

# Rural Power

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Please send any story ideas to [ruralpower@kec.org](mailto:ruralpower@kec.org).

## Larry Freeze retires, closing chapter on 35-year co-op career

When Larry Freeze became editor of *Kansas Country Living* in Dec. 1979, he never imagined he would retire from the position. Thirty-five years and 424 issues of the magazine later, he decided, "It's time."



Larry Freeze

"Coming into the position, I simply hoped to produce a magazine each month," Larry recalled of his first day on the job. "As time went on, I realized the power and potential the magazine had as not only a communication tool but a method to help highlight rural businesses, events and agritourism for the benefit of our members."

The consummate diplomat, Larry hesitates to choose a favorite issue or article he's produced during his tenure at KEC, but he's quick to describe one of his most memorable experiences, which happened during a photo shoot at the Hollenberg Pony Express Station in Hanover. While snapping photos of the building to accompany an article, Larry encountered a less-than-friendly visitor.

"I went up the stairs to take photos and there was a rattlesnake waiting for me," Larry says despite the unfriendly encounter, he finished the photo shoot—albeit outside. "You learn to persevere whatever the situation gives you."

From typewriters to computers and from

black-and-white film developing in a dark-room to digital photography, technology used to produce *Kansas Country Living* continuously evolves. Larry says the upshot to the many changes in three decades has been their positive affect on him personally.

"Change is constant and you must adjust no matter what," Larry stated. "Changes at work have helped me adjust to changes in life."

After his last official day on May 22, Larry may not miss the monthly deadlines or having to arise by 5:30 a.m. each weekday morning, but he said he will miss the shared camaraderie among electric co-op employees that he describes as "unique."

"I'm thankful for the friendships I've made over the years with co-op employees around the state," Larry explains. "I'll miss the friendly and genuine readers I've come in contact with over the years. They've come to appreciate the magazine and all it brings to their mailboxes each month."

"I've learned the degree of care and quality that electric cooperatives have for the members and their communities, and I'm grateful to have been given the opportunity to highlight the rural Kansas resolve, resourcefulness and spirit through the printed page. It's been a genuine honor and pleasure to serve our state's electric cooperatives," he shared.

Larry was honored by the KEC Board of Trustees on May 14, and by the Kansas Member Services Directors Association (KMSDA) on April 9.

## Western's Stacey Malsam named Assistant General Manager/CFO

At Western's April 16 board meeting, the Board voted to name Stacey Malsam as Assistant General Manager and Chief Financial Officer, effective May 1.

Malsam was hired in Aug. 2007 as Western's Manager of Accounting and Finance. In her new position, her responsibilities will include assisting with managerial decisions and directing the co-op's finances.

"Stacey has been performing executive management duties for years. It became increasingly important to officially recognize her as Western's Assistant GM/CFO. She handles a wide array of complex issues and steps up with ease in my absence," said General Manager Darrin Lynch. "She possesses all the qualities you hope for, and seldom find, in any one person."



Stacey Malsam



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## Jim Andrew

Jim Andrew, who championed rural economic development as president of NRECA and pushed for rural broadband service as administrator of the Rural Utilities Service, died in Augusta, GA, April 16. He was 78 and had been ill for some time. Memorial services were held on April 25 in Millen, GA.

# jobmarket

## Kaw Valley / LJEC seeks accounting assistant

Kaw Valley and LJEC have created the new Financial Accounting Assistant position that will assist the financial plan of Kaw Valley and LJEC.

Candidates should have working knowledge of generally accepted accounting principles issued by the Financial Accounting Standards Board, the IRS, and other regulatory and advisory organizations, as well as financial management techniques and practices appropriate within the industry.

This position is accountable for monthly and annual reporting to the Accounting and Finance Manager, as well as assisting with member services.

Visit [ljec.coop](http://ljec.coop) under About Us, Employment Opportunities for an application. Send a resume and completed application by May 22 to Lisa Scott, Director of Human Resources, at [lisa.scott@kve.coop](mailto:lisa.scott@kve.coop). EOE.

## LJEC seeks tree crew/groundsman

LJEC seeks a full-time, tree crew/groundsman. This is a bargaining unit position with Local Union #304.

