



Celebrating *75* Years of  
Our Shared Cooperative History

# *Feel the* **POWER**

## *2023* **ANNUAL MEETING**

*Scott Community Building  
600 Fairground Road, Scott City, Kansas*


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*April 26, 2023*

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*Thank you for joining us in Scott City  
or a remote location near you*

**Caldwell | Garden City | Great Bend  
Harper | Leoti | Syracuse | Tribune**

**WHEATLAND  
ELECTRIC**  
Delivering Energy for Life  
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

# Meeting Agenda

11:30 a.m.

Invocation & Lunch

Noon

Posting the Colors

Pledge of Allegiance

National Anthem

Annual Meeting Call to Order

MARK ARNOLD PRESIDENT

Recognition of Trustees

MARK ARNOLD PRESIDENT

Recognition of Special Guests

BRUCE W. MUELLER CEO/ GENERAL MANAGER

Declaration of Quorum

MARK ARNOLD PRESIDENT

Official Notice & Affidavit of Mailing

JIM MCVAY GENERAL COUNSEL/  
ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER

Financial Report (Treasurer's Report)

VIDEO PRESENTATION  
TRACI GODDARD DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

Annual Summary

VIDEO PRESENTATION

Scholarship Awards

ALLI CONINE DIRECTOR OF MEMBER SERVICES &  
CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

Service Awards

MARK ARNOLD PRESIDENT

Old Business

MARK ARNOLD PRESIDENT

New Business

MARK ARNOLD PRESIDENT  
JIM MCVAY GENERAL COUNSEL/  
ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER

Grand Prize Drawing

MARK ARNOLD PRESIDENT

Adjournment

Retiring the Colors

## FROM THE MANAGER

# Feel the Power

of 75 Years of Shared Co-op History



Bruce W. Mueller

This year — 2023 — marks a very special year for us, which is why your participation and involvement this April are so much more meaningful.

That's because we're celebrating 75 years since the inception of our cooperative.

In the late 1940s, nine visionary western Kansans took matters into their own hands to bring reliable and affordable electricity to our region — electricity to light our homes, to water our farmlands, and to transform us into the economically thriving region we call home today.

It was on Oct. 25, 1948, that WEC received its official charter from the Rural Electrification Administration (REA), which was signed into law in 1936 at the height of America's Great Depression.

This transformative program under President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal was designed to bring electricity to rural America, at a time when nearly 90% of the country lacked electricity. Stringing wires across sparsely populated farmlands was simply cost prohibitive at the time.

Today, three-quarters of a century later, it's clear to see how the visionary leadership and hard work of a few locals have continued to power our landscape over the decades — and why our cooperative continues to be a powerful source of service, compassion and innovation for the communities we serve today.

### Feel the Power

Most people measure success by what you can see; however, it's often the unseen that is the true measure of success.

Day in and day out our employees work tirelessly to make sure that when you flip that switch, the power is yours — instantly and effortlessly.

Behind the scenes is a powerful system at play and a team of professionals at work, inspecting and replacing our poles and wires daily; using sophisticated mapping systems and technology to ensure safe and reliable service; testing and inspecting meters for accuracy and dependability; answering your questions and anticipating your energy needs; collaborating with community leaders to encourage economic growth across our service territory; and even braving the elements during unexpected events so that power is restored when you need it most.

And that's just a snapshot.

As the fifth general manager and CEO to serve WEC, I'm proud and humbled to lead an organization that has stayed true to its original mission from 1948: "to make electric energy available to all its members at the lowest cost consistent with sound economy and good judgement."

### The Power of Our Past

While that mission hasn't changed much over seven decades, a lot else

has. In 75 years, we've experienced significant growth, challenges, successes and opportunities.

In the beginning, we worked diligently to secure sufficient generating supply to power our region's growing energy needs and ultimately, in the spirit of cooperation, we banded together with several sister co-ops across western Kansas to form a generation and transmission cooperative — Sunflower Electric Power Corporation — that could meet those demands, decreasing costs for all our respective members. I encourage you to read more starting on Page 16.

Despite these changes and challenges, the founding fathers of our organization laid the original groundwork to make sure our cooperative stood only to serve our members — rather than the bottom line.

In fact, as a cooperative, we're governed by Seven Cooperative Principles that guide what we do and why we put our members first — members just like you.

That fundamental philosophy has guided our leadership through the years, and I encourage you to learn more about these powerful beginnings, starting on Page 11, reflecting 75 years of our shared cooperative history.

### The Power of Our Present

From our humble grassroots, we've grown into an organization today that serves over 21,000 homes and businesses across 17 Kansas and Colorado counties, via 4,600-plus miles of distribution lines.

Delivering energy around the clock and across

# 7 Cooperative Principles

1 Voluntary & Open Membership

2 Democratic Member Control

3 Members' Economic Participation

4 Autonomy & Independence

5 Education, Training & Information

6 Cooperation Among Cooperatives

7 Concern for Community

a service territory that spans 330 miles — from Towner, Colorado, to Caldwell, Kansas — is no easy feat.

Over the decades our cooperative has faced many natural disasters: floods, blizzards, ice storms and derechos. In the face of these threats, we've always gone to work as quickly and safely as possible to get the power back on. I encourage you to read more about these climate events and the impact they've had starting on Page 20.

Continued on page 5 ►

## Service Awards

\*INDICATES BOARD MEMBERS

### 5 YEARS

Heath Hill  
Tara Watson  
Jim McVay  
Manuel Gonzalez  
Jeanine Biera  
Keith Vrbas

Megan Sneath  
Sheena McKinley  
Derek Holdt  
Jessica Preisner  
Andrea Tucker  
Riley Waggoner  
Stephanie Fontenot

### 10 YEARS

Tyler Gehring  
Kreyton Demel  
Chris Schurle  
Justin Skelton  
Chris Oliver  
\*Katie Eisenhour

### 15 YEARS

Lucy Martinez  
Paul Aguiniga  
Eric Newberry  
Jim Welker  
Mark Douglas  
Clay Shelton  
Jillane Koochel

### 20 YEARS

Perry Smith  
Mike Ille

### 25 YEARS

Jevin Kasselman

### 35 YEARS

Chris Huber

### 40 YEARS

Rick Klaus

*From our humble grassroots, we've grown into an organization today that serves over 21,000 homes and businesses across 17 Kansas and Colorado counties, via 4,600-plus miles of distribution lines.*



# 2022 Financial Statements

## Operating Statement

AS OF DEC. 31, 2022 (AUDITED)

### INCOME:

Electric Revenues	103,878,629
Water Revenues	3,023,557
Interest Income	2,586,891
*Capital Credits from Other Cooperatives	4,267,201
Non-Operating Income (Other)	385,651
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>114,141,929</b>

### EXPENSES:

Purchased Power/Cost of Sales	62,807,728
Operations & Maintenance	8,833,429
Administrative & General	11,051,662
Depreciation	11,607,225
Total Interest	8,047,755
Taxes	4,408,065
Other	46,556
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>106,802,420</b>

**TOTAL MARGINS 7,339,509**

(\*) Of this amount \$3,572,537 is a non-cash allocation of margins from Sunflower Electric Power Corporation for the year of 2022. This amount will be available to be paid out to members at such time when Sunflower makes cash distributions to WEC for that year.

