

Rural Power

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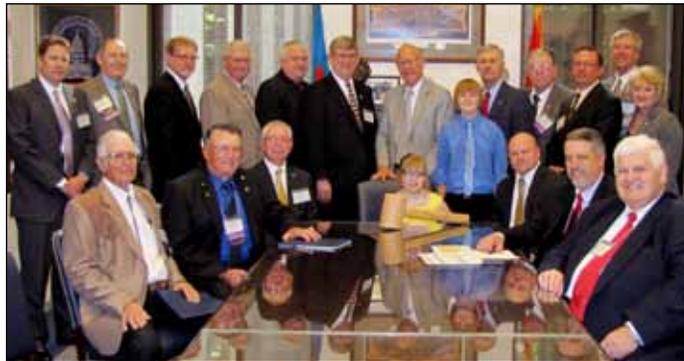
Kansas co-op delegates deliver message during Legislative Conference

Thirty-five Kansas cooperative delegates participated in the NRECA Legislative Conference, May 1-4, in Washington, D.C.

The Kansas representatives were able to meet with Senators Roberts and Moran, and Representatives Huelkamp, Jenkins, and Pompeo, and with the staff of Rep. Yoder. They visited about the wide range of legislative and regulatory issues facing the electric cooperative industry.

“We discussed EPA’s new and more stringent rules governing air quality and coal ash management, as well as on the Department of Agriculture’s RUS Loan Program continuation and equitable renewable generation tax incentives,” said KEC’s Dave Holthaus. “We also discussed other Kansas-specific issues, including Sunflower’s Holcomb Expansion Project.”

The Kansas delegation was tasked to com-



Part of the Kansas delegation met with Sen. Pat Roberts. *Seated:* Ronald McNickle, Perry Rubart, Les Evans, Payton Epperson, Steve Epperson, Dave Holthaus, Ron Holsteen. *Standing:* Stuart Lowry, Pat Morse, Scott Whittington, Ken Maginley, Keith Miller, Don Hellwig, Sen. Roberts, Jake Epperson, Dave Schneider, Cliff Freisen, John Leis, Dale Coomes, Clare Gustin.

municate the challenges to meet the enormous demands for new generation, efficiency programs, renewable power and R&D to develop technologies that will reduce carbon emissions while providing member-owners with safe, reliable electric power in the most cost-effective

manner possible.

All of these challenges must be met in a difficult political climate where key decision makers are determined to use the regulations to transform both the way the nation generates and uses electricity.

“I appreciate the efforts of those electric cooperative trustees and managers who devoted their time to advancing our legislative agenda,” said KEC’s Stuart Lowry. “Every participant was well-prepared and effectively communicated the cooperative message.”

Dennis Deines receives Touchstone Energy Brand Champion award

Dennis Deines, Western’s member services manager, was honored by Touchstone Energy this month with a Brand Champion Award.

A total of 30 awards were given at the Connect Conference to spotlight dedicated employees who have shown exceptional leadership, effectiveness, innovation and consistency while locally or regionally building the brand.

Deines spearheaded his cooperative’s efforts in developing multiple programs that highlight the core



Dennis Deines, Western, was recognized for his achievements to promote Touchstone Energy in Kansas.

values of the Touchstone Energy program. He serves on the Executive Council of the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Kansas, and has been vital to the growth of the Kansas ElectroRally program.

Touchstone Energy’s success is attributed to individuals such as these award winners who truly live the “power of human connections”.

Created in 2005 by the Touchstone Energy board of directors, this award recognizes outstanding contributions by electric co-op CEOs, employees and trustees.



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Governor's office swears in new KCC commissioner Sievers

Mark Sievers, economist and lawyer, was sworn in as a commissioner of the Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC) on May 17 at the Statehouse. Sievers, of Cripple Creek, Colorado, was appointed by Governor Sam Brownback March 16, 2011, and confirmed by the Senate May 5th. His term will expire March 15, 2015.

KCC - 5/17/11

USDA and DOE award biomass R&D grants

U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu announced a total of \$47 million to fund eight research and development projects that will support the production of biofuels, bioenergy and high-value bio-based products from a variety of biomass sources. These investments in clean, sustainable transportation fuels will help reduce U.S. oil imports, support economic development in rural America, create clean energy jobs for U.S. workers, and protect American families and businesses from future spikes in gas prices.

DOE - 5/5/11

Kansas lawmakers take aim at metal thieves

Kansas lawmakers worked to make metal theft a riskier crime by taking into account how much it costs to repair damage that criminals cause while tearing out metal. The Legislature passed a bill to require scrap metal dealers to register with cities or counties, and that registration could be suspended or revoked for repeated violations. And because the cost of repairing and replacing the stolen metal would become part of the crime, something that is now a misdemeanor theft could turn into a felony.

