

Rural Power

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Kansas electric cooperatives successfully appeal property valuations

Several Kansas electric cooperatives recently learned that their 2012 tax bills will not be as high as previously anticipated.

Nine co-ops and Southern Pioneer each requested an informal conference to appeal their state-appraised valuations before the Kansas Division of Property Valuation (PVD). Owners of state-appraised property have an opportunity to present evidence to the appraisers supporting their case that the value is overstated. This must be done before the final values are certified to the local taxing districts.

Of the 10 appeals, all but two valuations were decreased. Doug Shepherd, KEC's vice president of management consulting services, assisted with six of the appeals.

"Even though some of the arguments were the same, it doesn't mean that the outcome will be the same for all," Shepherd said. "It all depends on each individual cooperative's circumstances."

The PVD bases its valuation largely on their forecasted net operating income.

"Most of our arguments centered on reasons why the historical income statements

were not indicative of future income streams," he added.

The eight utilities with successful appeals received a total reduction in value of \$3.25 million. This translates to about \$129,000 in annual property taxes. Overall, the median increase in electric cooperative valuations in Kansas was nearly 10.5 percent from last year.

"KEC's Management Consulting Services offers property tax assistance in order to minimize a cooperative's property taxes," Shepherd explained. "A successful appeal helps to keep the pressure off of electric rates."

Nikki Pfannenstiel wins Touchstone Energy Brand Champion award

Nikki Pfannenstiel, Sunflower's manager of member services, was honored by Touchstone Energy with a Brand Champion Award on May 17.

A total of six awards were given at the annual CONNECT Conference for electric cooperative marketing, communication and member services professionals.

Created in 2005 by the Touchstone Energy board of directors, the Brand Champion Award focuses on dedicated employees who have shown exceptional leadership, effectiveness, innovation and consistency while locally or regionally building the brand.

"This recognition came as a complete surprise from my friends and colleagues in Kansas," Pfannenstiel said. "I am honored to be selected for this award and truly believe in the Touchstone Energy brand, which unites electric coop-



Touchstone Energy's Jim Bausell presents Nikki Pfannenstiel with a Brand Champion Award at the CONNECT Conference.

eratives across our nation and represents the high standards to which we hold ourselves."

Pfannenstiel was recognized for advancing the Touchstone Energy brand both locally and regionally. She serves on the executive council of the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Kansas, the national Touchstone Energy cooperatives' business development committee, and was recently named as a contributor toward developing a balanced scorecard for generation and transmission cooperatives.

Pfannenstiel has also made her mark on the Touchstone Energy ElectroRally program, which sponsors races for high school students competing with electric cars they have designed and built. She has been involved with the ElectroRally program since the beginning and has helped it grow into the statewide program it is today.



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Would-be copper thieves sentenced

Two Illinois men have been sentenced to nine months in a Kansas prison following their conviction in Coffey County for attempting to steal copper in Burlington.

Officials say the two men treated metal theft as a business. An investigation turned up an itemized list of money earned and spent during metal-selling operations in several states. Authorities say the two had addresses of rural electrical cooperatives in Kansas, Tennessee, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Iowa.

CAPITAL-JOURNAL - 5/31/12

NCSC leads \$100 million Mid-Kansas syndication

The National Cooperative Services Corporation recently acted as lead lender in a \$100 million syndicated credit facility for Mid-Kansas Electric Company, LLC. CFC was the lead arranger of the transaction and will serve as administrative agent for the three-year unsecured revolving credit facility. Mid-Kansas will use the funds for general corporate purposes such as investment in generation and transmission assets, other capital expenditures, and the issuance of letters of credit.

CFC SOLUTIONS - 5/21/12

150th anniversary of the United States Department of Agriculture

A proclamation was signed by President Barack Obama to commemorate the 150th anniversary of USDA on May 14. It read, "On May 15, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed legislation to establish the USDA and codified a commitment to the health of our people and our land. One hundred and fifty years later, USDA continues to realize that vision of service by applying sound public policy and science to an evolving food and agriculture system."

WHITE HOUSE - 5/14/12

JUNE

- 14-21 **"Government in Action" Youth Tour**, Washington, D.C.
- 14-15 **REC Manager's Spring Meeting**, Hyatt Regency, 400 W. Waterman, Wichita.
- 22 **Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting**, Sunflower Headquarters, Hays.
- 28 **MDM Meeting**, KEC Headquarters, Topeka, 10 a.m.
- 29 **KEC Annual Attorneys Meeting**, KEC Headquarters, Topeka, 9 a.m. Attorneys and co-op staff welcome.