## Property Taxes Paid

Finney	1,126,157	Kingman	97,757
Barton	438,057	Gray	51,852
Harper	329,992	Reno	3,776
Sumner	236,879	Wallace	2,239
Scott	228,148	Logan	1,749
Hamilton	228,148	Sedgwick	1,384
Kearny	218,379	Haskell	-
Greeley	216,490	Seward	-
Wichita	179,775	Lane	-
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>3,360,782</b>

## Balance Sheet

AS OF DEC. 31, 2022 (AUDITED)

### ASSETS:

Cash & Short-Term Investments	1,494,829
Memberships and Other Investments	94,613,779
Notes Receivable	2,792,661
Accounts Receivable	15,481,399
Materials and Supplies	4,711,215
Other Current and Accrued Assets	706,256
Deferred Charges	505,944
Plant Assets (All Operations)	388,030,432
Accumulated Depreciation	(115,378,598)
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>392,957,917</b>

### LIABILITIES:

Principal Owed on Long-Term Debt	189,115,149
Interest Payable on Long-Term Debt (in 2023)	692,140
Notes Payable	36,840,541
Accounts Payable	5,832,387
Property Taxes Payable (due in 2023)	1,640,665
Consumer Deposits	1,441,315
Other Liabilities/Deferred Credits	11,075,032
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>246,637,229</b>

### EQUITIES:

2022 Operating Margin	99,766
2022 Non-Operating Margin	7,239,743
Prior Years Margins	138,763,718
Other Equities	217,461
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>146,320,688</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	<b>392,957,917</b>

**WEC will pay a total of \$3,360,782 in property taxes for 2022. These amounts were assessed against assets such as electric lines, poles, buildings, trucks and water-related equipment owned by WEC. As a not-for-profit cooperative, WEC is exempt from income tax.**

Feel the Power of 75 Years of Shared Co-op History *Continued from page 3* ▶

**Today, three-quarters of a century later, it's clear to see how the visionary leadership and hard work of a few locals has continued to power our landscape over the decades ...**

Despite the many storms — both literal and figurative — we've always stayed true to our vision: to **"PROVIDE ESSENTIAL SERVICES THAT ARE SAFE, RELIABLE AND COMPETITIVELY PRICED TO ENHANCE THE LIVES OF OUR MEMBERS."**

We do that in many ways, not only by meeting your energy needs but also by serving our communities with care and compassion.

Nearly 10 years ago, our cooperative started a small project we called Cram the Van. Our goal was to raise as many donations as possible for our local food banks.

That service project has steadily grown into a powerful initiative over the years, collecting 54,599 pounds of food in 2022 for a dozen food banks and bringing our combined nine-year total to 226,908 pounds, or just over 113 tons!

Today, Cram the Van is just one of the many ways we give back, and we look forward to sharing our plans to continue this campaign at our annual meeting.

In addition, our cooperative also awards academic scholarships and sponsors annual youth programs for high school students; dispenses grants through our Sharing Success Fund; sponsors local youth sporting teams, county fairs, and other community events and programs; hosts electrical safety demonstrations for audiences of all ages and backgrounds; and much more.

While it's difficult to quantify all that we do, I encourage you to take a look at the numbers that powered us through 2022, starting on Page 6.

These figures also include our latest capital credit retirement — \$2.25 million — a record-setting level of excess operations margins which were returned to our membership last year. As a cooperative, we belong to you, and retiring capital credits is just one more way we honor that spirit!

These numbers from 2022 are just a snapshot of how we impacted the communities we serve in the last calendar year and how we plan to continue charging forward in powerful and innovative ways in the years ahead.

### The Power of Tomorrow

None of us knows what the future might hold or what the energy industry will look like 75 years from today. What we do know is that we'll be ready for whatever lies ahead.

Our organization has proven itself in the past, growing, changing and adapting to our membership's ever-evolving needs.

Since our very first annual meeting — held Feb. 15, 1949 — the members of our democratic organization have actively participated to set policies and make decisions that have impacted our shared present and future.

Thank you for attending this year's annual meeting to exercise that power today and helping us **DELIVER ENERGY FOR LIFE** across southwest and central Kansas as we plan for the next 75 years!

**UNTIL NEXT TIME, TAKE CARE.**

## 2023 Scholarship Winners

Argonia High School  
**WESLEY WEISHAAR**

At-Large  
(Garden City High School)  
**PAYTON TULL**

Caldwell High School  
**ANNISTON LEE**

Chaparral High School  
**MADISON HALEY**

Conway Springs High School  
**FAITH STUHLSTATZ**

Deerfield High School  
**AUDREY MUSIL**

Great Bend High School  
**NAYOMI OLIVAS**

Greeley Co. High School  
**KARLYN WOELK**

Holcomb High School  
**KAYA BJURSTROM**

Norwich High School  
**TEJA SAMUELSON**

Scott Community High School  
**BROOKE STRINE**

South Haven High School  
**KAMDYN BUTLER**

Syracuse High School  
**YADIRA MORENO**

Wichita Co. High School  
**ELISE WHALEN**



# 54,599

**POUNDS OF FOOD**

Thanks to YOU, we collected 54,599 pounds of food for a dozen food banks during our 2022 Cram the Van season!



# \$9.4 Million

**TO PROTECT OUR CO-OP SERVICE TERRITORY**

In 2022, we secured \$9.4 million in funds following a years long legal battle to protect our co-op service territory.

# 150 VISITORS

In 2022, we began offering tours of our outdoor green space at our new Great Bend office. We've had about 150 visitors come to learn more about renewable energy through the wind, solar, and water resources that power the small park.



# 501

**ANNUAL MEETING ATTENDEES**

We had record attendance at our 74th WEC Annual Meeting.



# CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR 105 Kids

43 WEC employees and trustees sponsored a record number of 105 kids for Saint Francis Ministries' Christmas for Kids. WEC also awarded a \$1,000 Sharing Success grant to fulfill additional wish lists for foster kids in need.



# POWERFUL NUMBERS

*From 2022*

*There's no doubt about it, 2022 was a standout year! Check out the numbers that powered us through the year — they're proof we have a lot to celebrate!*

# 1 NRECA SPOTLIGHT ON EXCELLENCE GOLD AWARD

Our member services team received national recognition, receiving the 2022 NRECA Spotlight on Excellence Gold Award for Best Total Communications Program for our 2021 Cram the Van "Yes, WE Can!" food drive campaign.



# 8 RIDE & DRIVE EVENTS

We hosted eight public ride and drive events so members could get behind the wheel of our electric Hyundai Kona and discover the power of driving electric.



# 254 EV CHARGING SESSIONS

WEC put southwest and central Kansas on the national EV map by installing two ChargePoint public charging stations at our Garden City and Great Bend office locations. In 2022, our inaugural year, we've had at least 254 individual charging sessions by 164 unique drivers!



# \$2.25 MILLION CAPITAL CREDITS

We returned \$2.25 million in capital credits to our membership. Eligible members from 1989, 1990 and 2021 were presented checks on Dec. 6, 2022, at our Capital Credits Harvest Day.



# 16 EVENTS

We opened our new Great Bend meeting room facilities to outside community, school and other civic and statewide groups. Offering our space at no cost is one more way we can serve our community.



