

# Rural Power

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

## RUS Administrator, legislators among KEC annual meeting speakers

Final touches are being applied to the 2016 KEC Annual Meeting. The event will be held Jan. 23-26 at the Capitol Plaza Hotel in Topeka.

Speakers for this year's meeting include RUS Administrator **BRANDON MCBRIDE**, and state legislators **SEN. JEFF LONGBINE** and **REP. RUSSELL JENNINGS**.

Other speakers include Sunflower's **BILL BRANCH**, who will lead a discussion on cyber security; Apple certified instructor **CYNDI DANNER-KUHN**, who will facilitate an iPad training session; and NRECA's **JIM SPIERS**, who will look into the utility industry future and how technology promises to impact our operations. NISC's **VERN DOSCH** is now an author and will share his insights in a presentation entitled "Culture Matters."

There will also be a luncheon presentation

that will feature the inspirational **CHRIS KOCH**, a farmer and rancher who was born without arms and legs but who lives life to its greatest potential. The Kansas Power+Hope Award recipient will be recognized.

In addition, **PHIL IRWIN** from Federated, **MIKE LEWIS** from CFC, and **SETH HART** from CoBank are part of the speaker line-up. The Trustee Roundtable discussion will also be repeated at this meeting.

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 those who have contributed to the PAC will receive KCRE pins.

## KEC staff with combined 75 years of service to retire

KEC will see nearly 75 years of service retiring from its staff this month: **BOB JENNINGS**, **DANNY SEELE** and **DAVE HOLTHAUS**. *Rural Power* pays tribute to these employees.

### Bob Jennings

On January 31, **BOB JENNINGS**, Manager of Publishing Services, will retire after 35 years at Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. Jennings started his career at KEC as the Communications Specialist, designing centerspreads and writing articles and newsletters.

During his KEC career, he transitioned into the position of Editorial Assistant and then to Manager of Publishing Services, where he worked closely with KEC's member cooperatives assembling annual reports, creating logos and advertisements, and building and maintaining websites.

Prior to working at KEC, Jennings established himself in the world of journalism and publishing, gaining valuable experiences that built the foundation for his many roles at KEC. He started his work in journalism in high school, writing for the school yearbook and newspaper and serving as the school's FFA chapter reporter.



Bob Jennings

After graduating from Pittsburg State University with a bachelor's degree in English and a minor in journalism, he wrote for the *Sun Publications* in Johnson County, covering high school and professional sporting events. Jennings also worked his way up in the marketing division at Jostens.

Jennings' time at the *Sun* newspaper led him to adventures such as interviewing the founder of the Kansas City Royals, Ewing Kauffman; mingling with the coaches and players during the Royals' spring training; and taking game photos on the turf of Arrowhead Stadium.

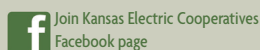
Throughout each step of his career, building relationships was at the forefront of his priorities. Before entering his retirement, he had one simple piece of advice. Jennings said, "Do not forget 'the power of human connections'"—a reference to Touchstone Energy Cooperatives' mission statement. As a statewide communicator, "it is important to establish relationships built on trust so that our electric cooperatives are confident in our role in communicating with the members," added Jennings.

Jennings shared that one of his fondest memories from working at KEC was writing "A Small Kansas Town Remembers 9/11: Anthony Boasts the Official State Memorial to a National Tragedy" for *Kansas Country*

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**Wheatland seeks Assistant General Manager**

Wheatland Electric is looking for an exceptional, experienced leader for the position of Assistant General Manager. The Assistant General Manager assists in all aspects of managing overall operations and organizational functions. Applicants must have a minimum of a Bachelor's degree and five years of senior management experience in the electric utility industry. This position requires excellent interpersonal adaptability, organizing, planning, leadership, decisiveness, and the ability to maintain confidential information. This position is available to be located in Scott City or Garden City locations. Email cover letter and resume to resumes@weci.net.

**Wheatland seeks two PC Support Specialists**

Wheatland Electric is looking for two PC Support Specialists—one for the Garden City office and the other for the Great Bend office. These positions require an associate's degree or Vo-Tech training in computer science, experience in Microsoft products and operating systems, iOS, and android. Linux experience desired but not required. Applicants must have excellent organizational and communication skills, and strong attention to detail, and be able to meet deadlines and maintain confidential information.. Must live within 15 minutes of the office. Email cover letter and resume to resumes@weci.net. Deadline is Jan. 25.

