an educational video on vehicle accident safety, visit Safe-Electricity's YouTube channel.



Following an accident on April 22, the driver had students exit the bus that was in contact with a power line that was not energized. Bluestem's Journeyman Lineman Kevin Swenson repairs the damage.



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## MAY

- 7 **Caney Valley Annual Meeting – dinner at 5:30 p.m.**, meeting at 7 p.m., Cedar Vale School Gymnasium, 500 Dora, Cedar Vale
- 8 **Western Annual Meeting – lunch 12 p.m.**, meeting at 1 p.m., Cooperative Headquarters, 635 S. 13th Street, WaKeeney
- 8-9 **KEC Board of Trustees Meeting**, 9100 Corporate Hills Drive, Wichita Marriott
- 9 **KAMO Annual Meeting – dinner at 6:30 p.m.**, meeting at 7:30 p.m., Chateau on the Lake, 416 State Highway 65, Branson, MO
- 15-16 **KEC Board of Trustees Meeting**, Geary County Convention Center, Courtyard by Marriott, Junction City
- 17 **Sunflower Annual Meeting and Board of Directors Meeting**, Annual Meeting starts at 8 a.m., Pioneer Electric Co-op Headquarters, 1850 W. Oklahoma, Ulysses
- 21-23 **KEC LCS&C's Supervisors Summit**, Prairie Band Casino, Mayetta
- 23 **MDM Meeting**, KEC Headquarters, Topeka, 10 a.m.
- 27 **Memorial Day – KEC Office Closed**
- 30-31 **CFC Financial Workshop**, Marriott Hotel, 9100 Corporate Hills Drive, Wichita

## CFC to host financial workshop for directors in Wichita, May 30-31

CFC is hosting the Kansas State-wide Financial Workshop at the Wichita Marriott, May 30-31. Designed specifically for directors of CFC electric cooperatives in Kansas, this workshop provides a variety of finance-focused topics. In addition, CFC will host a reception and dinner for the attendees and spouses on May 30. On May 31, a box lunch will be provided as attendees depart for home.

The workshop sessions will be led by CFC experts and will address topics such as strategic planning, debt and equity management and electric rates. The agenda is designed to provide both

learning and networking opportunities.

There is no cost to register for this workshop. Attendees must register for the CFC Statewide Financial Workshop by completing CFC's online registration form.

There are rooms blocked for the night of May 30. In order to get the group rate of \$96/night Single/Double + applicable state and local taxes (currently 13.3%), please mention the CFC Workshop. The room block expires on May 16.

For more information about the workshop, please contact Shana Read at 785-478-4554 or [sread@kec.org](mailto:sread@kec.org).

## KEC offers training for attorneys, human resource professionals

KEC offered two educational workshops for employees last month. The Continuing Legal Education (CLE) program for co-op attorneys was held on April 11 in Topeka, and the HR Summit for co-op human resource professionals was held April 23 in Wichita.

The CLE presented topics including a regulatory review of the prudence of board and management decisions, mortgage registration tax issue update, new environmental regulations, legal issues affecting electric co-ops in Kansas stemming from Mississippian Lime Play Development, legislative review, and an ethics case review. Twenty-six attorneys and eight managers attended the training.

"KEC has a long-standing tradition of providing an informational CLE for cooperative attorneys in Kansas," said

Melissa Doeblin, Manager of Government Relations. "Our CLE is specialized and directed to issues that would affect the electric cooperative world."

KEC's HR Summit was designed for those who are responsible for HR activities within their co-op. The workshop's agenda focused on current topics in HR, with a focus on compliance issues, real-world case studies, and a session on health care reform. Nineteen co-op employees and three managers attended this workshop.

"The HR Summit was a great opportunity for those cooperative employees who have human resources responsibilities to network with each other," said Shana Read, Director of Communications. "We hope they left the workshop with new resources and tools to do their jobs."

## Doniphan

64 members attended Doniphan's annual meeting March 28 at Doniphan West.

The Doniphan West PTO prepared dinner and students served it to 118 members and guests prior to the meeting.

In a voice election, Milton Hartman, Richard Lemke and Kenneth Smith were elected to the board of trustees. This will be Richard Lemke's first term on the board. He replaces Patrick Pickman who did not seek re-election.

## DS&O

DS&O held its annual meeting on April 2 at Sterl Hall in Abilene. More than 440 people enjoyed the meal before the meeting.