# 30 SAFETY DEMOS

Line crews hosted 30 safety demos to educate everyone, from school-age children to critical first responders like EMTs and firefighters, on staying safe around power lines.



# \$25,000 SHARING SUCCESS GRANT FUNDS

We distributed \$1,000 grants to 25 community-based organizations throughout our southwest and central Kansas service territory to bolster deserving projects and improve the quality of life for the communities we serve.



# Official Notice of Annual Meeting for Wheatland Members

The 2023 Annual Meeting of the Members of Wheatland Electric Cooperative Inc. will be held Wednesday, April 26, 2023, at the Scott Community Building, 600 Fairground Road in Scott City, Kansas, or at one of our remote meeting locations: Leoti, Tribune, Syracuse, Garden City, Great Bend, Harper and Caldwell.

Registration opens at 10:30 a.m. CDT, and lunch will be served at 11:30 a.m. CDT at all locations. The business meeting will convene at noon. The following matters will be addressed:

- ▶ Reports of officers, trustees, committees and employees.
- ▶ Election of trustees of the cooperative.
- ▶ Bylaw revision referendum.
- ▶ Any other business which may come before the meeting.
- ▶ Adjournment.

The 2023 nominating committee consisted of the following members:

- ▶ District 1 — **ED CUPP**
- ▶ District 2 — **MILAN REIMER**
- ▶ District 3 — **DALE WETZEL**
- ▶ District 4 — **PAT RILEY**
- ▶ District 5 — **JASON DOUGHERTY**
- ▶ District 6 — **LANE MOORE**
- ▶ District 7 — **TROY DIERKING**

The following trustees have been nominated by the nominating committee for the position of trustee:

- ▶ **DISTRICT 1**  
**KATIE EISENHOUR**  
1106 Myrtle, Scott City, KS
- ▶ **DISTRICT 2**  
**JOSH YOUNG**  
112 S. Genesse, Leoti, KS
- ▶ **DISTRICT 4**  
**STACEY ADDISON-HOWLAND**  
911 N. Norris, Syracuse, KS
- ▶ **DISTRICT 5**  
**JOHN KLEYSSTEUBER**  
6310 E. Old Post Road,  
Garden City, KS

In addition, the following candidate has been nominated by petition as established by Wheatland bylaws:

- ▶ **DISTRICT 1**  
**LYNN FREESE**  
2061 W. Road 230, Scott City, KS

## Katie Eisenhour

DISTRICT 1 | INCUMBENT

**KATHLEEN (KATIE) EISENHOUR** brings expertise in economic development and the ability to listen, learn and discern complex topics to the board table. She has represented District 1 since her appointment in 2013 and is seeking election to the WEC Board of Trustees.

Her connection to WEC began in 1979, when she was selected by WEC to attend the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp near Steamboat Springs, Colorado. Eisenhour returned the following year as a camp counselor.

Her extensive co-op background began in the mid-1980s with her 16 years at Scott Cooperative Association. She also has valuable experience as a Chamber of Commerce executive director, sales manager, grain bookkeeper and commodity trader. Eisenhour has served as the executive director for Scott County Development Committee since 2009.

In the last 10 years as a WEC trustee, Eisenhour has witnessed a lot of changes.

“The energy industry is evolving so rapidly that new technologies, solar farms, wind generation and electric vehicles are impacting the decisions we make at the board table,” she said. “I enjoy researching and implementing the best possible integrations for the betterment of our cooperative’s members.”

Eisenhour currently serves as vice president of the WEC board, alternate to the Kansas Electric Cooperatives Inc. Board of Directors, and formerly led the youth tour/scholarship committee. As a trustee, she’s earned her distinction as a Credentialed Cooperative Director in 2014 and attained her Board Leadership certificate in 2017, as well as Director Gold status in 2019 and 2022.

Eisenhour has worked diligently on the WEC board to support policy changes such as focusing on enabling the consumer service representatives to handle late payments and resolve disconnections. “By making policy improvements and empowering our people, WEC has seen a massive decline in bad debt write-offs reported to the board each month,” she said.

Eisenhour has two sons and seven grandchildren. Her favorite pastime is spending time with her family playing cards, camping and cooking.

“I have been honored to serve the members of Wheatland and of District 1 who are my coworkers, friends and neighbors,” she said. “I have taken this role seriously, am considered a very active trustee, and fully intend to serve only one more term before passing the honor to another qualified candidate. I humbly and respectfully ask for your vote on April 26.”



## Lynn Freese

DISTRICT 1

**LYNN FREESE** of Scott City is seeking to represent District 1 on WEC’s Board of Trustees.

Freese, a full-time rancher in rural Scott County, was raised on a farm in Oklahoma and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in agriculture from Oklahoma State University. Immediately following graduation in 1979, Freese moved to Scott City to begin his career at WEC as the energy conservation director, implementing efficiency, load shed and energy management programs.

During his time with WEC, Freese worked in numerous capacities including director of member services, supervising IT, broadband, and water departments. He was a Class 4 water system operator. Freese last served the cooperative as director of consumer services before retiring after 38 years in 2017, to be a full-time rancher — a family tradition and life-long passion.

As the owner of a small cow/calf operation, Freese understands the need for reliable, affordable electric power to keep the western and central Kansas economy going.

“I feel my years of experience in matters from customer service to contracts and from personnel to power supply could be helpful navigating the next several years in the energy industry,” he said.

Freese has served in a number of community organizations over the years and has previously umpired Little League Baseball. In addition, he served on the Board of Directors for Finney County Rural Water District No. 1 for 10 years and served as the board’s chairman for nine of those years.

With such a varied background, Freese has a rather unique perspective. “I have both served on a board of directors and reported to a board of trustees,” he said. “I have had to explain the reasoning behind why we do what we do, and I’ve had to make tough decisions. I want to bring that experience to Wheatland’s board of trustees.”

With significant electric distribution experience and a thorough understanding of the industry, Freese feels he has a lot to contribute, plus he feels the drive to give back. “Wheatland has been good to me and my family, so serving on the board of trustees would be a way for me to give something back to the organization and its members.”

Freese and his wife, Lori, have three adult children and one granddaughter. In addition to enjoying time with family and ranching, Freese is an avid fisherman and hunter.



## Josh Young

DISTRICT 2 | INCUMBENT

**JOSH YOUNG**, a lifelong resident of western Kansas, is seeking his second term as District 2 trustee.

First elected in 2020, Young sought to expand his knowledge of electric co-ops and serve his community. Since then, he has found even more purpose. “Energy drives our society, but we don’t always realize how much it impacts our day-to-day lives,” he said.

Winter Storm Uri in 2021 gave Young his first board challenge. It caused historically low temperatures, stressing both electric generating capacity and grid transmission. The record-high-cost of natural gas and increased electric usage during this cold spell caused a huge spike in energy costs. “I am proud of how Wheatland communicated with its members and navigated the situation, taking a proactive approach,” he said. “We learned a lot and have implemented policies to help mitigate similar situations in the future.”

December 2021 brought special challenges to his own district when 100 mph winds contributed to extensive grass fires. “I appreciate the dedication of our linemen who worked through the issues and got members back on as quickly and safely as they could,” he said. “Wheatland’s linemen do dangerous work. I respect and appreciate all that they do.”

