



the **COOPERATOR**

JUNE 2023 | For the members of Kay Electric Cooperative
A supplement to Oklahoma Living



**ANNUAL
MEETING**

2023



OUR MISSION

Founded in 1937, Kay Electric Cooperative remains focused on our primary mission: to provide safe, affordable and reliable power for our member-owners. Today, our service territory includes 2,269 miles of line and more than 5,900 meters located in Kay, Grant, Noble, Osage and Garfield counties.

CONTACT US

Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
580-363-1260 | 800-535-1079
300 W. Doolin Ave. | PO Box 607
Blackwell, OK 74631
www.kayelectric.coop

REPORT AN OUTAGE

Call 800-535-1079 or use Kay Electric's SmartHub at www.kayelectric.coop or download the SmartHub app for smartphone or tablet.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Max Hohmann, President | Dist. 4
Verl Brorsen, Vice President | Dist. 9
Ron Shoffner, Secretary/Treasurer | Dist. 3
Jake Olsen | Dist. 1
Chad Otto | Dist. 2
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Brady Hostetler | Dist. 6
Bart Cardwell | Dist. 7
Dr. Tim Blanton | Dist. 8
Jason Boesch | General Manager/CEO

EASY WAYS TO PAY YOUR BILL

- Pay online using SmartHub at www.kayelectric.coop or download the SmartHub app for smartphone or tablet.
- Pay over the phone: 800-535-1079.
- Pay in person at Kay Electric or use our 24-hour payment drop box located at 300 W. Doolin Ave. in Blackwell.
- Pay via automatic draft of your checking or savings account or major credit card. Sign up for auto-pay online at www.kayelectric.coop.

MANAGER'S MESSAGE



Kay Electric's line crew, from left to right: Operations Manager Heath Lambert; Linemen Kris Perkins, Jason Lenon, Kris Spencer, Chris Young, Terry Grace, Tyler Barrows, Chris Barker, Mark Miller, Jim Rigdon, Matt McConnell, Cody Johnson, Brady Burtner and Jacob Barr. 2272300

Lineworker appreciation


By Jason Boesch, CEO

We all depend on electricity from the time our electric alarm clock wakes us until we brush our teeth with an electric charged toothbrush before going back to bed. Throughout the day we constantly use electricity almost minute by minute to charge our smartphones, the breakfast toaster, microwave for lunch, washer and dryer in the evening, heating and cooling, and so forth. We all have one person to thank and appreciate for that electricity and it's your local lineman. They build the electric lines, maintain them and keep power flowing to your house.

Our linemen get the job done safely in all kinds of conditions. Heat, cold, rain, darkness, you name it. Outages from storms are unpredictable which cause them to miss family time and special events. It's a part of the job they sign up for in the name of electricity reliability. Most of us don't think much about that short light blink, but that ripple could

have come from a larger outage that our operations department bypassed and sent a line crew out to repair.

We put a lot of responsibility in the hands of our linemen. Working on power lines they often literally hold energized electric lines in their hands running at 14,400 volts. They are provided high quality insulated and routinely tested gloves, arm/shoulder sleeves and line cover-up devices to keep them safe. Even with that protection, accidents can happen and these gentlemen have a risk to life and limb on a daily basis.

With that said, you can see how appreciative I am of what they do on our 2,269 miles of energized line. Please help me thank Terry Grace, Jim Rigdon, Jason Lenon, Tyler Barrows, Kris Perkins, Cody Johnson, Matt McConnell, Kris Spencer, Chris Young, Chris Barker, Jacob Barr, Mark Miller and Brady Burtner. 

Former Kay Electric CEO remembered

Joe Harris was a voice for Oklahoma's electric cooperatives and a friend to many

A visionary leader, a champion for Oklahoma's electric cooperatives, and a friend and mentor to many, Joe Harris' impact and influence will be long remembered in the electric co-op family.

Joe Paul Harris, age 75, of Goldsby, Oklahoma, passed away on Friday, March 31, 2023. He was born on January 8, 1948, in Wewoka, Oklahoma, the third of five boys, to Olton Hoyt and Frankie Jeanne (Woods) Harris. Joe graduated from High School in Perrin, Texas, in 1966, and he graduated from East Central University in Ada, Oklahoma, in 1971, with a B.S. in Environmental Science and B.S. in Industrial Arts.

Joe met his wife, Judy Ashlock, while at East Central, and they were married in 1972. They had two sons, Micah Paul Harris and Travis Marshall Harris.

Joe wore many hats over the years which included student activities director at East Central State University, general manager of the Harris Construction Company, director and assistant director of various divisions within the Oklahoma Corporation Commission, and director of legislative and regulatory affairs with the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives (OAEC).

"Joe loved the co-op program and the many friends he had," OAEC general manager Chris Meyers says. "Any time I talked to him, his first question was 'How is Chris and how are the co-ops doing?'"

"Joe was a very vocal champion for Oklahoma's co-ops. He got things done. Best of all, he was a great friend."

In 1989, Joe became general manager and CEO of Kay Electric Cooperative in Blackwell.

