

Rural Power

INSIDE

- 2 | Calendar
- 3 | LJEC's Jennifer Fisher earns Touchstone Energy Brand Champion award
- 3 | Member co-ops hold annual meetings
- 4 | KEC communications staff honored with Spotlight awards

Kansas cooperative officials deliver key messages to Congress

On May 5-6, 33 employees and directors from electric cooperatives in Kansas met with the state's Congressional Delegation and their staff while in Washington, D.C., for NRECA's Legislative Conference.



Representatives from Kansas electric cooperatives – shown here with Congressman Tim Huelskamp (front row, fifth from the right) – attended the NRECA Legislative Conference, May 5-6, to visit with elected officials about issues critical to maintaining affordable and reliable electric service.

The two-day summit gave 1,500 co-op officials the latest information on issues critical to maintaining affordable and reliable electric service to 42 million co-op members nationwide. This year's program featured education sessions that explained key issues to strengthen the participants' ability to communicate effectively on FEMA, greenhouse gas standards, the Endangered Species Act, and more.

"We had the opportunity to localize these national issues. For example, Kansas is front and center on the Endangered Species Act with the Lesser Prairie Chicken. The FEMA issue hits home too and we encouraged our Delegation to support a letter to FEMA Administrator Fugate that questions recent Region VII policy interpretations," said Bruce Graham, KEC's CEO. That letter was unanimously endorsed and sent to FEMA before the week was over.

"In addition, we had a chance to thank our delegation, in particular Senator Roberts, for his leadership on the Cooperative and Small Employer Pension Flexibility Act, which was signed into law April 7," Graham added.

During the week, cooperatives were also asked to register comments urging the Agriculture Department to withdraw or re-propose its draft NEPA rule that could have negative impacts for Rural Utilities

Service (RUS) borrowers. While in D.C., Bruce Graham and Don Hellwig were also part of a small group invited by NRECA to meet with RUS Administrator John Padalino to express the industry's concerns that these policy changes would cause delays and additional expenses, and likely would encourage lawsuits by third parties not agreeing with the results of many reviews.

KEC's Bruce Graham and Dave Holthaus each led teams that included KEC's Melissa Skelton; Don Hellwig, David Mueller, and Judy Barten, DS&O; Dale Coomes and Angie Erickson, Heartland; Bill Riggins and Phil Wages, KEPCo; Kevin Gregg and Joe Conley, Kaw Valley; Dow Morris, Lane-Scott; Steve Foss, LJEC; Earnie Lehman, John Blackwell, and Keith Miller, Midwest Energy; Keith Ross, Prairie Land; Steve Epperson, Pioneer; Dave Childers and Dan Thimesch, Sedgwick County; Stuart Lowry and Clare Gustin, Sunflower; Shane Laws, Terri Larson, Pat Morse, and Randy Quint, Victory; and Bruce Mueller, Charles Ayers, Dan Bonine, Wes Campbell, Beth Looney, Wheatland. Also joining the Kansas contingent was Seth Hart, CoBank.



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inbrief

Funding available for Rural Energy for America Program Projects

USDA Rural Development has up to \$12.3 million available in grants and nearly \$60 million available for loan guarantees for renewable energy and energy efficiency upgrades. The funding is provided through USDA's Rural Energy for America Program. REAP is one of many USDA programs to support an expanded domestic energy economy. For more information on how to apply, email USDA's David Kramer at david.kramer@ks.usda.gov.

insympathy

Marvin Farney

Marvin Dale Farney, retired Ark Valley board member, died on May 13. He served on the board from 1985-1997. Funeral services were held on May 19 at Sterling Evangelical Bible Church in Sterling, KS. Memorial contributions may be made to Sterling Evangelical Bible Church, in care of Elliott Mortuary, 1219 N. Main, Hutchinson, KS 67501.

co-opcalendar

MAY

26 **Memorial Day**, KEC Office Closed

JUNE

4-6 **Managers Meeting**, Hilton Garden Inn, Manhattan

10 **OSHA Informational Workshop**, KEC Office, Topeka

11 **OSHA Informational Workshop**, Victory Headquarters, Dodge City

12-19 **Electric Cooperative Youth Tour**, Washington, DC

20 **Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting**, Sunflower Headquarters, Hays

26 **MDM Meeting**, KEC Headquarters, Topeka

JULY

4 **Independence Day – KEC Office Closed**

12-18 **Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp**, Steamboat Springs, CO

16-17 **KEPCo Board of Trustees Meeting**, KEPCo Headquarters, Topeka

21 **Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting**, Sunflower Headquarters, Hays

24 **MDM Meeting**, KEC Headquarters, Topeka

KEC offers 2nd annual human resources workshop

KEC offered the 2nd annual HR Summit on April 28 in Wichita. This training was designed for electric cooperative human resources professionals, benefits administrators and supervisors.