KC STAR - 5/5/11

JUNE

- 2-3 **REC Manager's Meeting.** Hyatt Regency, Wichita.
- 9-16 **"Government in Action" Youth Tour.** Washington, D.C.
- 17 **Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting.** Sunflower Headquarters, Hays.
- 23 **MDM Meeting.** KEC Headquarters, Topeka.
- 28-30 **2011 Safety Conference.** Hilton President Hotel, 1329 Baltimore, Kansas City, Missouri.

annualmeetings

LJEC

LJEC held its annual meeting on April 27 at the McLouth High School.

Sen. Jerry Moran was a guest speaker at the annual meeting. Steve Parr of KEPCo and Stuart Lowry of KEC also spoke to the membership.

Ken Bailey and Larry Stevens were re-elected to the Board, and Billy J. Hadfield was newly elected. Hadfield fills a seat held by Mark Gratny, who did not stand for re-election.

Leadership reports were given by general manager Steve Foss, president Ralph Phillips, and treasurer Larry Meadows. Youth Tour winners Rachel Kennedy of Royal Valley High School, Aaron McIntyre of Tonganoxie High School, and Cheyenne Patton of Lawrence Free State were introduced. The membership approved an opt-in participation in Operation Roundup.

Caney Valley

Approximately 289 members attended Caney Valley's 63rd annual meeting held May 3 at the Chautauqua County fairgrounds in Sedan.

Members approved a bylaw amendment allowing board trustees to serve five consecutive terms rather than the three terms currently allowed.

Re-elected to the board was Coral Ann Magnus. Newly elected were David Evans and Dan Hubert. Special recognition was given to board members Dale Clubine and Patrick Steward who decided not to run for re-election. Employee Debbie Wall was recognized for 30 years of service.

Guest speakers included KEC's Shana Read, and KEPCo's Mark Doljac and Steve Parr. Scholarship recipients and youth tour winners were also introduced.

Western

Approximately 225 people attended Western's 66th annual meeting on May 11. Western's linemen provided valet parking, and helped serve the meal which was catered by Bigge's Country Kitchen of Stockton.

The Wheatland High School electric car team displayed a car and shared the past year's race experiences.

Guest speakers included KEC's Dave Holthaus who spoke about the grassroots advocacy program, and Sunflower's Earl Watkins who discussed both the Holcomb expansion project and future power supply options.

Terry Hobbs, Richard Schaus, and Bob Abell were re-elected for three-year terms.

Tri-County

Tri-County's annual meeting was held May 13 at the Texas County Activity Center in Guymon, OK. There were 682 members registered for the meeting and approximately 1,200 people enjoyed a barbeque dinner.

Sunflower

Sunflower held their annual meeting on Friday, May 20, at the office of Lane-Scott Electric Cooperative in Dighton.

The meeting was attended by 50 Sunflower member system trustees and managers. Special guests included Rep. Tim Huelskamp, Sec of Wildlife and Parks, Robin Jennison, and several state senators and representatives. Loren Ochs was re-elected as Chairman of the Board and Larry Evans was re-elected as Vice-Chairman. Lindsay Shepherd was appointed as Associate General Counsel by the Board.

Ed Wiltse honored by Small Business Administration

Ninnescah's general manager, Ed Wiltse, is among those honored by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

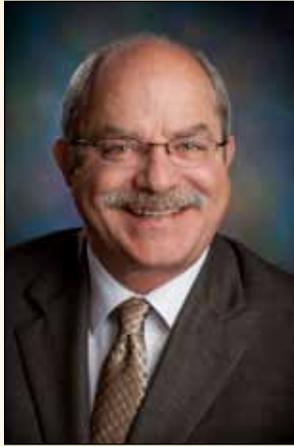
Wiltse was named the SBA Wichita District Office Financial Services Champion for his support of rural economic development. A reception was held in his honor at the cooperative on May 26.

Wiltse has been Ninnescah's general manager since January 2010.

Prior to that, he served as manager of member services for Pioneer Electric.

Wiltse was instrumental in promoting economic development loans in Pioneer's service area. He also served on the review board for Pioneer's revolving loan fund that provided low-interest loans for business development in the region.

In his current position, he works closely with the Great Plains Development, Inc., to make loan products available. He also works with local developers and investors to help inject capital into small business ventures.



Ed Wiltse

"I am honored to be the recipient of this award. This is part of my job that I have always enjoyed," Wiltse said.

"I have always enjoyed working with new businesses because it creates new jobs and adds sustainability to our community," he added.

As a volunteer member of the Western Kansas Rural Economic Development Alliance, Wiltse has supported

and promoted its purpose, which is to develop business relationships to help sustain economic growth through business and job retention in 53 counties in Western Kansas.

Wiltse has offered significant business assistance in promoting partnerships with local bankers and the Great Plains Development Company.

He has also created liaisons with local economic development, city and county officials. Oftentimes, he was the direct contact person for the small business and spent many hours in the field working with them.

Severe spring storms spare most of Kansas

Despite a destructive massive weather system that spawned severe storms across the Midwest last weekend, Kansas electric cooperatives are feeling very lucky to be spared any major damage.