For the first time, DS&O conducted its election by mail ballot. Brian Lang, Doug Lindahl, and Jim Christopher were all re-elected.

## Kaw Valley

Kaw Valley hosted its 75th annual meeting at its warehouse in Topeka on April 3. More members and guests attended this year than ever before. Aboud's catered a meal for the 1,500 attendees.

Those in attendance listened to Dave Holthaus from KEC and the 2012 Youth Tour winners, Cody Christensen and Dezirae Hamrick. Kaw Valley also hosted a "Together We Save" energy house demonstration. Along with its 75th anniversary, Kaw Valley celebrated its first annual meeting as a Touchstone Energy Cooperative and introduced a new website and newsletter format.

Rob Sage, Larry Butel and Robert Lynch were all re-elected to the board.

## Wheatland

Wheatland Electric celebrated its 65th anniversary at its annual meeting at the community center in Caldwell on April 3.

Approximately 150 people attended. Webb's Barbeque served lunch to the attendees prior to the meeting.

Stuart Lowry, President and CEO of Sunflower Electric spoke to the members.

Lawrence Houston, Wes Campbell, Bob Hiss and Woody Barnes were re-elected to the board of trustees.

## Radiant

Radiant Electric held its 65th annual meeting April 4 at the co-op's headquarters south of Fredonia.

More than 200 members attended, and 470 members and guests were served dinner by Rory Hamilton and dessert by Glenda Carter, both members of Radiant.

Members listened to Mark Barbee Vice President of Engineering, KEPCo and Bruce Graham KEC's CEO

Trustee Lee Bracken, whose service term expired, was presented a plaque for 12 years of dedicated service. Tom Ayers and Sandy Smith were elected to the board of trustees. This is Smith's first term as a board member.

## Alfalfa

Alfalfa held its annual meeting April 5 in the high school in Cherokee, OK.

More than 500 members and a total of 1,100 attendees enjoyed a roast beef dinner served by Adventures in Catering from Mustang, OK, and the humor of Buzz Sutherland. After their meal, Joe Hise recited a tribute to the linemen he wrote in honor of the work they did after a recent winter storm.

Dennis Ferrell, Debbie Ferguson and Carl Newton ran unopposed, so their terms on the Board were extended.

## Sedgwick County

Sedgwick County Electric Co-op held its 75th annual meeting on April 9 at the Cotillion Ballroom in Wichita. More than 300 members attended, and a meal was served to 708 attendees prior to the meeting.

State Representative Joe Seiwert presented a certificate on behalf of the Kansas House of Representatives honoring the co-op in recognition of 75 years of serving its members.

Afterward, Bruce Graham, from KEC, Chuck Terrill, from KEPCo, Dave Childers, general manager, and the 2012 youth tour winners spoke.

The members re-elected Margie Conyack and Stan Theis, and newly elected former state legislator Dan Thimesch to the board of trustees.

## CMS

CMS held its 67th annual meeting on April 9 at the high school in Meade.

Barbeque from Kim's Ribs of Guymon, OK was served at the event. Approximately 250 attendees were present to enjoy it.

CMS introduced this year's scholarship winners along with business reports.

Members re-elected Ron Oliver, Michael Johnson and Joe Murphy to their board of trustees.

## Victory

Victory held its 68th annual meeting April 9 at the Western State Bank Expo Center in Dodge City.

Victory employees prepared and served 838 steak and baked potato dinners to the 471 members and their guests prior to the meeting.

Attendees listened to reports from last year's youth tour and camp winners Lindy Bilberry, Josie Hayes and Jaden Butcher. Victory also introduced the six 2013 youth tour winners.

Terry Janson, Victory's CEO, gave a presentation on outage management and historical Victory statistics. Board President, Kenny Wehkamp, introduced the new SmartHub program to the members.

Gary Gillespie, Richard Lightner, and Pat Morse were re-elected to the board. James "Jim" Ochs was elected to the board. He replaced Loren Ochs who retired from the board after 43 years of service.

## Twin Valley

Twin Valley held its annual meeting April 11 at Labette County High School in Altamont.

The 93 members in attendance listened to guest speakers Les Evans from KEPCo and the 2012 youth tour winners, Lane Whitt and Orren Taylor.

Pichler's Chicken Annie's of Pittsburg served the more than 200 members and guests dinner for the event. During their meal, attendees enjoyed the musical talents of John Smith.

Bryan Hucke, Dan Peterson and Larry "David" Hubbell were re-elected to the board of trustees.