Tim Rodriguez, who succeeded Joe as Kay Electric CEO, recalls that when Joe

started at Kay Electric the co-op was experiencing some difficulties, and that Joe led the co-op well through a "tumultuous time."

"Joe was an encourager. He believed that you could do more and accomplish things that you yourself doubted," Tim says. "He pushed me personally in many ways that allowed me to achieve things in my career I never thought possible."

Through the years, Joe served on many boards, statewide and nationally, with the electric cooperative associations.

After retirement from Kay Electric, he became temporary manager and CEO at Choctaw Electric Cooperative in Hugo, Oklahoma, for two years.

Kay Electric board president Max Hohmann kept in touch with Joe throughout his retirement.

"Joe was able to see the positive in just about any situation, reflect on it, and then move forward to a solution of a problem," Max says. "He was a good friend, mentor and leader."

Joe was an enthusiastic member of many community activities and organizations, such as the city commission for town of Hall Park, where he was mayor. In Blackwell, he was involved with the Chamber of Commerce, Kaw Lake Association, longtime president of the Will Rogers Council of Boy Scouts of America, Blackwell Quarterback Club, Blackwell School Foundation, Rotary Club and served as chairman of the Blackwell-Tonkawa Airport Trust Authority.

Among many awards, Joe was recognized for his service as a commissioner for the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission, a position appointed by the governor. He was proudest of his induction into the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives Hall of Fame in 2014.



IN MEMORY OF JOE HARRIS

Those who knew Joe knew of his enthusiasm for all things aeronautical. Joe's love of airplanes and flying was his lifetime hobby to the end, wheeling and dealing across the country for airplanes and parts to build and restore antique airplanes

Kay Electric attorney Jon Ihrig recalls meeting Joe in 1989 while Joe was working at OAEC.

"Joe and I were like brothers, much more than a professional relationship. We were each other's confidant, sharing life's ups and downs, supporting one other at all times. It is difficult to imagine him not being around to talk," Jon says.

"Joe was a visionary leader who got things done, in his community and in the many cooperative programs he served, locally, regionally, and nationally. He mentored, was respected, admired and, most significant to him, he was a friend to many. He will be greatly missed."

He will indeed be greatly missed, though his legacy will continue on. 🇺🇸



Drone photos, including cover photo, by Trey Linsenmeyer; photos by Laura Araujo.



Making history in 2023

KEC members set new annual meeting attendance record


From long-time Kay Electric members to families and their four-legged friends, the turnout at Kay Electric's 2023 annual meeting was record-setting. Nearly 900 members registered and drove-thru the Kay Electric grounds on April 14.

Staff and volunteers greeted Kay Electric members with the same friendly smiles you've come to expect from us over the years. Members had the chance to drive through the co-op grounds.

The first stop on the drive-thru route—the snack table! Next, members had the chance to see behind-the-scenes at Kay Electric with a drive through the co-op yard where they received a pen and keyring flashlight set.

The final stop was where registration took place. Each member received an Oklahoma-shaped cutting board as a registration gift. A total of 898 members attended, which is more than last year's record of 824, and more than double the registration of the annual meetings prior to COVID.

To close out the evening, members were invited to watch Kay Electric's business meeting, streamed on Facebook live. Board president Max Hohmann presided over the meeting. Near the end of the virtual meeting, Minuteman and woman, Doug and Radena Eisenhauer, drew winners for more than 30 prizes and four grand prizes.

Thanks to the members, volunteers and employees who helped make KEC's 2023 annual meeting a success! 

ANNUAL
MEETING





Nearly 900 Kay Electric members registered during the 2023 drive-thru annual meeting on April 14. Pictured are some of the members, board directors, volunteers and employees who participated.



ANNUAL MEETING



CONGRATULATIONS, GRAND PRIZE WINNERS!

John Deere mower - James Turk

Stihl weed eater - Barry Cook

John Deere shop heater - Ron Kreger

John Deere gator - Andy Mavis





James Burnett

Staking Design & Projects
Manager

Celebrating employees' legacies

After more than three decades in the utilities industry, two of Kay Electric's long-time employees retired in May

By Desiree Whitehead

After a 31-year career at Kay Electric Cooperative, James Burnett has retired as the staking design and projects manager.

James has filled many roles since he was hired in 1992. He worked as a member of the tree crew, an apprentice lineman, a journeyman lineman, and in 2001 was promoted to crew foreman. During his time as a foreman, James took a crew to Louisiana to help and aid in relief after Hurricane Katrina. In 2005, he moved into the staking department as a staking technician. James was promoted to staff supervisor of staking in 2006, and in 2008 was again promoted to manager of staking where he has served Kay Electric ever since.

When asked about his best moments at Kay Electric James says, "Every time I could meet with and talk to our members and help them, those were my best moments."

James will miss his Kay Electric family greatly. "I like what I do, and I love the people at Kay. I'm thankful for the time I've had here," he says.

"James is a great example of the ideal cooperative employee," former Kay Electric CEO Tim Rodriguez says. "He was always there to help our members. It didn't matter what the task was, he was there. Dependable and loyal, that is James."

James says he looks forward to his retirement with his family and spending time with his four grandchildren as well as spending time hunting and fishing.