One tornado touched down in Reading, KS, a town of about 250 people located in Lyon County. One person was killed, 20 homes were destroyed, and at least 200 other buildings were damaged, including the town's post office and fire department.

Lyon-Coffey experienced damage to its system in rural areas outside of Emporia, Reading, Barkley and Osage City.

"That tornado went right through us," said Mark Doebele, Lyon-Coffey's director of operations. It took houses and it took barns, but left our lines standing. "

"There were areas where trees were all down on one side of the road, and our lines were all standing on the other side," he added. "You never know what a tornado is going to do."

In Joplin, MO, a tornado from the same weather system killed at least 116 people and left much of the town without power. Many of the outages were the result of damage to transmission towers linking the co-op's distribution system to KAMO, who lost 10 large transmission structures in the storm.

Governor Sam Brownback issued a state disaster declaration after the tornados hit for the following 16 counties: Allen, Anderson, Atchison, Brown, Coffey, Doniphan, Douglas, Franklin, Jefferson, Johnson, Leavenworth, Lyon, Miami, Nemaha, Osage, and Shawnee. Monetary donations for Reading can be made at www.KSReady.gov.

Victory hires Micaela Morales

Victory Electric recently hired a new employee in member services. Micaela Morales will work primarily in Hispanic relations and will also help with the many programs and events at Victory.

"This is an exciting time for me and the members of Victory," Morales said. "My objective is

to reach out to the community and further enrich its partnership with Victory."

Morales comes to Victory with many years of experience in community relations.

"Victory has a large percentage of Hispanic members, and we needed to improve our relationship with the community and their business owners," explained Jerri Imgarten, Victory's communications specialist.

"Micaela, with her former position at the Chamber of Commerce, had a great rapport with key business owners and social services personnel. She has been a tremendous help in bridging the communications gap."

Through Victory, Morales has already hosted a lunch-and-learn meeting with many Spanish-speaking business owners to promote the cooperative's programs and the cooperative business model.

Jerry King, director of marketing and communications, said, "The possibilities are endless and we are excited about the projects we can expand and new projects we can start with Micaela on our team."



Micaela Morales

congrats

John Blackwell

Congratulations to John Blackwell, KEC's vice president, on the birth of his granddaughter, Lilah Beth. She was born May 5, was 7 lbs. 10 oz., and was 20 inches long. Blackwell said, "She is born to be a Wildcat."



Lilah Beth

Kimberlin earns Spotlight award

KEC's Carrie Kimberlin received recognition in the 2011 "Spotlight on Excellence" national awards program, sponsored by the Council of Rural Electric Communicators and NRECA.

She received an Award of Merit for Best Photo category for the May 2010 cover of *Kansas Country Living*.



Carrie Kimberlin

"The judges noted the emphasis on being good stewards of each cooperative's resources, while still doing the vital job of communicating with members," said Maggie Tilley, Spotlight's administrator.

A special luncheon honored the award recipients during the NRECA Connect 2011 Conference held in Denver, CO, on May 11. Winning entries were displayed during the event.

The annual Spotlight awards competition recognizes the top-rated communication efforts by electric cooperatives. Participants competed with electric co-ops of similar sizes in 19 categories. Communicators submitted more than 800 entries.

Faculty members from the University of Missouri and the University of North Carolina judged the entries.

Friday the 13th brings a hairy situation for Tri-County

As Tri-County employees were preparing for their annual meeting on Friday, May 13, a meeting of another sort was occurring in Cimarron County, Oklahoma.

This meeting was between a Cinnamon phase black bear and one of the cooperative's 65-foot transmission poles.

"With the drought conditions we have in the area, bears are travelling farther to look for food and water," said Rusty Menefee, Cimarron County's Game Warden, speculating why the bear was in the area.

The two-year-old bear was first spotted in a rural member's yard about 7:30 a.m., and the game warden was called. The bear ran from the area and climbed a transmission pole about 10 miles east of Boise City on Highway 64.

The transmission pole was carrying 69,000 volts of power, creating an extremely dangerous situation for the bear, as well as posing a serious wildfire threat if the bear came in contact with the lines.

When Tri-County serviceman Donovan Austin saw the situation, he



As Tri-County employees were preparing for their annual meeting on Friday, May 13th, a co-op serviceman helped to safely remove a bear from a transmission pole.

stopped to help. Menefee called the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife headquarters and made the decision to tranquilize the bear. Tri-County voluntarily cut power to the lines for safety reasons, causing a 17-minute outage for some of its rural members. The bear crawled partially down the pole after being tranquilized then fell approximately 20 feet to the ground. A veterinarian determined that the bear was unharmed.

Following standard procedure, Menefee pulled a tooth from the bear for DNA and aging purposes, and then attached an ear tag to document its history if it is captured in the future. The bear was taken to an undisclosed location and released.

Photo courtesy of Tri-County



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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 sholsteen@kec.org.