Young serves as the board’s treasurer and is WEC’s alternate representative for the Sunflower Electric Power Corporation Board. He is an NRECA Credentialed Cooperative Director and is currently working on his Board Leadership certificate.

“Wheatland is facing some critical issues that we will have to address when it comes to dealing with renewable energy and grid resilience,” he said. “I want to continue contributing to a culture where integrity is at the forefront of what we do and bring a commonsense approach to doing the right thing every time.”

Young attended Fort Hays State University and is currently a senior vice president with Security State Bank in Leoti.

Young is active in his community serving on the Wichita County USD 467 Board of Education. He has served as a member of the Wichita County Hospital Board, Park and Recreation Board and Economic Development. He has also volunteered as a coach for both youth football and basketball.

He and his wife, Courtney, have three sons. He enjoys traveling, coaching, spending time with friends and family and attending his children’s sporting events.

“It has truly been a pleasure serving the members of District 2 and I look forward to the opportunity to continue my service,” he said. “We have much more to accomplish, and I want to do my part to contribute to the growth and continued success of Wheatland Electric.”



# 2023 Trustee Nominees

Continued on page 10 ▶



## Stacey Addison-Howland

DISTRICT 4 | INCUMBENT

**STACEY ADDISON-HOWLAND**, Syracuse, is seeking her third term on WEC's Board of Trustees, representing District 4. First elected in 2016, she also currently serves as the board's secretary.

Addison-Howland grew up attending electric and grain co-op meetings with her parents and grandparents. Serving her fellow co-op members on WEC's Board seemed like a natural fit.

She believes in stepping up and supporting her community through volunteering. "I have served on numerous community boards," she said. "Wheatland has a significant impact to this area. Serving on Wheatland's board was the next logical step in my commitment to serve the community."

Her goal is to be a voice for the small communities in WEC's service area and be responsive to member concerns and employee safety. "We need to be proactive and not reactive as a board," she said. "Part of that is learning the governmental and environmental impacts to the organization. But another important part is listening to our members. When necessary, I will also be a voice for our staff in the effort to maintain a culture of providing a safe and productive work environment."

Addison-Howland is open minded to change and actively seeks knowledge of current events affecting the co-op and listens to member concerns. "For me, the board is more than a one-day-a-month commitment," she said. "There are many hours of personal study. I have taken the past six years to invest in learning and consume a steady diet of electric-related articles and classes."

She understands the importance of safeguarding WEC's assets and taking advantage of opportunities that benefit the co-op. "When deciding how to vote, I always keep 'how will this affect the majority of our members' in mind."

Addison-Howland earned her bachelor's degree from Fort Hays State University. She previously taught high school business classes and worked in banking as a loan review officer and on the internal audit team. She has been an agent for the Farmers Union Midwest Agency in Syracuse for nearly 18 years, serving Hamilton County and the surrounding area. She also serves as secretary for the Hamilton County Chamber of Commerce. She and her husband, Mike, have two daughters.

Since joining Wheatland's board, Addison-Howland has completed the NRECA Credentialed Cooperative Director certification and has earned both her Board Leadership Certificate and Director Gold Certificate.

"I hope members will continue to support me with their vote this April as I do take my duty to serve seriously."



## John Kleysteuber

DISTRICT 5 | INCUMBENT

**JOHN KLEYTEUBER**, a Garden City local who represents District 5, is seeking election to the WEC Board of Trustees.

Kleysteuber has been a WEC trustee since 2016 and saw serving on the board as an opportunity to represent his district and be a voice for his hometown area.

As a fourth-generation farmer and rancher, Kleysteuber has a personal understanding of the importance of reliable energy, fair rates, and being an active voice in policy discussions. Having a business that is dependent on the services that WEC provides, he was drawn to being a larger part of such an essential organization.

Kleysteuber brings a strong voice for agriculture, extensive knowledge of water rights, and a deep love and connection for the district that he represents to the board.

Since his addition to the board, Kleysteuber has completed the Credentialed Cooperative Director training and will continue his training if elected to another term.

Growing up in Garden City, Kleysteuber attended Garden City High School, Garden City Community College, and received his bachelor's degree in agribusiness from Kansas State University.

After college, he moved back to Garden City where he joined his family's fourth-generation irrigated farm and ranch in Finney County.

Kleysteuber and his wife, Marisa, have two sons, Cooper and Colin. Cooper serves in the U.S. Navy and Colin is a senior at Garden City High School with intent to attend Oklahoma State University and specialize in agribusiness. He also plans to come back to the family operation like his father did.

District 5 is home to the family. As Kleysteuber's sons grow up, he hopes to be able to dedicate even more time toward serving on the WEC board and giving back to his community.



# Powering Rural America The REA of 1936

While most big cities across the country were enjoying electricity by the end of the 1920s, most farms and rural homes — 9 out of 10 — remained off the grid well into the 1930s.

Why? It wasn't that farmers didn't need electricity — or that bringing it to them was particularly difficult. Instead, for-profit power companies simply were not interested in investing the upfront costs of infrastructure that were needed to connect America's farmlands to the grid.

Their claim? It wasn't economically feasible to deliver electricity to a small number of consumers across many, many miles of land.

That all changed when federal lawmakers got involved. According to the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), the first official action by the federal government came with the passage of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) Act in May 1933. This act authorized the TVA Board to construct transmission lines to serve "farms and small villages that are not otherwise supplied with electricity at reasonable rates."

On May 11, 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order No. 7037 establishing the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) as part of his New Deal in the midst of America's Great Depression.

It was not until a year later — May 20, 1936 — that Congress passed the Rural Electrification Act (REA), which allowed the federal government to make low-cost loans to farmers who had banded together to create non-profit cooperatives for the purpose of bringing electricity to rural America.

According to NRECA, it became evident to REA officials from the start that investor-owned utilities were not interested in using federal loan funds to serve sparsely populated rural areas.

Instead, loan applications from farmer-based cooperatives poured in, and the REA soon realized

electric cooperatives would be the entities to make rural electrification a reality.

In 1937, the REA drafted the Electric Cooperative Corporation Act, a law that enabled the establishment of not-for-profit, consumer-owned electric cooperatives.

According to NRECA, within four years, the number of rural electric systems in operation doubled, the number of consumers connected more than tripled and the miles of energized line grew more than five-fold. By 1953, more than 90% of U.S. farms had electricity. Today, 99% of the nation's farms have electric service.

Most rural electrification is the product of locally owned rural electric cooperatives, which got their start by borrowing funds from REA to build lines and provide service on a not-for-profit basis, just like Wheatland Electric.

Thanks to these grassroots movements across America, over 830 distribution co-ops power more than half (about 56%) of this nation's landmass today.



On May 11, 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order No. 7037 establishing the Rural Electrification Administration (REA).

RECORDS OF THE RURAL ELECTRIFICATION ADMINISTRATION; RECORD GROUP 221; NATIONAL ARCHIVES AT COLLEGE PARK, MD.



