

Rural Power

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Kansas Electric Cooperatives hosts eventful 71st annual meeting

Representatives of Kansas electric cooperatives gathered in Topeka Jan. 26-29 for KEC's 71st 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.

Monday was dominated by Kansas politics. Senate Majority Leader Terry Bruce and House Minority Leader Paul Davis discussed their expectations for the 2013 Kansas Legislature focusing primarily on their political party's vision for fiscal and tax policy, and how to fund essential government programs in light of a projected budget deficit.

Kansas Governor Sam Brownback also talked tax policy as well as the potential for energy production in the state.

"The United States is now looking at being a major energy exporter," said Brownback. "With our energy production that's happening in Kansas, we are looking at being the largest energy-producing nation by 2020."

He pointed out the natural gas and wind operations, methane plants, and oil production within Kansas. He also discussed the economy at the state level, noting that Kansas needs to be more competitive with tax policies.

"We can't prosper in the state if one part is growing and one part is declining," he said. "One of the biggest things we as Governors do is to get our states to grow. We want our kids and grandkids to have the opportunity to move back if they want to."

Kansas legislators were the focus of the evening as well during KEC's Annual Legislative Reception. Approximately 70 members of the Kansas Legislature dropped by through the three-hour reception to visit with cooperative constituents. Many other state officials were in attendance, as well as Kansas Congressman



Governor Sam Brownback addresses the meeting attendees.

Tim Huelskamp. Additional speakers featured on the agenda included Adam Schwartz, Founder and Principal of the Cooperative Way; Susan Olander, Vice-President and General Counsel at Federated Rural Electric Insurance; Karissa Berks, USDA Rural

Development; Mike Lewis, RUS General Field Representative; and Brian Briggeman, Director of the Arthur Capper Cooperative Center at Kansas State University.

KEC's Loss Control, Safety and Compliance Department recognized cooperatives who have earned the "No Lost Time" safety award and the NRECA Safety Achievement certificate.

In a special presentation, the president and CEO of the Kansas Cooperative Council (KCC), Leslie Kaufman, recognized Paul Seib, Jr., for being selected to the Kansas Cooperative Hall of Fame. Seib is a director for Lane-Scott Electric Cooperative and will be inducted in March.

Bruce Graham and Kaufman presented Steve Parr, KEPCo's CEO, with a Resolution of Appreciation from the KCC.

Graham is on the KCC Board and authored the resolution recognizing Parr for his career of service not only to KEPCo but to the cooperative movement across the nation.

Attendees heard reports from the Kansas Committee for Rural Electrification, CFC, NRECA, CoBank and

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Elected at the January Board Meeting were (from left) John Blackwell, Midwest Energy, President; Kathleen O'Brien, Nemaha-Marshall Electric Cooperative, Secretary-Treasurer, and Ralph Phillips, LJEC, Vice President.



A Division of Electric Cooperatives of America

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inbrief

Federal court won't rehear EPA on air rule

A federal court won't reconsider a decision that nullified major EPA rules to cut power plant emissions that cross state lines. A three-judge panel ruled 2-1 in August to toss out the rule, and last month the court announced that a majority on a wider panel of judges voted against a full-court rehearing.

THE HILL – 1/24/13

Utilities planning to address cybersecurity shortfalls through coalition

President Barack Obama said during his State of the Union address that he had signed an executive order aimed at protecting government and businesses from what he called "the rapidly growing threat from cyberattacks." In response, utilities are forming a coalition in order to share emerging cybersecurity threat information, employee training, and cybersecurity best practices. The group will include 11 electric, energy, gas and chemical companies.

WALL STREET JOURNAL / CIO JOURNAL – 2/12/13

insympathy

Gerald Ridenour

Gerald Ridenour, retired general manager of Flint Hills, died Jan. 23. He worked from 1945-1990, serving as Field Engineer, Operations Manager, and then General Manager.

Funeral services were held Jan. 26 at the First Congregational Church in Council Grove. Memorials may be made to Morris County Hospital Foundation or the Congregational Church.

Donald Hedges

Donald Hedges, Wheatland Trustee, died on Dec. 30. He had served on the board since 1990.

A memorial service was held Jan. 7 at the United Methodist Church. Memorials may be sent to the church in care of Price & Sons Funeral Home, 401 S Washington St., Scott City, KS 67871.

co-opcalendar

FEBRUARY

- 14-22 **NRECA Annual Meeting**, New Orleans, LA
- 15 **Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting**, Sunflower Headquarters, Hays
- 28 **MDM Meeting**, KEC Headquarters, Topeka, 10 a.m.