The workshop's agenda centered on current topics in human resources, with a focus on compliance issues, real-world case studies, a discussion on the NRECA Region 7 audits and pension plans, and a session on health

care reform. There was also a roundtable discussion on several other human resources issues.

Presenters included Kristina Dietrick, President of Creative Business Solutions of Topeka; Wichita attorneys Steven P. Smith and Jena Lysen; William Birkeness of Federated; and NRECA's Steve Newton.

Twenty-two co-op employees and two managers attended the workshop.

upcoming training

Supervisory fast track

KEC is offering the NRECA Supervisory Training courses on August 18-22 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 is open until July 28. For more information, contact Shana Read at sread@kec.org.

Budget Pro workshop

KEC has scheduled a CFC Budget Pro and Cash Flow Pro workshop. This two-day training will be held June 24-25 at the Wichita Marriott.

The purpose of the workshop is to learn how to prepare a 12-month operating budget for a distribution co-op using a CFC-created spreadsheet template. The course will be facilitated by CFC's Adam Johnson.

Attendees will need to bring a laptop with Microsoft Excel 2007 or higher - OR - Microsoft Windows XP or higher. The laptop should have memory of two gigabytes or higher, as well as a USB port. A flash drive will be provided at the workshop.

Registration information will be emailed a few weeks before the date of the training. For more information, contact Shana Read at sread@kec.org.

Retirement seminar set

KEC is hosting a two-day Retirement Planning Seminar on Sept. 3-4, 2014, at KEPCo's office in Topeka. One-on-one retirement projection reviews with a professional investment advisor will be scheduled the evenings of Sept. 3-4, and on the morning of Sept. 5.

This two-day comprehensive retirement planning seminar is geared toward employees who are within 10 years of retirement and their spouses. Managers and insurance/benefit administrators are also encouraged to attend.

Topics include investment basics, retirement benefits from NRECA, calculating retirement needs, legal affairs and estate planning, protecting assets, and financial products and services.

For members, the cost is \$25 per person. For more information, contact Angela Howard at ahoward@kec.org.

Touchstone Energy honors LJEC's Jennifer Fisher as Brand Champion

Jennifer Fisher, LJEC's PR / Marketing Specialist, was awarded the 2014 Brand Champion Award May 15 at the CONNECT '14 Conference for Cooperative Marketing, Communication & Member Services Professionals.

Along with ten other dedicated co-op employees, Fisher was recognized for her exceptional efforts in making the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives brand come alive for our members and delivering real value.

Fisher stated that she enjoys spreading the cooperative message.

"Working for LJEC offers me the opportunity to work for an organization



Jennifer Fisher (left) receives the Brand Champion Award from Touchstone Energy's Denise Aranoff-Brown.

that is owned by its local members instead of outside investors," she said. "Spreading the message about what makes co-ops different, why co-op membership matters and being involved with the community are all activities I enjoy."

Touchstone Energy's success as the national brand for electric cooperatives is attributed to individuals such as these award winners who truly live the "power of human connections."

"Touchstone Energy provides member cooperatives such as LJEC

with a wealth of information that can be used to help educate our members," said Steve Foss, LJEC's general manager. "Jen has done a great job using the tools available to her to establish a communications plan that best serves our members and our improving member satisfaction scores validate the work she has done."

Denise Aranoff-Brown, Touchstone Energy COO and chief marketing officer, said, "Touchstone Energy Cooperatives are about innovation, integrity, accountability and commitment to community. Our Brand Champions personally embody these four principles as they serve our members."

Previous winners of this award in Kansas include Butler's Travis Griffin (2010), Western's Dennis Deines (2011), Sunflower's Nikki Pfannenstiel (2012), and KEC's Shana Read (2013).

annual meetings

Victory

Victory's annual meeting drew more than 800 members and guests for a BBQ dinner on April 15.