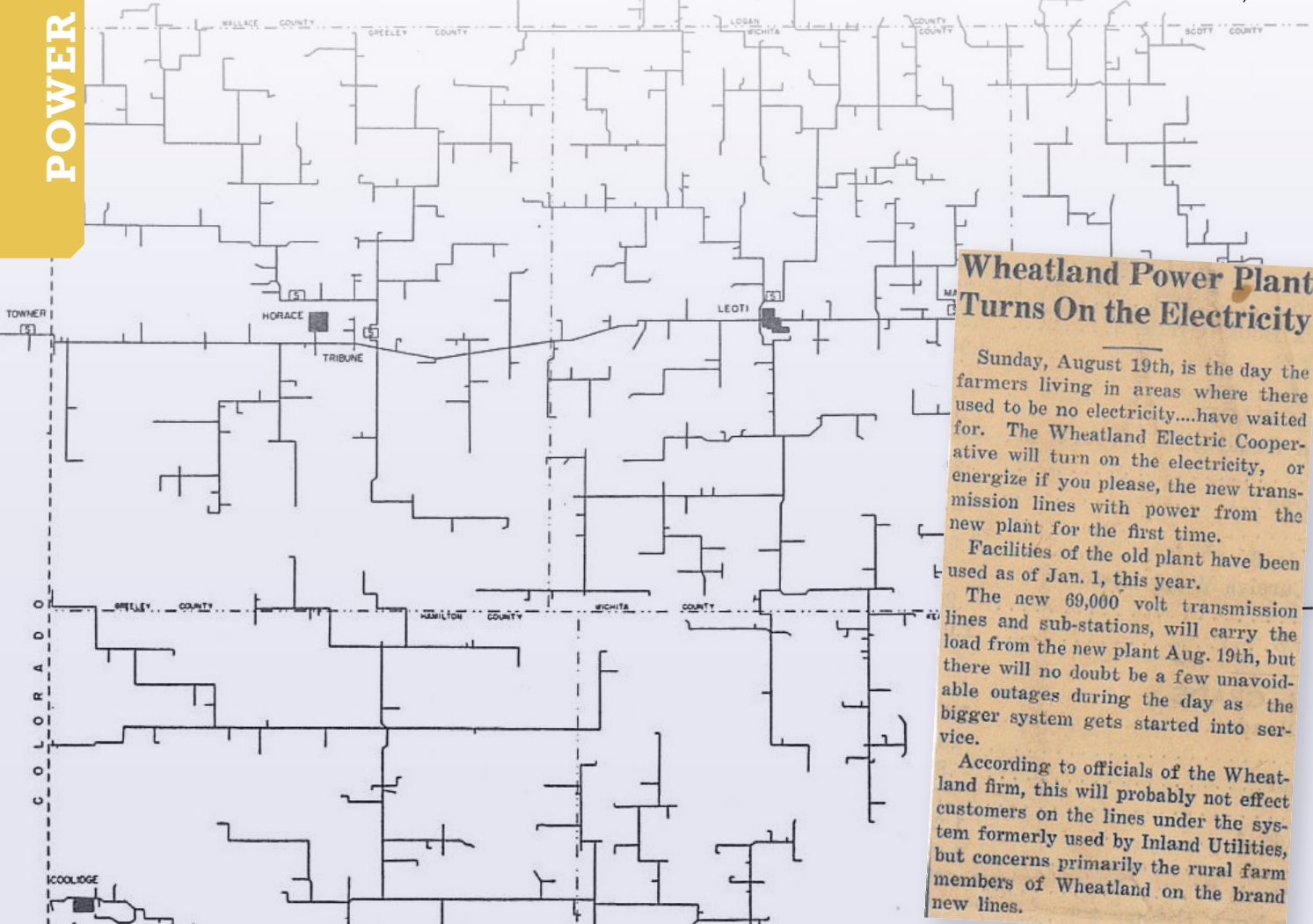


## A Powerful Vision

# One Member, One Voice

***"It shall be the aim of Wheatland Electric Cooperative Inc., to make electric energy available to all its members at the lowest cost consistent with sound economy and good management."***

ORIGINAL MISSION STATEMENT, 1948



In the mid-1930s, nearly nine out of 10 rural homes across the country were without electricity, according to the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). Farmers milked their cows by hand in the dim light of a kerosene lantern, and families relied on the wood range for cooking and washboard for cleaning.

While demand for electricity in rural areas grew during these years, investor-owned utilities were not interested in serving America's farmlands. The costs of stringing wires over long distances clearly outweighed the bottom line for these for-profit companies.

In 1946, nine visionary Kansans took matters into their own hands and joined forces to build an electric cooperative to serve our southwest Kansas communities, to supply both reliable and affordable electrical power for themselves and their neighbors.

These individuals — Jess Taylor, Frank Crouch, Bernarr Nelson, Kenneth Davis, Abram Buck, Joseph Ridder, Paul Johnson, Iman Wiatt and Richard Hobson — served as trustees, with the first four gentlemen serving as officers of the cooperative.

They held their very first documented meeting in Leoti on Nov. 22, 1946. Over the next few years, meetings rotated between Leoti, Tribune, Syracuse and Scott City, as they laid the groundwork for a powerful idea — an electric cooperative, open to all, where the needs of its members are put first and the voice of every person holds power.

Organized in 1946  
The Wheatland Electric Cooperative was organized in 1946 by nine farm leaders in Greeley and Wichita and contiguous parts of Scott, Hamilton and Kearny counties. It also will serve farm members in the extreme south part of Wallace and Logan counties, and in Towner, Colo. The group which was instrumental in organizing the cooperative was comprised of Jess Taylor, Tribune; Frank Crouch, Syracuse; Bernarr Nelson, Modoc; Richard Hobson, Marienthal; Abram Buck, Syracuse; Kenneth Davis, Lakin; Paul Johnson, Tribune; Joseph Ridder, Marienthal, and I. C. Wiatt, Lakin.  
These men worked three years to achieve their purpose, and on June 14, 1949, the Rural Electrification Administration granted the cooperative a loan of \$5,400, 000 with which to purchase and rehabilitate the Inland Utilities Company's holdings, which formed the nucleus of the system, and to construct a new plant, transmission lines and distribution system.

WHEATLAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.  
WAIVER OF CALL OF NOTICE  
We the undersigned trustees of the Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc. (herein called the "Cooperative") hereby waive all call and notice of time, place and date of the first meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Cooperative, and we do hereby fix Syracuse, State of Kansas as the place and the 5th day of November, 1948 at 1 o'clock P.M. as the time for the holding of said meeting for the following purposes;  
1. To adopt bylaws;  
2. To elect officers;  
3. To adopt a Corporate Seal;  
4. To consider and act upon forms of application for membership and for electric service, and of certificate of membership;  
5. To consider and act upon applications for electric service;  
6. To take action with respect to insurance; and  
7. To take action with respect to the signing of the minutes;  
8. To take any and all action and to transact any business which may be necessary, convenient or proper in connection with any of the foregoing and the organization of the Cooperative at said meeting or at any adjournment or adjournments thereof;  
and for the transaction of such other business as may come before said meeting or any adjournment or adjournments thereof.  
In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands this 5th day of November, 1948  
Jess Taylor, Frank Crouch, Bernarr Nelson, Kenneth Davis, Abram Buck, Joseph Ridder, Paul Johnson, Iman Wiatt, Richard Hobson  
Being all of the trustees of Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Top Left: A *Syracuse Journal* clipping (date unknown) details the efforts of Wheatland's founding trustees.

Top Right: The signatures of Wheatland's nine original trustees can be seen above in this document dated Nov. 5, 1948, shortly after the cooperative received its official charter from the REA.