annualmeetings

FEBRUARY

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

MARCH

- 5 **Flint Hills – dinner at 5:30 p.m.**, meeting at 7 p.m., Centre High School, 2382 310th St., Hwy 77, Lost Springs
- 5 **Nemaha-Marshall – lunch at 11:30 a.m.**, meeting at 1 p.m., Axtell American Legion, 207 5th Street, Axtell
- 11 **Bluestem – meeting at 7:30 p.m.**, Riley County High School, 12451 Fairview Church Road, Riley
- 14 **Butler – dinner at 6 p.m.**, meeting at 7 p.m., Circle High School, 905 E. Main St., Towanda
- 16 **Pioneer – meeting at 10 a.m.**, lunch at 12 p.m., Grant County Civic Center, 1000 W. Peterson, Ulysses
- 23 **Sumner-Cowley – lunch at 11:30 a.m.**, meeting at 1:15 p.m., Wellington High School, East Highway 160, Wellington
- 25 **Lyon-Coffey – dinner at 6 p.m.**, meeting at 7 p.m., Burlington High School, 830 Cross Street, Burlington
- 26 **Heartland – meeting at 7 p.m.**, Ft. Scott Community College, Ellis Arts Center, 2108 S. Horton, Fort Scott
- 26 **Ninnescah – dinner at 6 p.m.**, meeting at 6:30 p.m., Municipal Bldg., 117 W. 3rd, Pratt
- 28 **Doniphan – dinner at 6:30 p.m.**, meeting at 7:30 p.m., Midway School, Hwy 20 East, Denton

APRIL

- 2 **DS&O – dinner at 6:30 p.m.**, meeting at 7:30 p.m., Sterl Hall, 619 N. Rogers, Abilene
- 3 **Kaw Valley – dinner at 5 p.m.**, meeting at 6:30 p.m., Cooperative Warehouse, 1100 SW Auburn Road, Topeka
- 3 **Wheatland – lunch at 11:30 a.m.**, meeting at 12:30 p.m., Community Center, 117 E. 1st Street, Caldwell
- 4 **Radiant – dinner at 5:30 p.m.**, meeting at 7 p.m., Cooperative Headquarters, Hwy 400 and Jewell Rd., Fredonia
- 5 **Alfalfa – dinner at 5 p.m.**, meeting at 7 p.m., Cherokee High School, 412 E. 5th, Cherokee, OK
- 9 **Sedgwick County – dinner and meeting at 6:30 p.m.**, Cotillion Ballroom, 11120 W. Kellogg Street., Wichita
- 9 **CMS – dinner at 5:30 p.m.**, meeting at 7 p.m., High School, 509 School Addition, Meade
- 9 **Victory – dinner at 6 p.m.**, meeting at 7 p.m., Western State Bank Expo, 11333 US Highway 283, Dodge City
- 11 **Twin Valley – dinner at 6 p.m.**, meeting at 6:30 p.m., Labette High School Cafeteria, 401 S. High School, Altamont
- 16 **Ark Valley – dinner at 6 p.m.**, meeting after dinner, Kansas State Fairgrounds, Sunflower South, 2000 N. Main, Hutchinson
- 19 **Rolling Hills – dinner at 5:30 p.m.**, meeting at 6:30 p.m., NCK Technical College, 3033 US 24 Highway, Beloit
- 20 **Prairie Land – lunch at 12 p.m.**, meeting at 12:45 p.m., Cooperative Headquarters, 14935 US Hwy 36, Norton
- 23 **LJEC – meeting at 7 p.m.**, High School Auditorium, 217 Summit Street, McLouth

MAY

- 7 **Caney Valley – dinner at 5:30 p.m.**, meeting at 7 p.m., Cedar Vale School Gymnasium, 500 Dora, Cedar Vale
- 8 **Western – lunch 12 p.m.**, meeting at 1 p.m., Cooperative Headquarters, 635 S. 13th Street, WaKeeney
- 9 **KAMO – dinner at 6:30 p.m.**, meeting at 7:30 p.m., Chateau on the Lake, 416 State Highway 65, Branson, MO
- 17 **Sunflower – meeting at 8 a.m.**, location TBD

JULY

- 9 **Lane-Scott – dinner at 6:30 p.m.**, meeting at 7:30 p.m., Lane County Fairgrounds, Dighton

SEPTEMBER

- 19 **Tri-County – dinner at 5:30 p.m.**, meeting at 6 p.m., Texas County Activity Center, 5th & Sunset, Guymon, OK

OCTOBER

- 21 **Midwest Energy – meeting at 10 a.m.**, FHSU Robbins Center, One Tiger Place, Hays

NOVEMBER

- 20 **KEPCo – dinner at 6 p.m.**, meeting at 6:30 p.m., Prairie Band Casino and Resort, 12305 150th Road, Mayetta

Pioneer improves employee efficiency with renovations

Pioneer Electric Cooperative, Inc., is in the process of renovating its office and warehouse spaces.

The remodeling project started in 2010 when its warehouse received a 7,000 square-foot facelift and the linemen's room was expanded.

"Before, we had to work around different things," Mark Shogren, Manager of Warehouse, said. "But now that it's done, we're out where the materials are. It gives us more room to effectively do our work."