**Wheatland seeks System Administrator**

Wheatland Electric is looking for a customer service-oriented System Administrator in the Scott City office. This position requires an associate's degree or Vo-Tech training in computer science with two years experience. Experience in Microsoft server products including Hyper-V, Linux Operating systems, and VMWare. Applicant must have excellent organizational and communication skills, and strong attention to detail, and be able to meet deadlines and maintain confidential information. Email cover letter and resume to resumes@weci.net. Deadline is Jan. 25.

**JANUARY**

- 22 **Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting**, Sunflower Headquarters, Hays
- 23-26 **KEC Annual Meeting**, Capitol Plaza Hotel/Maner Conference Center, Topeka
- 26 **KEPCo Board of Trustees Meeting**, Emerald II-III, Capitol Plaza Hotel, Topeka – 12 p.m.

**FEBRUARY**

- 14-17 **NRECA Annual Meeting**, New Orleans, LA
- 19 **Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting**, Sunflower Headquarters, Hays

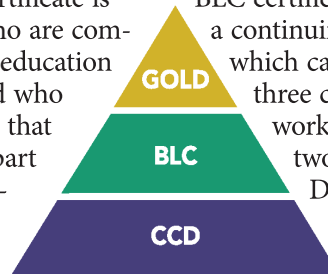
**MARCH**

- 2-3 **KEC Board of Trustees Meeting**, Marriott Courtyard, Salina
- 16-17 **KEPCo Board of Trustees Meeting**, KEPCo Headquarters, Topeka
- 18 **Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting**, Sunflower Headquarters, Hays
- 30-4/1 **KMSDA Spring Meeting**, Courtyard by Marriott, Old Town, Wichita

**NRECA creates new level for director education - Director Gold**

NRECA's new Director Gold certificate begins this month. Director Gold recognizes directors who have already earned their Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) and their Board Leadership Certificate (BLC) and who wish to continue to learn throughout their service on the board.

"The Director Gold certificate is geared toward directors who are committed to continuing their education beyond CCD and BLC and who desire a tangible credential that reinforces their stature as part of an experienced and educated group of directors," said Bruce Graham, KEC's CEO. "Director Gold also demonstrates to co-op members those directors' ongoing commitment to



advancing their knowledge and performing their fiduciary duty to the best of their ability."

For a director to earn the Director Gold certificate, they must have already earned the CCD and BLC and earn three additional credits from the BLC series of courses. Unlike the CCD and BLC certificates, Director Gold includes a continuing education requirement which calls for directors to earn three credits of approved course work and or conferences every two years to maintain their Director Gold status.

To opt in or have NRECA check your course record, just complete the form on [www.cooperative.com/DirectorGold](http://www.cooperative.com/DirectorGold).

**KDA to host six regional agribusiness development workshops**

The Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA) will host six Regional Agribusiness Development Workshops in 2016. The workshops will provide Kansas farmers, ranchers and agribusinesses with resources, and current business development and organizational contacts to assist with startups or expansions.

The KDA Division of Agriculture Marketing received a USDA Rural Business Development Grant to help fund the following state wide workshops:

- ▶ Feb. 11 in Belleville
- ▶ Feb. 18 in Iola
- ▶ March 3 in Dodge City
- ▶ March 10 in Colby
- ▶ March 24 in Marion

Established in the 2014 Farm Bill, USDA's Rural Business Development Grant is a program intended to help with technical assistance, training and other activities to allow small businesses in rural areas to expand.

Featured speakers at the event will include representatives from Kansas Department of Agriculture, Kansas Department of Commerce, Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, USDA Rural Development, Network Kansas, Small Business Development Center, local Chamber of Commerce, Main Street, economic development and E-Community.

For more information, email KDA's Robin Blume, [robin.blume@kda.ks.gov](mailto:robin.blume@kda.ks.gov).

## KEC retirements, cont.

*Living.* The article earned him one of his many NRECA Spotlight on Excellence awards.

“The story shows the compassion that the community of Anthony had for those affected by the 9/11 tragedy. The memorial represents the power of building connections between communities, no matter how many miles separated them,” said Jennings.

Jennings continued to build relationships within the electric cooperative community by serving two terms on the Certified Cooperative Communicator’s (CCC) board after earning his CCC designation in 2005.