In 1948, the group submitted its first loan application to the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) to purchase facilities in Greeley, Hamilton, Kearny, Scott and Wichita counties owned by Inland Utilities of Kansas City, Kansas.

With this nearly \$5 million request, the group's plan was to not only enlarge and improve these facilities, but also construct 820 miles of distribution lines to serve an additional 720 members eager to join the growing co-op.

Continued on page 14 ►

Far Left: This 1957 system map of Wheatland Electric Cooperative Inc. represents one of the earliest looks at our electric cooperative's reach, covering western Scott, Wichita, Greeley, Hamilton and northwestern Kearny counties.

Left: This newspaper clipping from the *Leoti Standard* (Aug. 16, 1951) highlights new electric service available to farmers.



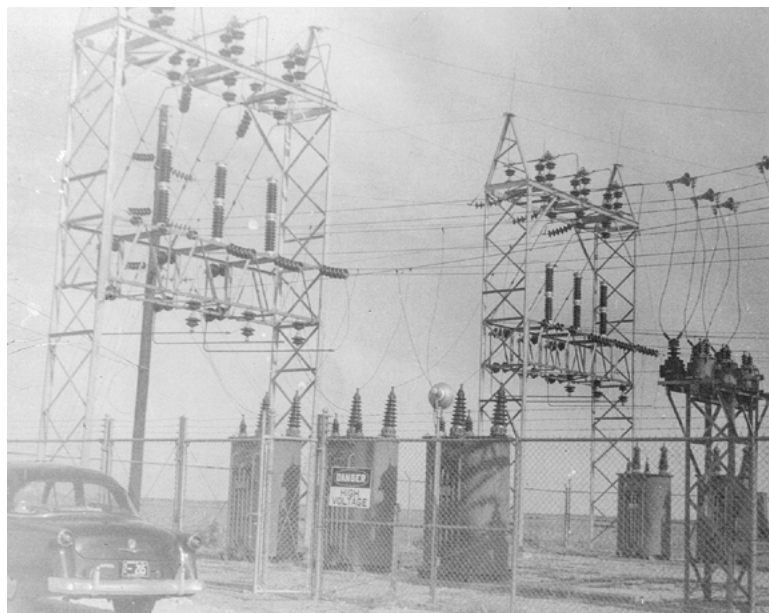
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The group received its official charter from the REA on Oct. 25, 1948, making Wheatland Electric Cooperative Inc., one of the newest co-ops in the nation and one of the youngest in Kansas.

Trustees adopted the co-op's first mission statement shortly thereafter: "It shall be the aim of Wheatland Electric Cooperative Inc., to make electric energy available to all its members at the lowest cost consistent with sound economy and good management."

After the REA granted the co-op its multimillion-dollar loan, things accelerated: the trustees moved to purchase Inland's assets, employees were hired, power contracts were made with other existing co-ops (including Kansas Electric Cooperatives Inc. and Lane-Scott Electric), agreements and contracts with engineering and construction firms were entered to lay many miles of lines, and the First National Bank of Scott City was selected as the co-op's primary depository — a fact that still holds true to today.

At this time, Wheatland was serving members in Scott City, Dighton, Leoti, Tribune and Syracuse with a 69-kV transmission line and substation in each community.



The Tribune Substation in Wheatland Electric's earliest days. Substations are an important part of the electrical transmission system, changing voltage from one level to another.

Growing demand required additional power sources, so on April 29, 1949, trustees hired the co-op's first general manager, Frank C. Arthur, and put him immediately to work.

Arthur's first major mission? Arrange for suitable power facilities that could accommodate the ever-growing demand for power across our region.

Trustees voted in 1949 to move WEC's headquarters to Scott City from Leoti. Today's building, while similar, boasts new windows, a new warehouse, and updated board room.



## Local Power to the People The Jess Taylor Plant

Until 1950, the nine original founders of WEC officially composed the membership of the cooperative.

During the second annual meeting of the membership, held Feb. 15, 1950, in Scott City, the nine original trustees voted to welcome an additional 2,246 applicants into the cooperative, bringing the total membership to 2,255. And by fall of 1950 an additional 650 members were voted in.

To join the cooperative, members signed a membership certificate and paid a \$5 fee, to be used toward development of infrastructure and electric service in the region, according to the application. The signed agreement also granted them voting powers:

"Each member of the cooperative, or in the case of a joint membership, the holders thereof jointly, or either of them, but not both, shall be entitled to one vote, and no more upon each matter submitted to a vote at all meetings of the members of the cooperative," according to the original document drafted in November 1948.

As WEC's membership grew, the original trustees began looking for a site for a new generating plant that could furnish the demand for power, growing at a rate of about 500 kWh annually.

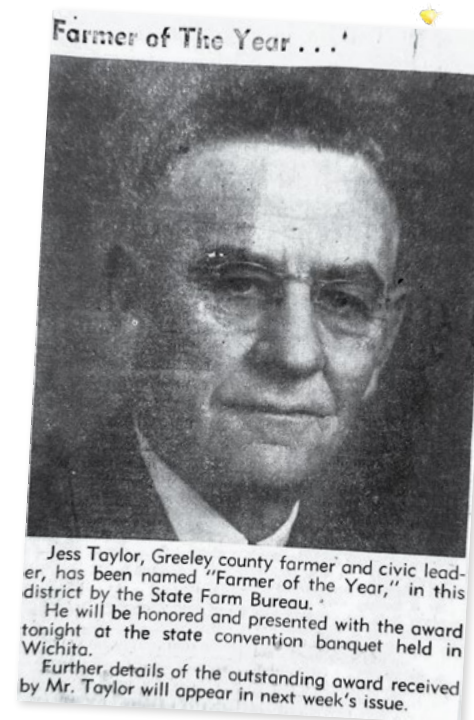
In late 1949, the original founders selected a site for a new generating plant 1 mile west of Scott City on U.S. Highway 96, a move that would allow the co-op to retire existing and outdated facilities to standby mode.

The new plant — christened the Jess Taylor

Plant in honor of the co-op's founding president — went online in the late summer of 1951, and "the effects of this sweeping move were felt almost immediately," according to an article about the state-of-the-art facility published in the October 1956 edition of *Diesel Progress*.

The new plant not only allowed the co-op to retire facilities, but it also increased the reliability and affordability of electricity for Wheatland's burgeoning membership, making it a "model of efficiency" and "showplace for the region."

"In every aspect, the Jess Taylor Plant at Scott City is an up-to-date, attractive power station, operating an excellent efficiency and economy," the *Diesel Progress* reported in 1956. "Wheatland Co-op's success in overcoming a seemingly hopeless rural electrification problem is outstanding and is an excellent reason why American farmers today are enjoying the full benefit of power-driven tools, pumps and appliances."



Jess Taylor, founding president and trustee, was a respected leader, according to this newspaper clipping from the *Greeley County Republican* dated Oct. 25, 1951. Taylor went on to serve in the Kansas House of Representatives in the 1950s and 1960s and even served as Speaker of the House.



The Jess Taylor Plant completed in 1951, improved electric service and reliability for miles around.



## The Power of Cooperation

### The Formation of Sunflower Electric

As the number of members and electric consumption grew in western Kansas, the problem of providing an adequate source of power became increasingly more acute for other cooperatives across the region. That is, load growth was quickly outpacing power supply.

