

Rural Power

INSIDE

- 2 | Calendar
- 2 | Youth tour alumnus uses grant money to support orphanage
- 3 | Charlie Ross selected as 2015 Cooperative Hall of Fame Inductee
- 4 | Joe Heinen's Power + Hope donation inspires others

Please send any story ideas to ruralpower@kec.org.

DS&O names Timothy Power as new CEO, Don Hellwig retires

The DS&O Board of Directors has selected Timothy J. Power as its new General Manager & CEO. Power began his DS&O career January 6.

Power brings a wealth of experience and a deep understanding of the electric cooperative business model. He most recently served as the General Manager of KC Electric Association in Hugo, CO, and comes to DS&O with more than 15 years of electric utility experience in Iowa, Minnesota, and Colorado.

Power holds an MBA and a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration. He and his wife, Shelly, have five children.

"Family considerations were a big part of wanting to come to DS&O," explained Power. "We have family in central Kansas, and my wife and I grew up in the Midwest and wanted to return to the area," Power said. "I think it was one of those 'right place, right time' situations. This part of the world offers recreational opportunities, like fishing, and the winters aren't too long."

He continued, "After doing research, I know DS&O is a great cooperative. I am really looking forward to meeting other managers and working



Timothy Power

with the DS&O board and employees."

Power replaces Don Hellwig, who has retired after 17 years as the DS&O General Manager & CEO. Hellwig spent 37 years working for electric cooperatives in Kansas.

"I want to thank the DS&O Board of Directors, the membership and the great employees for having made this my dream job," Hellwig expressed. "It has been an awesome ride."

Hellwig started his cooperative career at the age of 27 as a board member for Twin Valley.

"Both of my grandfathers were two of the incorporators of the co-op," Hellwig explained.

One of his grandfathers, Forrest E. Miksch, was a driving force in establishing the co-op. Miksch became the first president of the Twin Valley Board, and he was given the first member certificate issued in 1945. Miksch served on the board for about five years. Hellwig's other grandfather, Phil Hellwig, Sr., served on the board for one term.

Approximately 20 years after his grandfathers had served on the board, Hellwig was asked to run for election.

After eight years on the Twin Valley board, and four years on the KEPCo board, Hellwig stepped down in 1986. He then served as Twin Valley's General Manager from 1986 through 1996. He was hired as DS&O's General Manager and CEO in 1997. His last day at DS&O was January 5.

RUS official, legislator among KEC annual meeting speakers

Final touches are being applied to the 2015 KEC Annual Meeting. The event will be held Jan. 24-27 at the Capitol Plaza Hotel in Topeka.

Speakers for this year's meeting include Kansas State Representative Steven Johnson and RUS Acting Administrator Jasper Schneider.

Other speakers include Barry Flinchbaugh, former K-State Ag Economics Professor and noted professional speaker; Board policy issues and concerns with Bob Patton, NRECA; Kansas Association of Community Foundation by Bob Muirhead, Midwest Energy and Svetlana Pushkareva Hutfles, Kansas Association of Community Foundations; a luncheon presentation by storm chaser

and professional photographer Stephen Locke; a review of hydro customer group issues by panelists Bill Drummond of Mid-west Electric Consumers Assoc., and Nicki Fuller of Southwestern Power Resources Assoc.; and a trustee roundtable discussion.

In addition, Phil Irwin from Federated, Mike Lewis from CFC, and Miranda Stokes from CoBank are part of the speaker line-up.

KEC's Loss Control, Safety and Compliance Department will recognize co-ops who've earned safety awards for "No Lost Time" and National Safety Achievement awards. Attendees will also hear reports from the Kansas Committee for Rural Electrification and the KEC Auxiliary.



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Bluestem member performs cowboy poem at inauguration

Ron Wilson, Kansas cowboy poet and Bluestem member, presented an original poem as part of Governor Sam Brownback's inauguration on Jan. 12.

Wilson concluded the ceremony, which was held on the south steps of the State Capitol Building in Topeka, by performing an original cowboy poem about the history of Kansas and its founders.

"I am very honored to take part in this ceremony," Wilson said. "Kansas has a great history and this is an opportunity to honor the legacy of the Kansas pioneers."