Following Jennings’ retirement, **CARRIE KIMBERLIN** will take the role of Manager of Creative Solutions. In this position, Kimberlin will carry over her previous responsibilities of design and advertising sales for *Kansas Country Living*, and she will maintain her duties in Information Technology. Kimberlin will also take Jennings’ role in publishing services, handling member printing and special projects.

## Danny Seele

At the end of December, **DANNY SEELE** retired after working for more than 25 years in KEC’s Apparatus Testing (AT) Department.

In 1990, Seele agreed to try out the Apparatus Testing Assistant position for two weeks. Before the two weeks were up, he knew that the job would be a great fit for him. Since then, his career at KEC has evolved from AT Assistant to Director of AT.

When reflecting on his time at KEC, Seele said that the most rewarding aspects of his job were helping those in need during an outage and building relationships with both the members and fellow electric cooperative employees.



Danny Seele

“I have really enjoyed working with the co-ops over the years,” said Seele. “I really owe a lot to KEC. I have met some of my best friends while working here—some of them who live and work at co-ops over 300 miles away. I have made some really great relationships in the rural electric family.”

During his career, Seele used his expertise to expand the capabilities of the AT Department. In 2014, the department moved to a new facility in Osage City.

“In our previous space, we were only able to work on one project at a time, but our new workspace is more streamlined,” said Seele. “Because of the additional space that the new location provided, we were able to hire an additional technician.”

Furthermore, Seele saw the importance of training staff within the electric cooperatives, which has allowed the cooperatives and the AT department to respond to outages quicker and more efficiently.

“Danny has been a trusted resource for our member systems for many years, and we always knew we could call him day or night for technical assistance in operating our rural electric systems,” said Kirk Thompson, CMS Manager and Chairman of the AT Committee. “Danny’s spirit of cooperation helped lead the Apparatus and Testing Department as services and technology evolved to the point it is today.”

Seele is confident that he is leaving the AT department in good hands. In Sept. 2014, **CHUCK FAGAN** and **CHIP MORRIS** were appointed as Co-Directors of AT and will fill Seele’s role in his retirement.

“From training and working alongside of them, I know that they will be valuable to the Apparatus Testing department. They work efficiently and have gained valuable knowledge [in their field of work],” said Seele.

Seele now transitions to a new role with ElectriComm, Inc., and his expertise will be available to KEC members and others through that new affiliation. Seele can be reached at ElectriCom via phone at 785-640-3963 or by email at [dseele@ec-ks.net](mailto:dseele@ec-ks.net).

## Dave Holthaus

After working at KEC for more than 13 years, **DAVE HOLTHAUS**, Vice President of Government Relations, will retire at the end of January. He started at KEC in 2002 as the Manager of Government Relations.

Prior to joining KEC, Holthaus worked at Westar Energy, formerly known as Western Resources, for 22 years in a number of management positions, serving as a corporate lobbyist for seven years, and as a division manager for the Wichita gas division. He also was a contract lobbyist for Hein law firm.

Holthaus earned his bachelor’s degree in business from Emporia State University and a master’s degree in business management from Webster University in St. Louis, MO.

While at KEC, Holthaus worked with co-ops and legislators to protect and improve the laws affecting the operations of the 29 distribution cooperatives and three generation and transmission cooperatives, and educated and provided constituent services to Kansas legislators.

As the Vice President of Government Relations, Holthaus worked to “fortify and further KEC’s culture of respectability at the Capitol.”

“I have gained multiple friends in every county in Kansas—within the legislature and electric cooperative—and I consider that my personal measurement of success,” added Holthaus.

When reflecting on his career at KEC, Holthaus said. “In the past 13 years, I believe KEC’s legislative presence and standing at the Capitol has been strengthened, and our KCRE PAC has grown over 10 times,” he added.



Dave Holthaus

“Dave retires from KEC as the recognized leader among Kansas lobbyists, with a reputation for integrity. KEC and its members have great recognition at the Statehouse due to Dave’s stellar efforts on our behalf over the past years,” said Kim Christiansen, Director of Government Relations and Legal Counsel.

Holthaus is confident he is leaving KEC’s Government Relations Department in good hands. “Recently, we added **KIM CHRISTIANSEN** and **ALEX OREL**, Manager of Government Relations,” said Holthaus. “Kim and Alex have legislative backgrounds that complement each other, and I am particularly proud that these fine lobbyists will carry on the KEC tradition,” added Holthaus.