To solve this growing crisis, WEC joined five sister co-ops — Great Plains Electric Co-op, Colby; Lane-Scott Electric Co-op, Dighton; Northwest Kansas Electric Co-op, Bird City; Norton-Decatur Co-op, Norton; and Western Co-op Electric Association, WaKeeney — to form Sunflower Electric Cooperative Inc. (now known as Sunflower Electric Power Corp.) to provide generation and transmission services. The new G&T cooperative received its charter on Aug. 12, 1957.

Up until the formation of Sunflower, WEC generated its own power, distributed that power, and even supplied power to Lane-Scott.

The first aim of the new Sunflower board — composed of the representatives of each of the six co-ops, including W. A. Dobson, WEC's general manager — was to construct a steam generating plant located at Hill City at a cost of \$5,775,000 through a REA loan.

To be economically feasible, these visionary co-op leaders knew the plant would have to be located near existing



In 1957, Sunflower's first board of trustees included WEC's General Manager William A. Dobson, on the front row in the center. Currently, six general managers representing Sunflower's member cooperatives sit on the board.

transmission facilities, operating personnel, general supervision and overheads, and the reserve capacity of a major supplier.

Their REA loan request was granted in 1958, and the plant was completed June 17, 1960.

The new 22 MW plant was formally dedicated to David A. Hamil, who served as an REA administrator for 14 years and was a legendary champion for rural co-ops, and George Docking, the governor of Kansas at the time.

To solve the burgeoning power supply crisis, these leaders

could have chosen other business models to adopt, ones that focused on profits or bottom lines. But they didn't. Instead, they formed an organization that could focus on our best interests.

The demand for electricity in western Kansas continued to grow at a faster pace than projected, and in 1965 Sunflower began investigating long-term solutions to its bulk power supply needs.

In 1968, with the addition of two new member distribution co-ops, Pioneer Electric Inc., Ulysses; and The Victory Electric Co-op Assoc., Dodge City; plans were finalized to construct an additional 94 MW gas-fired steam unit in Garden City and additional transmission lines to serve the western region.

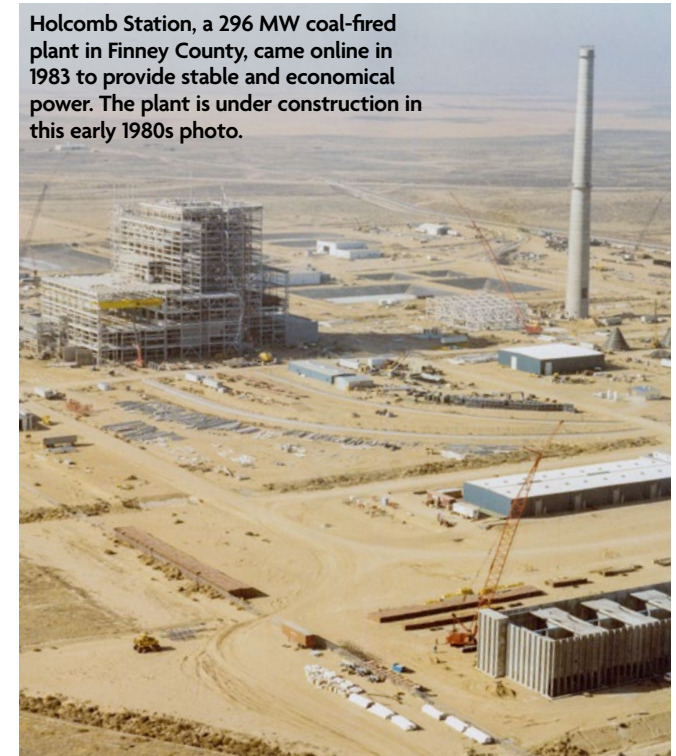
Despite staunch opposition from other investor-owned utilities across the state, which opposed rural electric cooperatives working together to power their own and take business away from the for-profit arena, the project moved forward under WEC's supervision and was placed in commercial operation in 1973.

Over the next decade, demand for power continued to multiply thanks to significant economic and agricultural growth, including center-pivot irrigation systems, strong oil and gas production, and other industrial development across the region.

In 1980, facing local pressures from growing demand and national and political pressures regarding electricity supply sources, the Sunflower board determined that a coal-fired plant was the lowest-cost alternative and a way forward.

With approval from both the REA and Kansas Corporation Commission, Sunflower leaders finalized plans to construct a 296 MW power plant in Finney County near Holcomb.

Holcomb Station, a 296 MW coal-fired plant in Finney County, came online in 1983 to provide stable and economical power. The plant is under construction in this early 1980s photo.



Holcomb Station, as it's known today, was completed ahead of schedule, construction costs were below budget (at a cost of \$441 million), and the unit was put into service on Aug. 6, 1983.

Today, WEC is Sunflower's largest member system. Thanks to the pioneers in the past, our co-op members across our southwest and central Kansas service territory today enjoy "safe, reliable and competitively-priced" power!

## A Look Back Through

# 75 Years

## of Our Shared Cooperative History



1946

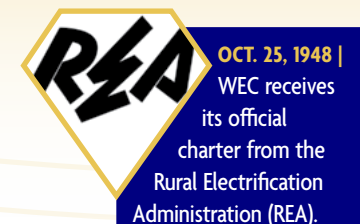
**NOV. 22, 1946** | First official meeting in Leoti where nine visionary residents meet to explore forming a co-op.

**MARCH 18, 1948** | Trustees vote to enter into a power contract with Kansas Electric Cooperatives Inc.

**FEB. 15, 1949** | The first annual meeting of WEC is held in Tribune.

**APRIL 29, 1949** | Frank C. Arthur is selected as WEC's first general manager.

**JULY 1949** | Trustees vote to change WEC's headquarters from Leoti to Scott City.



**APRIL 18, 1949** | First National Bank of Scott City selected as WEC's primary depository.

**JUNE 18, 1949** | WEC purchases Inland Utilities and begins generating power in Scott City.

**NOV. 15, 1949** | Trustees explore serving townships in Kearny County and Garden City Company in Finney County.



## A Sweet Source of Power

# Wheatland and the Sugar Beet Factory

In 1889, Kansans were the first to use sugar beets as a source for sugar. They soon became a mainstay crop for local farmers across Finney, Scott and Kearny counties during the 1890s.

By the early 1900s, the sugar beet was the “king of southwest Kansas,” thanks to the efforts of the United States Sugar and Land Company, which had built a \$1 million state-of-the-art sugar refinery just west of Garden City.

The 1906 factory was designed to process 600 tons of beets daily. One month after opening, it set a record processing 800 tons of beets into 2,608 sacks of sugar in a 24-hour period, according to the Finney County Historical Society.

By 1913, the company reorganized under the name the Garden City Sugar and Land Company. The company owned thousands of acres of land, a railroad and a power plant by 1916. Local power sources were simply insufficient for the factory’s

large-scale operations, and reliable power was critical for irrigation.

Originally known as the Garden City Irrigation and Power Company (until 1957 when its name changed to Southwest Kansas Power Inc.), the steam generating plant designed to process the sugar beets, became a source of power for a growing city and parts of five neighboring southwest Kansas counties.