Candidates should have a high school diploma or GED, and maintain a Class A CDL. Knowledge of clearing and trimming techniques, tree top and bucket rescue, chemical applications, CPR, and first aid are preferred. Position includes health insurance, dental, vision, and 401K retirement plan.

Visit [ljec.coop](http://ljec.coop) under About Us, Employment Opportunities for an application. Send a resume and completed application by May 24 to Lisa Scott, Director of Human Resources, at [lisa.scott@kve.coop](mailto:lisa.scott@kve.coop). EOE.

## MAY

- 25 **Memorial Day Holiday – KEC Office Closed**
- 28 **MDM Meeting**, Manhattan

## JUNE

- 4-5 **Spring REC Managers Association Meeting**, Marriott Hotel, 9100 Corporate Hills Drive, Wichita
- 11-18 **Electric Cooperative Youth Tour**, Washington, D.C.
- 19 **Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting**, Sunflower Headquarters, Hays
- 25 **MDM Meeting**, KEPCo Headquarters, Topeka

## Kansas co-op employees honored at CONNECT Conference

Kansas co-ops received recognition at the NRECA CONNECT Conference in Minneapolis, MN. More than 600 co-op communicators attended the conference May 12-15.

Two co-ops earned honors through the 2015 “Spotlight on Excellence” national awards program, sponsored by the Council of Rural Electric Communicators and NRECA. Victory’s Jerri Imgarten won a “Silver Award” for her Dodge City Days T-shirt design, and Wheatland’s Shawn Powelson received a “Gold Award”

for his “Cram the Van” food drive program. KEC’s Carrie Kimberlin designed the “Cram the Van” logo for Wheatland.

In addition, KEC staff was asked to present at the conference. Shana Read, KEC’s Director of Communications, joined Billy Gibson of the Louisiana statewide and Mike Marsch of the Missouri statewide at a breakout session dedicated to youth camps. Read spoke on the award-winning Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp.

# upcomingtraining

## Director Training at KEC’s Summer Board Meeting

KEC will offer board training presentations on Aug. 1-2, prior to the KEC Summer Board Meeting.

On Aug. 1, a new Board Leadership Course and a Certified Co-op Director course will be offered between 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Bryan Singletary will facilitate the new BLC on power supply called **964.1 Communicating the New Energy Landscape**. Wallace Barron will facilitate the CCD course **2630 Strategic Planning**.

On Aug. 2, there will be a half-day workshop from 1-4 p.m. Lynn Moore, Moore Innovative Solutions, will facilitate **Why Satisfaction Matters - The Impact of Building Influence**. This workshop is designed to explore the impact of positive and negative member satisfaction and discuss ways to repair and build relationships with their employees, members and community.

The Sunday course is in response to requests for training options outside traditional NRECA training and does not come with BLC or CCD credit. Moore is a dynamic presenter and her content will be useful to directors and cooperative employees alike.

## Supervisory Fast Track

KEC is offering the NRECA Supervisory Training courses on Aug. 24-28 at the Courtyard Marriott in Wichita.

This “fast track” offers all nine interactive, half-day courses in one week. Participants can register for some or all of the modules they need to fulfill their Supervisory Training certificate.

Bryan Singletary will facilitate the supervisory courses.

## CFC Financial Workshop for Directors

Join CFC for the Kansas Statewide Financial Workshop at the Wichita Marriott, Oct. 14-15. Designed specifically for Kansas co-op directors, this workshop provides a variety of finance-focused topics. CFC will also host a reception and dinner on Oct. 14, plus a box lunch will be provided as you depart for home on Oct. 15.

Sessions will be led by CFC staff and will address topics such as economic update, financial statement analysis, capital credits and electric rates. Registration information has been emailed to all member cooperatives. For more information, contact Shana Read.

## Alfalfa

Alfalfa Electric held its 79th annual meeting on April 10 at the Cherokee High School in Oklahoma.

Dinner was served to more than 1,700 people, and 734 registered members attended the meeting.

Re-elected to the board were Doug McMurtrey, John Regier, and Steve Eck.

