

Rural Power

INSIDE

- 2 | Calendar
- 2 | KCRE Golf Tournament to be held in Salina
- 3 | Clare Gustin receives national economic development award
- 4 | Ninnescah to receive USDA Funding

Elections, safety and power supply topics at KEC's summer meeting

Trustees, managers and key staff heard from a variety of speakers on industry updates and innovations, as KEC hosted its Summer Board Meeting at the Overland Park Marriott on July 30.

Congresswoman Lynn Jenkins discussed recent legislative activity and highlighted several proposals to help reduce the debt and to balance the national budget.

Steven Howe, deputy district director for Congressman Tim Huelskamp, played a news clip of the Congressman offering an amendment to the Farm Bill on July 11 that clarifies regulatory language that affects beneficiaries of RUS loans.

Gabe Snow, NRECA's senior grassroots advocacy advisor, took a political snapshot of current elections in Kansas. He discussed the Kansas Congressional redistricting, and he pointed out that all of the districts are solid Republican. He gave election predictions for Congress, reviewing specific upcoming races for both the U.S. House and Senate.

John Hewa, NRECA's vice president of research, engineering and technical services, gave a presentation about the technology innovations at cooperatives across the country and projects developed through the Cooperative Research Network (CRN) at NRECA.

Bryan Singletary, president of Practical Energies, highlighted the cooperative principles and how those principles can be applied to the issues faced by cooperative members.

Federated's Phil Irwin, emphasized the importance of constant attention to safety practices at the Board and management levels, urged Kansas cooperatives to embrace the revised RESAP program, and described the important partnership Federated has with the statewide associations.



Congresswoman Lynn Jenkins stated that good progress is being made and that "there is hope in Washington" at the KEC Summer Board Meeting in Overland Park on July 30.

KEC's Bruce Graham and Steve Epperson, chairman of the KEC Strategic Planning Committee, reported on the results of the KEC Organization Assessment and detailed the top priorities identified by the Strategic Planning Committee.

KEPCo's Steve Parr and Sunflower's Stuart Lowry reported on the activities of the Kansas G&Ts and recapped several issues that affect power supply.

During the luncheon, Bob Gress, director of the Great Plains Nature Center,

entertained with stories and photographs from his collection of native Kansas wildlife images.

In the business session of the meeting, the membership endorsed Loren Dickens, Radiant, as the Kansas nominee to stand for election to the Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange Board of Directors as the Region 7 Director-Director candidate.

Also during the meeting, KEC's CEO Bruce Graham presented Max Ott, retiring Manager at Alfalfa Electric Cooperative, with a plaque commending his years of electric cooperative service and leadership.

Prior to convening the summer board meeting, Bryan Singletary facilitated the CCD Course "Understanding the Electricity Business," and Terry Halter and Gabe Snow facilitated the Board Leadership course "The Director's Role in Shaping Policy." 275 co-op representatives and family members attended a performance of "Hairspray" at the New Theatre Restaurant on July 29.



Loren Dickens, Radiant, was endorsed as the Kansas nominee to stand for election to the Federated Board of Directors as the Region 7 Director-Director candidate.



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Huelskamp Farm Bill amendment to aid rural electric cooperatives

During the debate over the House Farm Bill, Congressman Tim Huelskamp offered an amendment to clarify regulatory language that affects beneficiaries of Rural Utility Service (RUS) loans.

A January 2012 U.S. District Court ruling held that any privately-funded projects undertaken by a cooperative with an RUS loan would constitute a "major federal action." Such classification would subject these privately-funded projects to the costly and time-consuming requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Enactment of the judge's ruling would be a major departure from the long-existing practice and standard operating procedure at the USDA of allowing privately-funded projects to proceed without such federal reporting. The amendment passed by voice vote.

HUELSKAMP OFFICE – 7/11/12

Public comment starts on proposed rule for RUS Energy Efficiency Loan Program

A proposed RUS Energy Efficiency and Conservation Loan Program, which would allow electric co-ops to help consumer-members make efficiency upgrades to their homes and buildings, was published in the Federal Register last week. NRECA, RUS and Pennsylvania electric co-ops participated in a media event highlighting this proposal.

The proposed rule is open for public comment until Sept. 24. NRECA supports this initiative and will submit comments after reviewing it. KEC will work with the state Rural Development office to provide supporting comments, as well.

NRECA – 7/27/12

AUGUST

- 2-3 **Material Managers Meeting**, Hyatt Regency, Wichita.
- 3 **Max Ott Retirement Party**, First Baptist Church, 614 S. Grand, Cherokee, OK, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.
- 15-16 **KEPCo Board of Trustees Meeting**, KEPCo Headquarters, Topeka.
- 23 **MDM Meeting**, Salina.
- 23 **Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting**, Sunflower Headquarters, Hays.
- 24 **Annual KCRE Golf Tournament**, Salina Municipal Golf Course, Salina.