JULY

- 10 **Lane-Scott's Annual Meeting**, dinner at 6:30 p.m., meeting at 7 p.m., Lane County Fair Grounds, Dighton.
- 14-20 **Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp**, Steamboat Springs, CO.
- 18-19 **KEPCo Board of Trustees Meeting**, KEPCo Headquarters, Topeka.
- 20 **Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting**, Sunflower Headquarters, Hays.
- 26 **MDM Meeting**, KEC Headquarters, Topeka, 10 a.m.
- 28-30 **KEC Summer Board Meeting**, Overland Park Marriott, Overland Park.

Kansas electric cooperative employees learn to be supervisors

Approximately 40 employees representing cooperatives across the state attended the second half of the NRECA Supervisory Training courses on May 22-23 at the Hotel Old Town in Wichita.

This program, facilitated by NRECA's Bryan Singletary, delivered instruction on core competencies required of supervisors in the areas of leadership, communication, and basic administrative skills.

KEC's Carol Dorr attended the courses and has applied her learned skills to her daily work.

"One of the skills I learned was how

to motivate people and keep their interests in their job," said Dorr. "I apply this skill by being an up-beat team player."

To earn the supervisory certificate, all nine interactive, co-op specific half-day courses must be completed.

"Whether you are currently, or are becoming a supervisor, I would recommend the NRECA Supervisory course to everyone," said Dorr.

All nine supervisory modules will be offered in Topeka, Oct. 14-18, 2013, if there is enough interest. For more information, please contact Shana Read at sread@kec.org or 785-478-4554.



NRECA's Bryan Singletary (standing) teaches the Supervisory Course to employees in Wichita.

upcomingtraining

Directors training courses offered at KEC's summer board meeting

KEC's Summer Board Meeting will be held at the Overland Park Marriott. Bryan Singletary will facilitate the CCD Course 2610 Understanding the Electric Business on July 28. Terry Halter and Gabe Snow will facilitate the Board Leadership Course 916 Directors Role

in Shaping Policy on July 29.

For the 2013 KEC Annual Meeting held in Topeka, Scott Luecal will facilitate the CCD Course 2620 Board Roles and Relationships on Jan. 26 and the CCD Course 2640 Financial Decision Making on Jan. 27.

KEC “cowboys up” for FFA state degree winners

During the 84th Future Farmers of America Convention in Manhattan on June 1, Sentinel Cole Smith gave his retiring speech and urged his fellow FFA members to “cowboy up.” This is a phrase that challenges each person to go the extra mile, take the extra step and put in the extra effort to achieve something great. This is just what KEC has done for FFA through its sponsorship of the State Degrees.

The State FFA Degree is the highest award a state association can offer to members of the FFA. There are seven requirements for candidates of the State FFA Degree. These requirements include two years of agriculture education, academic success, investments of time and money, and they must be approved by their chapter advisor.

KEC’s Carrie Kimberlin and Hillary



KEC’s Carrie Kimberlin (center) congratulates the FFA students who earned their state degrees at the State FFA Convention in Manhattan on June 1.

Berry attended the convention and had the opportunity to award the degree to each of its recipients.

“This is the highest honor in the state for FFA youth to receive,” Kimberlin said. “It is a great way for KEC to reach out to the students and their families.”

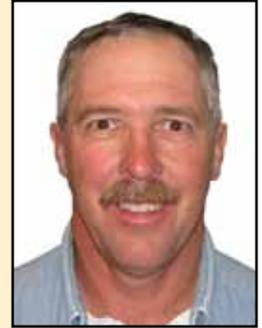
Kimberlin, an FFA alumn from Jefferson West and a former district officer, shook the hands of the 252 Kansas students who were awarded the golden charm of the State FFA Degree. The golden charm is a symbol of growth and development in a student’s chosen occupation.

For decades, KEC has sponsored the State FFA Degree in attempts to “cowboy up” for the rural communities of Kansas and to recognize the members of FFA who “cowboy up” each and every day.

Michael Stremel wins John McRae safety leadership award

Michael Stremel, Midwest Energy’s operations training manager, has been awarded the John McRae Safety Leadership Award.

This award honors those in the utility industry who best display strong leadership in the field.



Michael Stremel

Stremel received the prestigious honor on May 1 while attending the iP Safety Conference & Expo in San Antonio, TX.

The John McRae Safety Leadership Award was created to honor John McRae, a fourth-generation lineman who enjoyed an inspiring 42-year career before passing away on July 27, 2010. He was active in the military reserves for nearly 30 years and instrumental in establishing the Massachusetts Municipal Lineman’s Association. McRae, a member of San Diego’s IBEW Local 465, spoke across the country about electrical training and went on to assist in the launch of Incident Prevention magazine, a highly respected industry resource for utility safety and operations professionals.

Stremel received the 2012 award based on his outstanding commitment to the The Utility Safety & Ops Leadership Network, Midwest Energy and numerous other utility industry organizations.

annual meetings

Western

Approximately 200 people attended the 67th annual meeting of Western Cooperative Electric on May 9.