In his retirement, Holthaus plans to volunteer and travel with his wife, Jean. He also plans to continue his hobby of collecting and refurbishing vintage golf clubs, pocket knives, pocket watches, and whatever else may catch his eye.

## Co-ops update logos

Lyon-Coffey and Radiant electric cooperatives have recently announced new logos.

Lyon-Coffey turned to KEC's Manager of Publishing Services **BOB JENNINGS** to create new logo ideas.

"We wanted a logo that looked more current," said Lyon-Coffey's Manager **SCOTT WHITTINGTON**.

When brainstorming ideas for the new look, Jennings took some inspiration from Touchstone Energy's logo.

"Scott knew that I had designed logos in the past for other co-ops, and called to ask me if I would design one for Lyon-Coffey," said Jennings. "I suggested a three-color design based off of Touchstone Energy's logo colors."

Lyon-Coffey's new logo will be revealed in a future issue of *Kansas Country Living*. Jennings has also designed logos for LJEC, Twin Valley, and Nemaha-Marshall.

Radiant's Operations Manager **DENNIS DUFT** said that their idea for a new logo had been floating around the Radiant offices for a while.

**CINDY HOLINSWORTH**, Radiant's Warehouse Supervisor, contacted two graphic designers from KOAM-TV in Joplin, MO, to develop ideas for a new logo. The designers came up with three different, yet similar, designs that were then reviewed by both Duft and Radiant's Administrative Manager **LEAH TINDLE**.

"Cindy emailed both Leah and me the three designs, and it just so happened that we chose the same one," Duft explained.

With Duft and Tindle's unanimous choice, the logo was then taken to the Board. "We introduced the design we thought was best and, with Board approval, we added the logo to Radiant," said Duft.

Radiant's new logo already appears on the work trucks, its website, centerspread, and on employees' clothing. Radiant also plans to highlight the new logo at its annual meeting.



## Moore joins KEC's Communications team

This past December, **JACKIE MOORE** joined KEC's communications team as Communications Specialist.

Moore will be responsible for designing centerspreads, writing news and feature articles, and assisting with coordinating the youth programs and other co-op activities.

Moore received her bachelor's degree in English literature from Bethel College, with minors in business administration and art, and she earned her masters degree in English literature from Wichita State University.

Prior to joining KEC, Moore



Jackie Moore

worked as an editorial intern at Dzanc Books, Ann Arbor, MI, and as an instructor of literary studies at Bethel College. She is familiar with Kansas electric cooperatives, as she worked as KEC's Communications Intern in the summer of 2014.

"I value my previous experience as an intern at KEC because it introduced me to cooperative careers and has helped establish a solid foundation for my new role as Communications Specialist. I am really grateful that I have the opportunity to join the cooperative community," said Moore.

Moore takes the Communications Specialist responsibilities in preparation for **CARRIE KIMBERLIN'S** promotion to Manager of Creative Solutions upon **BOB JENNINGS'** retirement at the end of January.

## Five co-ops host booth at Topeka Farm Show

Co-op representatives from Bluestem, Brown-Atchison, Kaw Valley, LJEC, and Lyon-Coffey hosted a joint booth at the Topeka Farm Show Jan. 5-7 to meet and engage with co-op members and the public.

The Topeka Farm Show, which has been held at the Topeka Expo Centre annually since 1989, offers a convenient location for these northeastern cooperatives to interact with their members. The booth this year included a display showing the effectiveness of blown-in insulation versus more commonly used blanket insulation in attics.

**MIKE TWEEDY**, Lyon-Coffey's Member Service Coordinator, along with **BEN STALLINGS**, a Certified Attic

Technician from Attic Report Card, explained that the display was there to help people better understand their home insulation and to help promote a new service that is being offered by Bluestem, Kaw Valley, LJEC, and Lyon-Coffey cooperatives. The service offers any

member of the participating co-ops a free home attic inspection by the Attic Report Card team. The inspection includes a detailed report card of how well the inspected attic is currently insulated and what can be done to improve it, along with an estimated energy savings report.

The booth also had on display an efficient water heater, lightning surge protector and a water heater timer that improves residential efficiency.

"It's great to get to work with the other co-ops," said Tweedy. "I recognize a lot of the members that come up and talk to us. We're here to talk with them and answer any questions they might have."



Lyon-Coffey's Mike Tweedy, along with Kaw Valley's Frank Ortega (far right), visit with co-op members at the Topeka Farm Show.