SEPTEMBER

- 11-13 **KEC Hotline School**, Pratt Vo-Tech, Pratt.
- 18-20 **KEC Hotline School**, Manhattan Vo-Tech, Manhattan.
- 19-20 **KEPCo Board of Trustees Meeting**, KEPCo Headquarters, Topeka.
- 20 **Tri-County's Annual Meeting**, Texas County Activity Center, Guymon, OK.
- 21 **Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting**, Sunflower Headquarters, Hays.
- 27-28 **Kansas Line Supervisors Association Meeting**, Holiday Inn Select, Wichita.

16th annual KCRE golf tournament to be held in Salina

On August 24, cooperative trustees, managers, and suppliers will tee it up for the 16th annual Kansas Committee for Rural Electrification (KCRE) golf tournament at the Salina Municipal Golf Course.

The fundraiser will begin with a shotgun start at 8:30 a.m. The registration fee per player this year is \$65. The tournament usually draws in about 130 participants to support KCRE, a political action committee that raises funds to support candidate's campaigns.

"It's very important to legislators, as it allows them to build effective campaigns and hopefully support electric cooperative ideals once they are in office," said KCRE secretary treasurer Kirk Thompson.

The annual golf tournament is run by co-op managers volunteering their

time, and it accounts for about one half of KCRE's annual funding. The other half comes from a silent auction and annual membership dues.

"The co-op membership understands that they have a large role in politics, and they are willing to spend their personal time and money to protect and further the cooperative goals," said Dave Holthaus, KEC staff liaison to KCRE.

The KCRE donations are important to candidates running for Kansas offices to assist them in getting their campaign message out to voters, through media, website and visual advertisements. No KCRE dollars are used for meals, entertainment or gifts.

For more information on sponsoring a hole, donating prizes, or playing in the tournament, call Kirk Thompson at 620-873-2184.

Max Kolarik

Max Robert Kolarik, retired Sumner-Cowley board member, died on June 20.

In addition to serving on the Sumner-Cowley board from 1972-2003, Kolarik also served as a KEC trustee and was a charter member of the KEPCo Board of Directors.

A memorial service was held July 16 at the Schaeffer Mortuary Chapel in Caldwell. Memorials may be given in his name to the Shriner's Hospitals for Children.

Delbert H. Eichman

Delbert H. Eichman, retired Bluestem board member, died on July 23.

He originally served as a board member for PR&W, which later became Bluestem, from 1989-2010. He also served as a KEC trustee from 2003-2009.

Funeral services were held on July 28 at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Flush. Memorials for the St. Joseph's Catholic Church may be sent to Stewart Funeral Home, PO Box 48, Wamego, KS, 66547.

Kaw Valley joins Touchstone Energy

Kaw Valley Electric Cooperative's board of directors recently approved membership in Touchstone Energy.

According to Kevin Gregg, Kaw Valley's member services manager, being a Touchstone Energy member has its perks.

"The benefits include the co-op web builder tool, access to the photo and document library, cooperative employee training, the energy saving brochures and videos and the member satisfaction survey," Gregg listed.

"With rising energy costs and the current economy, energy efficiency and conservation has become more important than ever," he continued. "Together We Save is a national campaign designed to help our members make small changes that add up to big savings on their energy bills."

Kaw Valley is excited about the benefits of being one of the nationwide alliance. Gregg explained that it's about serving the members and sticking to the cooperative principles.

"Our board saw the value in joining over 700 other cooperatives nationwide in order to pool our resources and add valuable services for Kaw Valley members," he added.

"In the end," he stated, "it came back to Cooperation among Cooperatives, one of our guiding Cooperative principles."

Kaw Valley's enrollment brings the Touchstone Energy cooperatives' total to 26 in Kansas and 739 in the nation who collectively deliver power to more than 30 million members.

Gustin earns economic development award

Clare Gustin, Sunflower's vice president of member services and external affairs, was awarded the 2012 Rural Economic Development Lead-

ership Award by the National Rural Economic Developers Association (NREDA) at its annual conference on July 19, 2012, in Indianapolis, IN.

This award recognizes outstanding leadership in the field of rural economic development. Gustin, who was chosen by a national selection committee representing electric and telephone cooperatives across the nation, has been involved in rural economic development for 27 years, 15 of those years at Sunflower.

Gustin's vast involvement in rural development includes actively working with local, state and national economic development groups and community leadership activities. She also serves on rural development boards and volunteers for local issues affected by rural development efforts.

Prior to her tenure at Sunflower, Gustin assisted rural development efforts through the Kansas Small Business Development Center.

"As a Kansas farm girl, I've watched rural Kansas change, and I know how important it is for our communities to

grow," Gustin said. "It is indeed humbling to receive this award from the members of NREDA as I value the opportunity to learn from them, which

helps me make a difference in rural Kansas."