## Ark Valley

Ark Valley hosted its annual meeting on April 16 at the Kansas State Fair Ground.

More than 250 members attended, and 600 people enjoyed dinner served by Ray's Countryside Cooking, Inc., from Colwich.

Cami Roth was awarded a \$1,000 college scholarship and the Youth Tour. Roth then read her winning essay to the membership.

The attendees also observed a moment of silence for Steve Parr, former Executive Vice-President and CEO of KEPCo.

Joe Seiwert and Budd Fountain were re-elected to the board.

## Rolling Hills

Rolling Hill hosted its annual meeting April 19 at NCK Technical College in Beloit.

Buffalo Roam from Mankato catered a meal for the 168 attendees. After the meal, Lise Ostenberg, from Bluestem Associates, presented a strategic plan to consolidate Rolling Hills' three offices into one. Members will vote on the plan on Aug. 8.

The members had re-elected Jim Ehrlich, Jay Overmiller and Melroy Kopsa through a mail ballot earlier this year.

## Prairie Land

Prairie Land hosted its 75th annual meeting April 20 at the co-op's headquarters in Norton. P.H.A.T. Boy Catering served barbecue to the 500 attendees.

In an election prior to the annual meeting, Robert L. Johnson, Ivan Bohl and Gilbert Berland were re-elected.

## LJEC

LJEC hosted its annual meeting on April 23 at McLouth High School. More than 200 were in attendance with 122 voting members present and an additional 22 represented by proxy.

Capital credit checks were issued prior to the meeting and voters were registered for one of many door prizes, including the grand prize of \$500 cash. Programs such as pre-pay, SmartHub, time-of-use and Co-op Connections Card were all reviewed.

Ralph Phillips, Harlan Hunt and Jeanine Murphy were all re-elected to the board.

## Co-ops can help commercial members with lighting program

Federal mandates for fluorescent lights will soon make buying light bulbs more difficult for business owners. To avoid this problem, cooperatives and other utilities may participate in the new "Efficiency Kansas Small Commercial Lighting Program" to offer commercial members a chance to improve their lighting efficiency.

"With federal policies eliminating the availability of typical lighting fixtures and bulbs, this program allows businesses to make these upgrades without dipping into their much-needed capital," said Trayce Heidner, Manager of Residential and Small Business Programs in the energy division at Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC).

The program is limited to businesses with less than 15,000 square feet of space; however, there are no income limits. Business owners may receive loans for up to \$30,000 with a six-year term at a 5 to 6 percent interest rate. Ownership of the loan is tied to the electric meter. Each month during the repayment period, the owner will be

billed through a charge attached to the electric bill. The program is designed so that projects should produce enough energy savings to pay for themselves over the life of the loan.

After receiving a lighting audit from any local electrician or contractor, businesses work with the co-op's guidance to upgrade lighting systems based on the KCC's recommendations. After completing the changes and undergoing an assessment, the co-op distributes the payment. Businesses may begin to repay the loan through their electric bills.

If a business is unable to repay the loan or closes, the debt is treated the same as an unpaid electric bill. Because the loan stays with the meter, ownership is transferred to the next tenant. If building is left vacant for an extended period, the loan may be forgiven. The loss incurred from the loan will not fall on the co-op, but on the bank where KCC receives its funds.

For more information, contact the Energy Efficient Lighting Program Team at (785) 271-3185 or (877) 448-3185.

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### Charlie Ross

Charles "Charlie" Ross, former KEC and KEPCo Executive Vice President, died April 9.

Before starting his co-op career, Ross was a Farm Broadcaster for WIBW-TV and AM-FM radio. He became Station Manager on June 8, 1966, the day an F-5 tornado hit Topeka. As manager, Ross ordered his newsman to broadcast a tornado warning to Topekans 9 minutes before the Weather Bureau had confirmed the tornado's existence. That decision saved lives.

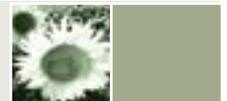
In 1969, Ross began his 20-year career in the rural electric field, first as Executive Vice President of Kansas Electric Cooperatives (KEC), then as the first Executive Vice President and CEO of Kansas Electric Power Cooperative (KEPCo), from which he retired in 1988. He also was an incorporator of Wolf Creek's operating organization and served on its original board.

Services were held on April 12 at the Penwell-Gabel Southwest Chapel in Topeka. Memorials may be sent to Midland Care at 200 SW Frazier Circle, Topeka, KS 66606.



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