Pioneer has yet to finish all of its changes. The accounting department will move into the current assembly room to gain more space for cubicles. The current accounting space will be divided to create an office and a meeting room.

Rae Gorman, Communications Coordinator, said that it's a matter of efficiency and that the departments had out-grown the previous space.



Steve Epperson (left) and George Bushnell cut the ribbon to Pioneer's newly-renovated warehouse.

The communications department is currently reorganizing, and will have a new layout and newly painted cubicles by the end of this year.

Realigning and painting cubicles, adding on to warehouses and moving departments gives Pioneer employees more space to do their jobs comfortably and effectively.

"Everybody involved really enjoys our new facility and it improves productivity when people like where they work," Shogren said.

Electric cooperatives help to protect members from scammers

Cooperatives in western Kansas have experienced a rash of scams in their service territories.

The scammers have tried, both in-person and over the phone, to gain personal information and payments from members of Midwest Energy, Pioneer and Victory electric cooperatives.

Midwest reported one incident where a Spanish-speaking male targeted owners of a local grocery store. The scammer claimed to be from the "electric company" and already knew the couple's account number.

In Pioneer's territory, a man claiming to be from the utility knocked on a member's door demanding \$100 and threatened to disconnect the meter.

Scammers in Victory's service area demanded members buy a MoneyPak card to pay their bills or be disconnected. A few members have reported falling for this scam, but the co-ops estimate that there are more victims who haven't reported.

The co-ops have reached out to their members to alert them.

Midwest and Pioneer sent news releases to area newspapers and radio stations, including two Spanish-speaking stations. It also posted information on its Facebook page and website.

"If we can help someone avoid falling victim to any of the money-collecting scams, we've been successful," said Rae Gorman, Pioneer.

Victory employees were interviewed on the local nightly news to warn their membership.

Victory's television appearance was rounded out through the use of bill stuffers, radio spots, e-mails to local businesses, posts on Facebook and information in the local news section in *Kansas Country Living*.

"We've done everything that we could do," said Josh Schmidt, Victory. "We encourage our members to let us know and to call the local law enforcement officials."

For more information on how your cooperative can protect your members from these types of scams, visit the NRECA Nov. 2012 newsletter of *StraightTalk*.

AT Department completes move

KEC's Apparatus Testing Department has moved from a leased facility in Burlingame to a permanent location in Osage City.

Apparatus Testing spent November and December moving its inventory into the larger building.

"It used to be scattered, a little here, little over there," said Danny Seele, Director of Apparatus Testing. "Now it's all right here."

The new building has larger rooms and more space for items such as the oil circuit recloser inventory. While the old location required shared work areas, the new location allows two work stations and a paint booth area to operate simultaneously without interference.

The move to the new facility is not the only change the department has faced recently. Apparatus Testing has also upgraded its inventory management system, utilizing the full potential of KEC's current accounting software.

"The software will give us more tracking and reporting capabilities," said Angela Howard, KEC's Staff Accountant.

The new facility, which came with perimeter fencing and a security monitoring system, also allows Apparatus Testing to better protect their equipment.

Although some items have yet to be unpacked and the team has plenty of work to do, Seele is confident the change will help them serve members more efficiently.



Top: Chuck Fagan shows the new crane that was installed into the new facility. Bottom: Danny Seele shows how, with the new facility, he now has space to set up models with different configurations for easy reference.

KEC Annual Meeting, continued from p. 1

the KEC Auxiliary. Other activities that coincide with the meeting included the auxiliary program, silent auction and raffle.

During the KEC Board Meeting on Tuesday, three officers were re-elected to their current posts: John Blackwell, Midwest Energy, President; Ralph Phillips, LJEC, Vice President; and Kathleen O'Brien, Nemaha-Marshall Electric Cooperative, Secretary-Treasurer. Leon Eck, Rolling Hills Trustee, stepped down from the KEC Board and was honored with a plaque for his years of service.

KEC hosted its eighth annual Expo, as well as a breakfast that featured a professional pancake flipper from Chris Cakes of Wichita. Caleb McGinn, played acoustic guitar and entertained the annual meeting lunch crowd. He even performed a duet with his mother Kansas Senator Carolyn McGinn. Attendees also had the opportunity to attend training sessions during the weekend prior to the meetings.

“The meeting evaluations look very positive and we tried some new things this year to keep the agenda lively as

well as educational. Thanks to the staff for their hard work to make the meeting a success. It takes everyone pitching in together to make an event like this happen without a hitch,” Blackwell said.



From top: Caleb McGinn performed a duet with his mother Kansas Senator Carolyn McGinn; Kirk Thompson presents a check from CFC to Bruce Graham; Rachel Killian of the Topeka Zoo teaches the auxiliary about animals; Stacey Marston helps serve pancakes; Rep. Tom Phillips meets with his co-op constituents; and Leslie Kaufman, KCC, honors Paul Seib, Jr. for his selection into the Co-op Hall of Fame.



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