Wilson and his family lives on the historic Lazy T Ranch near Manhattan. For more information about Wilson, go to www.ronscowboy-poetry.com.

insympathy

Lois Ellen Gerhardt

Lois Ellen Gerhardt, retired employee of KEC and KEPCo, died Jan. 12 at Lexington Park Assisted Living.

Gerhardt was a Certified Professional Secretary. She worked at KEC from 1970-1981. When KEPCo was formed, she worked there from 1981 until her retirement in 1999. In 1980, she was named Woman of the Year for the American Business Women's Association.

Memorial services were held on Jan. 16 at St. John's Lutheran Church. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) at St. John's Lutheran Church, 901 SW Fillmore, Topeka, KS 66606.

Katrina V. Clark

Katrina Clark, wife of retired KEC and KEPCo employee Marshall Clark, died Jan. 9. At her request, no service was planned.

Memorials may be made to Friends of the Topeka Zoo (specify Conservation Fund) FOTZ, 635 SW Gage Blvd, Topeka KS 66606; the C.A.T. Association of Topeka, 1719 SW Gage Blvd, Topeka KS 66614; or to Grace Hospice, 3715 SW 29th Street, Ste 100, Topeka KS 66614.

co-opcalendar

JANUARY

- 16 **Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting.** Sunflower Headquarters, Hays
- 24-27 **KEC Annual Meeting.** Capitol Plaza Hotel, Topeka
- 27 **KEPCo Board of Trustees Meeting.** KEPCo Headquarters, Topeka – 1 p.m.

FEBRUARY

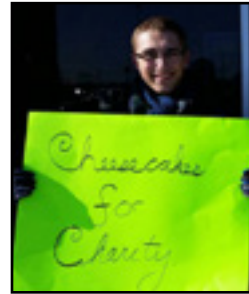
- 20 **Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting.** Sunflower Headquarters, Hays
- 22-25 **NRECA Annual Meeting.** Orlando, FL

Youth tour alumnus uses grant money to support orphanage

Jacob Rose, a 2014 youth tour delegate sponsored by DS&O and the 2014-15 Kansas representative to the NRECA Youth Leadership Council, has successfully completed his community service project "Cheesecake for Change".

"We specifically raised money for Tupelo's Children Mansion, an orphanage in Mississippi for kids who come from broken families and don't have a home," he explained. "We don't want to just help people, we want to change their lives. We want to make sure they have the chance to be successful."

The cheesecake fund raiser supports a charity that, since its inception in 1953, has raised over \$112 million



Jacob Rose won a \$500 community service grant through NRECA.

to fund missions and ministries around the world. This year, Rose helped create and sell cheesecakes which raised more than \$1,000.

Helping Rose sell cheesecakes on the last day of the fund raiser were two youth tour alumni who were sponsored by Lyon-Coffey.

"Malorie Wagner and Antony Furse drove all the way from Burlington to help us reach our goal," Rose stated.

This project was partially funded with a \$500 nationwide student service project grant coordinated by NRECA. A total of 18 grants were awarded last year to youth tour alumni in partnership with generationOn, a global youth service organization.

upcomingtraining

KEC's HR Summit

KEC has scheduled the 2015 HR Summit at the Ambassador Hotel, Wichita, on Tuesday, April 7.

If you would like to serve on the planning committee, please email Shana Read at sread@kec.org.

KEC's IT Summit

KEC has created an IT Summit for those cooperative employees who manage their cooperative's information technology needs. This new training will be held at the Drury Inn, Wichita, on Thursday, April 30.

Topics include a discussion on security assessments by NISC's Sean Wiese, and virtualization and storage technology by the Davenport Group.

Registration information will be emailed a few weeks before the date of the training.

Supervisory Fast Track

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

This program covers core competencies required of supervisors in the areas of leadership, communication, and basic administrative skills. NRECA developed the curriculum based on a set of supervisory competencies identified by new cooperative supervisors, experienced supervisors, and CEOs.

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, NRECA, will facilitate these courses.

Registration information will be emailed a few weeks before the date of the training.

Charlie Ross selected as 2015 Cooperative Hall of Fame Inductee

The late Charles “Charlie” Ross, retired manager of both KEC and KEPCo, will be inducted into the 2015 Co-op Hall of Fame.