"James has been one of the best public representatives Kay Electric has," CEO Jason Boesch says. "He knows so many of our members on a personal level and always conducts himself professionally and genuinely. Our staff will really miss his dependability and expertise."

James will be missed at Kay Electric. We have all learned a great deal from his work ethic and knowledge. Thank you, James, for all your hard work, dedication, and years of service to Kay Electric. We hope you enjoy your well-deserved retirement!



K-UP second quarter grant winners

The K-UP Board met on April 18 and awarded \$4,250 in grants. The recipients of those grants were: Kildare Fire Department, \$2,500, for an AED machine and Perry Operation Blessing, \$1,750, for the food pantry and holiday food distribution. The next K-UP grant deadline is July 3, 2023. Guidelines and grant applications can be found at www.kayelectric.coop/k

EMPLOYEE RETIREMENTS



Cyndi Mitchell Director of Communications

After 34 years in the utility industry, Cyndi Mitchell has retired as the director of communications at Kay Electric Cooperative.

Cyndi has had the opportunity to hold many positions in the utilities industry during her career. She began her career in 1989, working as a billing clerk for the city of Wellington in Kansas. She was promoted to manager of utilities in 1991. In 1998, Cyndi accepted a position at Sumner-Cowley Electric Cooperative in Wellington, Kansas, where she was a staking tech and later moved into the cooperative's purchasing position. In 2006,

she began selling utilities poles, until 2014. A year later Cyndi came to Kay Electric as the executive assistant to the board of directors and CEO and an assistant to the director of communications. In 2016, Cyndi was promoted to the director of communications position and served Kay Electric in the position until her retirement in May 2023.

When asked about her proudest moments at Kay Electric Cyndi says, "When Kay Electric started the round-up program, now called K-UP, having the opportunity to work within our community, and being able to help and assist our members. I'm proud to be a part of helping implement that program. It's a good way for us to give back to our members and communities."

Cyndi will miss Kay Electric Cooperative's members most of all. "I'll miss the people and especially our Minutemen and women. Getting to visit with the people in the community and learning about them was one of my favorite parts about the job," she says.

Former Kay Electric CEO Tim Rodriguez says, "Cyndi brought new ideas

forth, doing things in a different way. She was always thinking of ways to engage our members. The members came first to her and that's what it's all about."

Cyndi says she's excited to spend quality time with her family, devoting time at church and pursuing her many hobbies which include reading, crocheting, furniture refinishing and her baking business during her retirement. She also hopes to do some traveling with her husband to check off some places on her bucket list.

CEO Jason Boesch says, "Everyone inside and outside Kay Electric who has worked with Cyndi knows her total commitment and dedication to the co-op. You would be hard pressed to find a more passionate employee. She works with all our departments, the board of directors, attorney, and does it with maximum attention to detail."

Cyndi will be greatly missed at Kay Electric. We have all learned a great deal from her passion and dedication to the electric cooperative industry. Thank you, Cyndi, for your years of service to Kay Electric and the utility industry. We hope you enjoy your well-deserved retirement! 🇺🇸



Peak Alert!

Peak energy hours may be called between June 20 and September 9, from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. Be sure to check our Facebook page and our website for when our power supplier calls a peak day. It's important that members limit electricity use on those days as it helps keep our rates down.

GOOD COOKIN'



Lemon Oreo Dessert

Ingredients:

- 14-ounce package golden Oreo cookies
- 1/2 cup salted butter, melted
- 2, 3-ounce packages instant lemon pudding mix, prepared according to package instructions
- 2, 8-ounce containers cool whip, thawed
- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup powdered sugar

Instructions:

Crush Oreo cookies in a food processor or crush with a rolling pin in a large ziplock bag. Set aside 3/4 cup of the crushed Oreos for the topping. Evenly spread the rest of the crumbs in a 9-by-13-inch baking dish. Pour the melted butter all over the crumbs. Mix together and then press this down into the bottom of the pan to create the crust. In a medium bowl, prepare pudding according to package instructions; cover bowl and place in the fridge for 5 minutes to thicken. Add the cream cheese to a separate bowl; blend with an electric mixer until smooth. Add powdered sugar and mix until combined. Fold in one container of cool whip. Spread this mixture evenly over the Oreo crust. Spread the lemon pudding evenly over the cream cheese layer. Spread the remaining container of cool whip over the top. Sprinkle the remaining crushed Oreos over the top. Cover and chill in fridge for 2 hours before serving. Cut into squares and enjoy!

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



CHRIS BARKER

APPRENTICE LINEMAN

Chris Barker serves as an apprentice lineman for Kay Electric, a position he has held for more than 4 years. Chris is 39 years old and was born in Oklahoma City. He currently resides in Blackwell with his family where he has lived since 1991. When he's not working Chris says, "I love spending time with my wife and our two teenage daughters." He also likes staying active, doing outdoor activities such as camping, going to rock concerts, and helping anyone with odds and ends. Thank you, Chris, for your service!



LIKES TO
CAMP



ENJOYS
ROCK CONCERTS



MARRIED WITH
TWO DAUGHTERS

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