## DS&O

DS&O's annual meeting was held on April 14 at Sterl Hall in Abilene. Dinner was served to more than 400 guests, with 200 members registered for the meeting.

Guest speakers included KEC's Dave Holthaus and KEPCo's Marcus Harris. Recognized at the meeting were Donald Hellwig, who retired after 17 years as General Manager, and William Chamberlin who retired from the Board of Directors after 25 years of service.

David Butler was newly elected to the board. Dean Allison and Dane Clark were re-elected.

## Victory

Victory's annual meeting drew more than 620 members and guests for a BBQ dinner catered by Outlaw BBQ on April 14. The meeting was held at the Western State Bank Expo. Pre-meeting entertainment was provided by the Dodge City High School Madrigals Choir.

2014 youth tour winners, Mackenzy Meis, Camryn Williamson, and Ashley Bohannon, gave a presentation about their experiences.

Re-elected to the board were Terri Larson, Daryl Tieben, Ken Schulte, and Cedric Drewes.

## Wheatland

Wheatland's 67th annual meeting was held April 15 in Syracuse with approximately 125 members and guests in attendance.

2014 youth tour winner, Bailey Harris, shared her experiences; and the 2015 winners were announced. Wheatland will send two students to D.C. and one student to camp this year. Wheatland also awarded a \$1,000 scholarship

to each of 10 local high school seniors.

During the meeting, Wheatland staff presented a \$1,000 check through its Sharing Success program to the Syracuse American Legion Post 27.

Re-elected to the board were Charles Ayers, Roe Johnson, Ron Davis, Dan Bonine and Dave Lowe. Members also voted to approve a recommended bylaw amendment.

## Twin Valley

Twin Valley's annual meeting was held April 16 in Altamont. Employees served a meal, catered by Pichler's Chicken Annie's of Pittsburg, to more than 220 guests.

Reports were presented from Ron Holsteen, CEO; Dan Peterson, President; Larry "David" Hubbell, Treasurer; Marcus Harris, CEO of KEPCo; and Kim Christiansen, Manager of Government Relations at KEC.

Re-elected to the board were Bryan Coover and Ronald McNickle. Newly elected was Jason Zwahlen.

## Rolling Hills

The 13th annual meeting of Rolling Hills was held on April 17, at the NCK Wellness Center in Beloit. Approximately 350 members and guests enjoyed a delicious meal served by Gene's Heartland Foods, Smith Center.

The 2014 youth tour winners, Grace McNichols and Tyler Marr, reported on their Washington, D.C. trip. Guest speakers included Marcus Harris and Phil Wages, both of KEPCo.

Re-elected to the board in a mail ballot back in December was Justin Trost. Newly elected were Robert Fredrickson and Paul Wilson.

## LJEC

Approximately 124 members attended LJEC's annual meeting at McLouth Elementary on April 28. More than 260 guests enjoyed a meal, and the co-op celebrated its 75th anniversary.

This year's meeting focused on the co-op's alliance with Kaw Valley. The alliance was approved during a special joint board meeting on Oct. 3, 2014, and is the first step toward a possible consolidation on Jan. 1, 2017. The

memberships of both LJEC and Kaw Valley will vote on the consolidation next April.

Bob Funk, retired Accounting Manager, was recognized for 25 years of service, and new hires Joseph Fridlington and Sarah Farlee were introduced. 2014 youth winners, Tamara Drinkard and Leah Parsons, spoke about the trips.

Re-elected to the board were Bill Pohl and Larry Meadows. Incumbent Martha Shaw and challenger Margaret Saunders tied, and a coin toss determined Saunders the winner for that district. However, Saunders resigned the position back to Shaw, who will resume her board duties.

## Caney Valley

Caney Valley's 67th annual meeting was held May 5 at the school gymnasium in Cedar Vale. There were 361 members registered, and approximately 520 were served a hamburger supper.

Special guests in attendance included Mark Barbee, KEPCo, and Carol Dorr, KEC. Service awards were presented and scholarship winners were announced. This summer's camp winners were also introduced.

Re-elected to the board were Dale Steward, Dwane Kessinger, and Jack Newcomb.

## Western

Approximately 200 people attended Western's 70th annual meeting on May 13 at its headquarters in WaKeeney.