The Hall of Fame, sponsored by the Kansas Cooperative Council, is valued for recognizing the contributions of co-op pioneers and honoring those who have gone “above and beyond the call” in advancing the cooperative philosophy.

“Charlie had a passion for the cooperative business model,” said Bruce Graham, KEC’s CEO. “He began his career as a farm broadcaster and, as such, recognized the critical role cooperatives played in the structure, the economy and the future of Kansas.”

Ross served the rural electric cooperatives for 20 years, first as Executive Vice President of Kansas Electric Cooperatives (KEC) from 1969-1981, then as the first Executive Vice President and CEO of Kansas Electric Power Cooperative (KEPCo) from 1981-1988, from which he retired in 1988. He also was an incorporator of Wolf Creek’s operating organization and served on its original board.

When Ross was named to lead KEC in 1969, electric cooperatives across Kansas and the nation were facing competitive challenges for service territory and the need to develop reliable and affordable generation resources. In response to that need, KEC formed the Power and Energy Committee whose purpose was to find a solution for ownership and control of generation resources that would serve rural Kansas. The Committee concluded that the most effective path to follow would be to form a statewide generation and transmission cooperative. The resulting entity was KEPCo, which was incorporated in 1975.

In the 1970s, Ross also began working with the Southwestern Power Administration (SWPA) to evaluate opportunities for Kansas to secure a hydropower allocation from the federal government’s preference power facilities in Arkansas,



Charles L. Ross

Missouri and the SWPA region. He led an effort that took Congressional direction to secure an allocation of the low-cost resource. As a result, the first such hydroelectric power flowed to Kansas for the benefit of rural electric members on July 8, 1980.

“The Kansas hydropower allocation was not sufficient to meet growing power supply needs and Ross had the vision to capitalize on an opportunity to join as an owner during construction of the Wolf Creek Generating Station,” explained Graham. “This vision led KEPCo to have a diverse generation portfolio of nuclear, natural gas, hydro/renewables, coal and even some diesel capacity.”

After a few years managing both KEC and a fledgling KEPCo, it was recognized

that development of a successful G&T would require significant effort and dedication by electric cooperatives across Kansas. Ross served as the leader of the group. He stepped aside as the association executive in 1981 and concentrated his full energy on KEPCo.

Phil Lesh, who served as KEPCo’s President from 1989-1990, stated in a previous article, “When members of the KEC Power Supply Committee signed the documents incorporating KEPCo, we had hopes of eventually having some influence upon our future power supply. I doubt that any of us expected the degree of success that has been achieved. One exception may have been Charles Ross. As CEO, he always forged ahead with dogged determination and KEPCo owes much of its success to him.”

Ross will be inducted into the Hall of Fame on March 11 at the Hyatt in Wichita. His children will be present to accept the honor on his behalf.

Following the ceremony, Ross’ biographical information will be placed alongside other honorees in the Kansas Cooperative Hall of Fame showcase display at the Kansas State Fairgrounds.

Electric co-op staff connect with members and Kansas Governor at annual farm show

Five electric co-ops joined forces to sponsor a booth at the Topeka Farm Show Jan. 6-8.

Bluestem, Brown-Atchison, Kaw Valley, Lyon-Coffey and LJEC used the opportunity to interact with members and the public.

More than 300 exhibitors participated in the event which drew nearly 30,000 attendees at the Kansas Expocentre in Topeka.

One of those visitors was Governor Sam Brownback. He attended the event

with his parents who are members of Heartland.

“The farm show went really well, which was nice considering how cold it was,” said Kevin Heptig, Bluestem’s Director of Member Services. “The best part of the show was having Gov. Brownback come by our booth for a short visit.”

The co-ops’ booth featured energy efficiency tips and the importance of attic insulation. Kaw Valley member, Charles Foster from Delia, won the drawing for an electric grill.



From left: Allen Baker of Brown-Atchison, Governor Brownback, Nancy Brownback, Glenn Brownback, and Adam Lynch of Attic Report Card pose in the electric co-op booth at the Topeka Farm Show.

Rolling Hills members elect trustees

Last month, Rolling Hills members voted by mail ballot for both open trustee positions and on potential bylaws amendments.

Newly elected to the board were Robert A. Fredrickson and Paul R. Wilson. Re-elected to the board was Justin Trost.

