

NREA GRASSROOTS NEWS

Report of James Dukesherer
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Governor Heineman signs two pipeline bills passed by the Legislature in special session. Photo by LJS

NREA Hosts Candidate Training School

This month the NREA hosted its fourth biennial Candidate Training School. The class is offered every election cycle and gives individuals who are interested in running for office an opportunity to learn what it takes to run a successful campaign. The NREA would like to thank all of those who helped to make the event successful including:

- Dan Mauk**-North Platte Chamber of Commerce
- Crystal Welch**-Mid Plains College
- Colby Coash**-State Senator District 27
- Carol Hudkins**- Former State Senator
- Marc Kaschke**-Mayor North Platte
- Kurt Bulgrin**-York County Commissioner
- Frank Daley**-NE Accountability and Disclosure
- Rob James**-NE Press Association
- Charles Isom**-Congressman Lee Terry Office
- Gabe Snow**-NRECA

In all, 11 attended the day-long course. These individuals were interested in running for a number of offices ranging from city level seats to the Nebraska Legislature. Comments from those in attendance about the course were very positive. Participants felt the course was worthwhile, and it helped to answer many of the questions they had about running for office.

Important Dates:

- NREA Annual Meeting—Kearney
November 30-December 2
- Grassroots Presentation Perennial PPD
December 21
- Christmas Vacation—NREA Office Closed
December 26

Grassroots Update

With all of the grassroots member-system annual meetings completed for this year (except for one more), I would like to take a moment to congratulate those of you that have worked hard over the past several years to implement a culture of grassroots support in your member-system. A number of our member-systems now incorporate grassroots updates into safety and board meetings. These updates ensure that grassroots involvement remains on the front burner as is not just a one-hour presentation that each member-system receives once a year.

I have also taken notice that as I give presentations across the state, it is more common for me to come across employees that are aware of some of the issues the electric industry is facing. They are more prepared to become involved in our grassroots efforts, and they understand the important role they play in our communications to our elected leaders.

Keep up the good work! There is no limit to how successful the NREA Grassroots Initiative can be if we continue to engage board members, employees, and even our customers on the issues that impact our electric rates.



Unicameral News Blog

With this month's Unicameral special session, it felt more like January around here than November. This special session gave NREA Government Relations Director, Kristen Gottschalk an opportunity to test out the "NREA Unicameral Blog." This blog updates readers to the happenings of the Unicameral as it pertains to the NREA. Reading these notices is a great way to follow the issues the NREA faces in the Unicameral. If you are interested in receiving notice of blog postings, please contact Kristen Gottschalk at kgottschalk@nrea.org.

Campaign News

December 1, 2011 is the opening date for legislative candidates to file with the Secretary of State to run for office. With this new registration date we have had to wait a little longer than in previous years to get an official list of who is running in each district. We should expect to see a number of candidates file in December to seek a legislative seat. As these events are covered in your local newspapers, please notify the NREA. As we try to learn about each candidate running for office it is usually best for us to hear from you so we know who is running and what experience and reputation they have within your community. This information can help us to draft our NREA Candidate Guidebook and ultimately make a decision as to who we should support during the election.

As candidates announce their intentions to run for office, please consider giving them an invitation to come visit your member-system. Building a relationship with our elected leaders should begin while they are candidates running for office. These meetings not only allow us to learn more about the candidate, they also provide an opportunity for us to introduce ourselves and the rural electric industry to these individuals. Often there is confusion by candidates and elected officials about what it means to be a public power state, what the REA's do in the state, and how the NREA fits into this equation. These meetings can be vital to explain some of these details and can help to build a foundation for a long-term working relationship.

Youth Tour Sign-Up

Now is the time to sign your member-system up to sponsor a student to the NRECA Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. Every year the NREA hosts a number of Nebraska's finest students on a week-long trip to our nation's capitol. This is a great opportunity to build some public relations points in your communities and give a student a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. If you would like to participate, please contact Kristen Gottschalk and let her know how many students your member-system would like to sponsor. The deadline for submission of the number of students your member-system will be sending is December 31, 2011.

Are you new to the NREA Grassroots Initiative?

With a number of new managers and grassroots coordinators among the NREA member-systems, the NREA will be hosting an introduction to the NREA Grassroots Initiative webinar in December. The webinar will outline to goals of the program and the responsibility of each participating member-system in a short presentation.

A firm date will be selected after the NREA Annual Meeting in Kearney. If you are interested in participating in the webinar, please contact James Dukesherer at jdukesherer@nrea.org.