Nominees must be an economic development professional at an organization involved in advancing rural development efforts.

In addition, those nominated must have demonstrated outstanding leadership in an economic development project resulting in the improvement of the quality of life,

creation of new jobs, and opportunity for growth and development in rural America.

"Clare Gustin is the epitome of a rural economic developer. Her vision, leadership and guidance to the profession have made her a source of knowledge and guidance," said Dennis Mingyar, NREDA awards chairman.

"She is committed to her members, her consumers and her communities. She is someone we turn to with our questions and our needs," Mingyar continued. "Her commitment to supporting the growth and development of rural economic development extends from the local community to the national scene."



Dana Baker, NREDA board member, presents Clare Gustin with the 2012 Rural Economic Development Leadership Award.

KEC Directory available in electronic format

The new KEC Directory is now available in electronic format to those who have access to the Members section of the KEC website (www.kec.org). This pdf version of the directory can be downloaded to smart phones, computers, or tablet devices. The file can be found in the Directory category of the Members Login section.



Lane-Scott hosts annual meeting

Lane-Scott's Annual Meeting was held on July 10 at the Lane County Fairgrounds. More than 525 guests were served a meal by Stan Hoss BBQ.

Incumbent Trustees Richard Jennison, Harold Hoss, and Craig Ramsey were re-elected to the board.

Speakers included interim manager, Dow Morris, and Sunflower's Stuart Lowry who stressed the effect that Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations are having on electric rates.

Attendees enjoyed free carnival rides and door prizes.

USDA announces funding to improve electric infrastructure in South Central Kansas

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack recently announced that electric cooperatives and utilities in 15 states - including Kansas - will receive loan guarantees to make improvements to generation and transmission facilities and implement smart grid technologies.

"USDA Rural Development has a strong commitment to help improve infrastructure in rural Kansas by offering low-interest financing to rural utility cooperatives," stated USDA's state director Patty Clark. "Financing provided by USDA Rural Development for rural electric projects assists cooperatives in improving electrical infrastructure, which helps them provide affordable and reliable energy to rural Kansans."

In Kansas, Ninescah will receive \$9.67 million in financing to build and improve 410 miles of distribution line and make other system improvements. The loan also includes \$550,000 in smart grid projects.

Ed Wiltse, Ninescah's manager, stated that the smart grid will assist the cooperative in locating outages and restoring power quickly, plus the cooperative can efficiently connect and disconnect meters from the office.

"The cooperative has partnered with USDA's Rural Utilities Services for more than 70 years, because they provide low-interest financing and the customer service has been excellent," said Wiltse. "This project will assist us in keeping our electric rates reasonable by not paying excessive interest costs, and it helps us to better plan our long-term financing."

Charlotte Provo-Blenden to represent Region 7 on advisory council

Charlotte Provo-Blenden, KEC's manager of administrative services, has been selected to represent NRECA Region 7 on the Executive & Administrative Professionals Advisory Council.

The council is dedicated to supporting the executive and administrative professional community. It achieves this through leadership and involvement, providing resources to promote growth and enhance effectiveness in the cooperatives. The group assists in the planning for a variety of meetings including the annual PowerUp Conference.

Advisors are committed to serve on the council for a term of three years. There are two representatives for each region. The other Region 7 representative is Rae Jean Amy from Victory Electric.

Provo-Blenden has been a part of KEC for 36 years and is excited to serve on this board.

"I am looking forward to working on the Executive and Administrative Professionals Advisory Council," Provo-Blenden said. "I am excited to positively contribute to the group."

Co-op linemen to deliver safety message at Kansas State Fair

Kansas electric cooperatives and Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Kansas are co-sponsoring a high-voltage line safety demonstration in combination with the Kansas State Fair, Sept. 10-14.

Linemen from CMS, Lane-Scott, Midwest Energy, Nemaha-Marshall, and Sedgwick County have volunteered to help spread the message.

Teaching the public to stay safe around power lines is the focus of the electric cooperatives' message at this year's fair. The demonstration, which is part of "Kansas' Largest Classroom," will incorporate the electric safety demonstration on loan from Midwest Energy.

Journeyman linemen from the electric cooperatives will demonstrate proper safety precautions and teach viewers what protective gear linemen use and why, what happens to a person when they come into contact with an

energized line and why birds can land safely on power lines.

Touchstone Energy and Discovery Channel School "Get Charged" kits will be distributed to teachers who pre-register their 5th-9th grade classes for the demonstration.

"Kansas' Largest Classroom" is a one-of-a-kind educational event that features various items from crafts to agriculture and animals. The Kansas State Fair is the largest event in the state and attracts over 350,000 people annually.

There are a limited number of State Fair admission passes available to cooperative board members and employees.

If you would like to receive free general admission passes to this year's State Fair, please call Shana Read, KEC, at 785-478-4554 or email sread@kec.org. Tickets will be distributed on a first-come, first-serve basis.



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