Western’s linemen provided valet parking for members. The meal was catered by Bigge’s Country Kitchen of Stockton.

Attendees heard reports by board president Larry Evans and manager Dave Schneider. Stuart Lowry, president & CEO of Sunflower, gave an update on the co-op’s activities. Lowry spoke to the members about the future of Sunflower, its challenges with EPA regulations and meeting future generation needs that are not only reliable but affordable.

Re-elected to the board were: Melvin Keller, Craig Crossland and Larry Evans.

Sunflower

Sunflower held its 55th annual meeting at Holcomb Station on May 18, 2012. The board of directors received the annual report of the corporation and elected officers for the upcoming year.

Speakers included Sunflower’s Stuart Lowry and Southwest Power Pool’s Julian Brix.

Following the board meeting, an organizational meeting was conducted by the board to elect leadership for the coming year. Loren Ochs, Victory, was re-elected as chairman of the board of directors. Larry Evans, Western, was re-elected as vice chairman.

In addition to re-electing existing officers, the board appointed Don Gully as vice president of regulatory and market affairs.

insympathy

Charles Pence

Charles Edwin Pence, former board member for LJEC, died May 4 at the F.W. Huston Living Center in Winchester. Pence served on the LJEC board from February 1990 to September 1999.

Funeral services were May 8 at the Winchester United Methodist Church.

Memorials can be made to the Winchester United Methodist Church and sent in care of Barnett Family Funeral Home, P.O. Box 602, Oskaloosa, KS 66066.

KEC Earns Spotlight Award

Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. received recognition in the 2012 "Spotlight on Excellence" national awards program, sponsored by the Council of Rural Electric Communicators and NRECA.

KEC's communications staff received an Award of Merit for Best Photo category for the October 2011 cover of *Kansas Country Living*.



Larry Freeze won an award for the photo featured on the October 2011 issue of *Kansas Country Living*.

Specifically honored for this award was Larry Freeze, editor, who took the photo.

The annual Spotlight awards competition recognizes the top-rated communication and marketing efforts by electric cooperatives and related organizations. Participants competed with electric cooperatives of similar sizes in 19 categories.

Electric cooperative communicators submitted more than 800 entries in the Spotlight on Excellence program, now in its 24th year.

Kansas youth prepare for "Government in Action" Youth Tour

Kansas electric cooperatives, along with 33 selected high school students from around the state, are gearing up for the 52nd annual "Government in Action" Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.

The group will learn about the U.S. government through visits with Senators Pat Roberts and Jerry Moran, as well as with the Kansas Congressional delegation. The students will meet with youth from other states and tour the memorials, Arlington National Cemetery, Smithsonian museums, Ft. McHenry, Holocaust Memorial Museum and Mount Vernon.

The selected students and their cooperatives are: Brynn Wright from Brown-Atchison; Rose Dollarhide from Butler; Eddie Sandoval from DS&O; Paige Stainbrook from Heartland; Cody Christensen and Dezirae Hamrick from Kaw Valley; Liz Heath and Matthew Mulville from Lane-Scott; Jody Baragary from LJEC; Thatcher Moddie and Brianna Zweimiller from Lyon-Coffey; Will Allen, Nathan Frame, Anna Hickert, Elizabeth Nedland and Katie Showalter from Midwest Energy; Bryton Stoll from Nemaha-Marshall; Rustin Ardery from Ninnescah; Jessica Johns and Bravane Phelps from Pioneer; Regan Bartels, Zach May and Logan Whitney from Prairie Land; Katy Winkel from Rolling Hills; Tyla Petersen from Sedgwick County; Canyon Brack Packard and Brandyn Terrazas from Southern Pioneer; Whitney Turek from Sumner-Cowley; Orren Taylor from

Twin Valley; Jenny Delzeit and Lindy Bilberry from Victory; and Bailey Hensley and Julia Hood from Western.

In 2004, Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., joined up with Hawaii's Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative to give four high school students from Hawaii the opportunity to take part in the Youth Tour and travel with Kansas students to our nation's capital.

Shana Read, KEC's director of communications, has organized the partnership from the beginning.

"We were delighted to accommodate the Hawaii delegation as part of our youth tour," said Read. "The students were so excited to get to know each other and it was a great experience for everyone."

Kansas is one of the 45 states to send a youth delegation to the annual electric cooperative event. Since 1964, the nation's electric cooperatives have sponsored the trips of more than 50,000 high school juniors and seniors.

The Youth Tour was inspired by Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson when he declared at a national electric cooperative meeting in 1957, "If one thing goes out of this meeting, it will be sending youngsters to the national capital where they can actually see what the flag stands for and represents."

"Follow" the youth on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/KansasYouthTour>. Or visit the KEC homepage at www.kec.org and click on the Youth Tour logo to view the photos from the trip.



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