On site for the meeting was an electrical safety demonstration. 2013 Youth Tour winners, Byrum Bittel, Myranda Axtell, and Ashlee Redger each spoke to the members and the 2014 Youth Tour winners were introduced. Re-elected to the board were John Leis, Jim Imel, Kenny Wehkamp, and Randy Quint.

LJEC

Approximately 150 people attended LJEC's 70th annual meeting at the McLouth Elementary Purple Gymnasium on April 22. Mark Gratny, Nancy Reed and incumbent Larry Stevens were elected to the board. 981 members cast mail-in ballots, 54 members voted in person, and there were two proxies.

Reports were given by Steve Foss and the youth winners. The 2014 trip winners were introduced.

Twin Valley

Twin Valley held its annual meeting in Altamont on April 24. The meeting included a meal catered by Pichler's Chicken Annie's of Pittsburg, which

was served by the Twin Valley Electric employees to over 250 guests.

Rodney Baker, Tom Ellison and Dareld Nelson were elected to the board, and reports were given by Ron Holsteen, CEO; Dan Peterson, President and Larry "David" Hubbell, Treasurer.

Rolling Hills

On April 25, Rolling Hills hosted its annual meeting at NCK Wellness Center gymnasium in Beloit. The approximately 350 guests enjoyed a meal catered by Butch's BBQ of Ellsworth. Reports were presented by Doug Jackson, manager; and Chuck Terrill, KEPCo. In a mail ballot held in December, Bernard "Sonny" Bohnen, Gary Frieling, Leon Eck, and Kevin Cromwell were re-elected to the board.

Caney Valley

Approximately 500 members and guests attended Caney Valley's annual meeting May 6 at the school gym in Cedar Vale. A meal was served by the Cedar Vale Lions Club and entertainment was provided by the Sedan High School Choir.

Guests included Coleen Wells, KEPCo, and Larry Freeze, KEC. Members re-elected trustees Coral Ann

Magnus, David Evans and Dan Hubert. Seven scholarship winners and the two winners of the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp were introduced.

Western

Western hosted its 69th annual meeting on May 14 at its headquarters in WaKeeney. Employees served a meal to approximately 300 guests, catered by Bigge's Country Kitchen of Stockton.

Darrin Lynch, Stuart Lowry, and Bruce Graham presented at the meeting. Byrum Bittel, participant of the 2013 Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp, shared his camp experiences. Isaiah Fabrizius, 2014 camp winner, sang the National Anthem. Terry Hobbs, Richard Schaus, and Dale Weinhold were elected to the board.

Sunflower

On May 19, Sunflower held its 57th annual meeting at Victory's headquarters. Sunflower's Stuart Lowry and NRECA Board President Curtis Nolan spoke at the meeting. Charles Ayers and Jim Imel were re-elected to the board. Noman Williams was named Vice President of Transmission Policy and Compliance, and Taylor Calcara was named Associate General Counsel.

KEC communications staff honored with three Spotlight awards

Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., communications staff received recognition in the 2014 “Spotlight on Excellence” national awards program, sponsored by the Council of Rural Electric Communicators and NRECA.

KEC’s communications staff received “silver” awards in the category of Best Total Communication Program for the HR Summit 2013, the category of Best Wild Card for the 2013 Youth Tour T-Shirts, and in the category of Best Use of Digital Communication for the 2013 Youth Tour Prezi.

The annual Spotlight awards competition recognizes the top-rated com-



(Top): Shana Read accepts the Spotlight awards on behalf of the KEC Communications Department at the CONNECT '14 conference on May 14. (Right): One award was for the 2013 youth tour T-shirt designs.

munication and marketing efforts by electric cooperatives. KEC competed with other statewides in those categories.

Electric co-op communicators submitted more than 800 entries in the Spotlight on Excellence program, now in its 26th year.



Heinen highlights youth legacy

Joe Heinen, retired assistant manager, made a special presentation during LJEC’s annual meeting. In honor of his retirement, he presented the cooperative with a plaque listing every LJEC youth winner since 1962. More than 80 youth have benefited from these trips. Heinen said he was proud to support such a positive program. The plaque is prominently displayed in the entry at LJEC’s office.



Joe Heinen, retired LJEC assistant manager, proudly displays a plaque with the names of all the co-op’s youth participants since 1962.



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