Western's linemen provided valet parking for members, while all employees helped serve a meal catered by Bigge's Country Kitchen of Stockton.

Co-op trivia questions were posed to the membership with prizes given for the correct answers. Before the business session, Sarah Gustin and Isaiah Fabrizio, 2014 youth tour winners, gave presentations about their trips.

Darrin Lynch, General Manager, reviewed financial facts and shared points in building a strong cooperative community.

Re-elected to the board were Melvin Keller, Craig Crossland, and Larry Evans. The membership also approved proposed bylaw changes.

# Senator Moran boosts co-ops at NRECA Legislative Conference

On May 4-5, 31 employees and directors from electric cooperatives in Kansas met with the state's Congressional Delegation and their staff while in Washington, D.C., for NRECA's Legislative Conference.

The two-day summit gave 1,650 co-op officials the latest information on issues critical to maintaining affordable and reliable electric service to 42 million co-op members nationwide. This year's program featured education sessions that explained key issues to strengthen communication related to regulatory challenges and legislative solutions such as the Ratepayer Protection Act, Waters of the United States, the Endangered Species Act, and more.

"The visits have been followed by action in Congress that begins to address a couple key regulatory relief requests," said Bruce Graham, KEC Chief Executive Officer. "The House has advanced legislation that delays enforcement of the Lesser Prairie Chicken listing under the Endangered Species Act. We appreciate the support of all four members of the Kansas House delegation on this initiative."



Sen. Jerry Moran speaks to co-op officials from across the country at the NRECA Legislative Conference.

That good news was matched by introduction in the Senate of the Affordable Reliable Energy Now Act (ARENA). Prior to the Legislative Conference, such a bill did not exist. Sen. Pat Roberts was immediately interested in helping to get this crafted and is an original co-sponsor of the proposal. There is a corresponding bill in the House that was previously introduced.

In addition, Sen. Jerry Moran was a featured speaker at the NRECA Legislative Conference. During his speech, Moran reviewed several of the

major issues, mentioned the importance of Youth Tour, and impressed the importance of the co-op visits to the legislative process.

"Despite the challenges posed by an ever-growing number of burdensome federal regulations, the NRECA works to support the interests of electric cooperatives and the consumers they serve," said Moran.

The Kansas delegation formed two teams called "Power" and "Light." These teams were made up of the following: Bruce Graham and Kim Christiansen, KEC; Dale Coomes, Heartland; Kevin Gregg, Kaw Valley; Marcus

Harris, Bill Riggins, and Phil Wages, KEPCo; Steve Foss, LJEC; Earnie Lehman and Keith Miller, Midwest Energy; Steve Epperson, James Bell, Michael Brewer, Fred Claassen, Brandi Fowler, Perry Rubart, and Lindsay Shepard, Pioneer; Allan Miller and Keith Ross, Prairie Land; Dave Childers, Sedgwick County; John Whittington, Sumner-Cowley; Stuart Lowry and Clare Gustin, Sunflower; Ron Holsteen, Twin Valley; Shane Laws and Daryl Tieben, Victory; and Bruce Mueller, Charles Ayers, Woody Barnes, Wes Campbell, and Beth Looney, Wheatland.



Senator Pat Roberts posted this photo and quote on his Facebook page, "Was glad to meet with Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. to discuss rural energy while they are in Washington to attend NRECA's annual conference."

## Electric cooperative employees attend KEC's IT Summit

Sixteen co-op employees representing systems from Kansas, Nebraska and Oklahoma attended the newly created IT Summit at Wichita's Drury Inn on April 30.

This training was developed by KEC staff for those cooperative employees who manage their cooperative's information technology and computer needs.

Topics presented at the IT Summit included a discussion on security assessments by NISC's Sean Wiese, and

virtualization and storage technology by the Davenport Group. The agenda also included a roundtable discussion for the attendees.

To serve on the planning committee for the 2016 IT Summit, scheduled for May 24-25, 2016, in Wichita, please email Carrie Kimberlin, KEC's Communications Specialist, at [ckimberlin@kec.org](mailto:ckimberlin@kec.org) or call 785-478-4554.