The membership also approved several significant bylaws amendments. Details can be found at www.rollinghills.coop.

KAA elects Kim Christiansen as secretary-treasurer

Kim Christiansen, KEC's Manager of Government Relations, was recently elected as the Secretary-Treasurer for the Kansas Agriculture Alliance.

Christiansen, who has been involved with the Alliance since July 2014, was encouraged by her peers to run for the position.

"I was asked if I would be interested in the position, and I thought that it would be an honor," Christiansen said. "I believe that if you belong to an organization, you should contribute in some manner."

The KAA's purpose is to promote the general welfare of agriculture and rural communities within the State and Nation, with a special emphasis on legislative activities affecting agriculture, rural areas, and cooperative services. The KAA membership includes statewide farm, livestock, commodity, operative, agri-business, and agri-service organizations.

jobmarket

Prairie Land seeks journeyman

Prairie Land Electric Cooperative, Inc., is seeking a journeyman lineman to be stationed at their district office in Concordia, KS.

To be eligible to apply, candidates must currently be a Journeyman Lineman. The position requires that the journeyman live in the Prairie Land service area and be willing to relocate, if needed.

For a complete position description or to apply, call April Karnopp, Manager of Human Resources, at 785-877-3323 or email akarnopp@ple.coop.

Joe Heinen's Power + Hope donation inspires others

One good deed has started a chain reaction for the community of Valley Falls.

It all started with an information kiosk that was constructed at the historic Pioneer Cemetery.

The kiosk was built as a result of LJEC retiree Joe Heinen earning the 2014 Kansas Touchstone Energy Power + Hope Award. As part of this award, Heinen received a \$500 donation to the charity of his choice. He selected Pioneer Cemetery as he has been involved in its care and maintenance for the past 19 years.

The cemetery, which originated in 1855, used the donation to build the kiosk. Heinen's donation covered approximately half of the total material costs, and the Knights of Columbus covered the rest. All the labor was donated by local residents. Joe assisted his brother Larry Heinen in building the kiosk.

The Valley Falls Historical Society was impressed with the kiosk which led to building a second sign for the Historical Shrine Church.



Joe Heinen's donation to create a kiosk at the Pioneer Cemetery has inspired the addition of this sign for the Historical Shrine Church.

The church was recently moved to Main Street just west of the Historical Society's building.

Heinen's donation has also inspired one of the local active cemeteries, The St. Mary's Cemetery, to start a fund for a sign of their own.

Heinen stated, "This just proves that you never know how the Power + Hope donation might inspire others to action."

The 2015 Touchstone Energy Power + Hope winners will be announced at the KEC Annual Meeting on Jan. 26.

Victory awards southwest Kansas museum a Sharing Success grant

Victory Electric has awarded the Stauth Memorial Museum in Montezuma \$10,000 through CoBank's "Sharing Success" grant program.

The museum received \$5,000 from Victory and \$5,000 from CoBank to help fund a *Suited for Space* exhibit on loan from the Smithsonian.

"The grant is amazing help for us," Stauth Museum Director Kim Legleiter said. "As the cost of exhibits go up, it's so helpful to have support and be able to bring exhibits in for others to enjoy. This is the last place the *Suited for Space* exhibit will be before all of the pieces go back to their original museums. With the help of the grant, we were able to get it here."

The Stauth Memorial Museum opened in 1996 and features the travel adventures of Claude and Donald



Victory's CEO Shane Laws (far right) and Trustee Gary Gillespie (third from right) present the "Sharing Success" donation check to members of the museum's staff and board.

Stauth, longtime residents of southwest Kansas, as well as traveling exhibits throughout the year. The *Suited for Space* exhibit will be on display until July 19 and

will feature life-size photographs and x-rays of suits, photographs, a replica Apollo spacesuit, and a photo-op spacesuit that visitors can try on.

"Victory is pleased to award this grant to the Stauth Museum," Victory CEO Shane Laws said. "The museum provides great educational opportunities to the citizens and youth of the surrounding communities and we are proud to support their efforts."

This is the third year Victory has awarded "Sharing Success" grants to local non-profits. The Bucklin Library received a \$10,000 grant in 2012, and the Mission of Mercy dental clinic received a \$10,000 grant in 2013.