Garden City entered into a contract to purchase power from the plant from 1921 to 1959, ending a few short years after the factory was closed permanently in 1955.

In 1959, WEC purchased the plant and additional infrastructure for over \$3.2 million. The purchase was made possible with the help of 19



The Garden City Sugar and Land Company operated their own railroad and power plant to process and distribute sugar in the early 1900s.

**Today, what was once the glorious site of one of the largest sugar beet factories in the world, is still a source for local economic growth and prosperity.**

sister cooperatives that loaned WEC approximately \$640,000 to purchase Southwest Kansas Power’s assets. At the time, REA was reluctant to make federal loans for generation facilities unless multiple co-ops would benefit from the investment.

In 1968, part of the sugar beet factory was torn down after a large fire the year prior caused widespread destruction to the facilities.

Today, what was once the glorious site of one of the largest sugar beet factories in the world, is still a source for local economic growth and prosperity. WEC uses what remains of the sugar beet factory’s buildings for both office and operations space to serve one of our largest districts, Finney County, northwest Gray County, and eastern Kearny County. The original site is also home to a natural gas-generating unit for Sunflower Electric, our wholesale power supplier.

A travel and destination hub, the City of Garden City has benefitted not only from the reliable power supply generated by the former sugar beet company, but also from WEC. We have provided reliable power to the region for many decades and have been proactive in making sure our neighboring communities have adequate capacity to grow in the decades ahead.

WEC purchased the assets of Southwest Kansas Power Inc., a subsidiary of the Garden City Irrigation and Power Co., in 1959. Buildings that remain of the old Sugar Beet Factory are used today to house our cooperative’s offices and operations for our Finney and eastern Kearny County district.



**JAN. 28, 1950** | Gordon E. Tempero was hired as a power use advisor to promote better understanding of electric appliances and promote sales.



**FEB. 1951** | A new generation facility in Scott City is named the Jess Taylor Plant; its modern design and equipment help reduce electricity costs.

**JAN. 1954** | A fourth generating unit installed at the Jess Taylor plant raises generating capacity to 9,380 kilowatts.



**AUG. 12, 1957** | WEC joins five sister co-ops to form Sunflower Electric Power Corporation, which serves western Kansas and lowers wholesale power costs.



**JULY 15, 1959** | WEC purchases the physical assets of Southwest Kansas Power Inc., a subsidiary of the Garden City Irrigation and Power Company, for just over \$3.2 million.

## 1950

**FEB. 15, 1950** | The second annual meeting of WEC held in Scott City. An additional 2,246 members join, strengthening the co-op.

**1951-1952** | These years were devoted to the settlement of construction contracts.

**MARCH 1953** | WEC leaders begin searching for additional power sources due to growing demand.



**JAN. 1, 1955** | William A. Dobson hired as second general manager to replace Mr. Arthur after his resignation.

**MARCH 1955** | A 500 kW generator is moved to provide standby power for Syracuse, Leoti and Tribune.

**OCT. 1957** | New headquarters are completed in Scott City; WEC now serves 4,389 members on 1,414 miles of line.

**1959** | Generation totals 88,107,000 kWh. WEC has 72 employees, a payroll of \$364,000 and paid \$181,278 in taxes.



## The Power of Mother Nature

Kansans understand the threat of severe weather.

WEC takes measures to prevent outages and ensure power is delivered to all our territories; however, Mother Nature is still unpredictable.

Since 1948, we've faced floods, tornadoes, fires and blizzards, just to name a few of the natural disasters that have challenged our co-op.

### The Blizzard of 1957

A history-making blizzard in March 1957 tore through southwest Kansas leaving some members without power for more than a month. Snow drifted so high, it covered clothes lines and trapped many at home for days.

During this time, many folks still had wooden stoves and oil lamps and could function by candlelight and without running water. Losing power today has a much larger impact, as much of

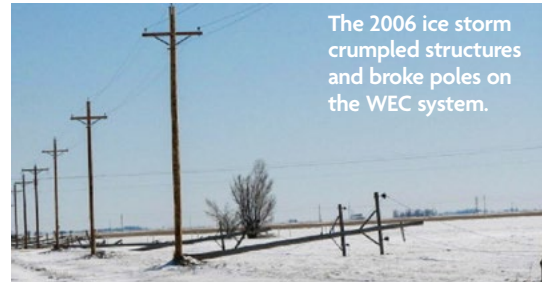
our lives are powered by electricity.

Today, thanks to better tools and technology, WEC restores power more quickly and safely than ever before.

### Back-to-Back Tornadoes in 1995

On May 15-16, 1995, WEC faced two tornadoes — back to back. Winds ranging from 40 to 80 mph during these disastrous events caused about 150 power poles to “snap like twigs,” according to one news report. Around 700 members lost power across Finney and Gray counties.

Several homes and farmsteads were damaged, including an estimated 50 center pivot irrigation systems. WEC crews worked from dawn to dusk for weeks to repair the damage and restore power.



The 2006 ice storm crumpled structures and broke poles on the WEC system.

### Crippling Ice in 2006

The details of a winter ice storm from Dec. 28-31, 2006, are more easily recalled. The weight of the ice was “so heavy that it crumpled Sunflower’s 345 kV steel structures like a monster had stepped on them,” said Rick Klaus, WEC director of operations.

In the Tribune and Leoti areas, snow drifts were so high they covered substation fences “to the point that you could walk on over to the other side.”

“Linemen would be working on a pole while ice was crumbling the structure next to them,” Klaus added. Crews worked around the clock to restore power.

### District 7 Storm of 2008

In early August 2008, Harper and the surrounding area experienced a storm with devastating winds, causing over 80 downed poles, according to Denzil Reed, district manager.

By the next morning, line crews from Great Bend and Garden City were dispatched to assist with the damage, and red trucks could be seen for miles, working round the clock. As crews were just finishing up the last of the work and headed back to the warehouse, massive black clouds could be seen building their way, Reed said.

“Another large storm was moving through, wiping out 40 of the poles that were just finished, so Saturday morning, the guys were back at it again!”

### Winter Storm Ursa Hits in 2017

With winds up to 70 mph and inches of heavy, wet snow, Winter Storm Ursa is simply unforgettable.

Scott City had an estimated 16 inches of snow on the ground, which caused 13,000 outages and damaged more than 1,125 poles. To add to the challenging situation, temperatures increased and the melting snow created difficult, muddy working conditions for line crews.

Thanks to help from a few locals with tractors and other heavy machinery, our crews were able to work through the mud and restore power to the area quickly and efficiently!

### Winds Whip Great Bend in 2020

On June 21, 2020, a severe windstorm ripped through Great Bend causing outages and leading to a weeklong restoration effort.

The windstorm wreaked havoc, breaking poles and tree limbs. The wind also caused debris to fall through wires, and burn downs were caused by objects blowing through our power lines. Prior to this storm, our co-op had converted an easement underground, which ended up being the only easement in the area that did not lose power. This test case encouraged us to convert more of our easements underground, and presently this work in Great Bend continues. WEC plans to convert all overhead easements with limited access to underground in the future, increasing reliability and reducing wind- and tree-caused outages.

### Uri Makes History in 2021

Winter Storm Uri was a history-making event in more ways than one.

From Feb. 13-17, 2021, a polar vortex of ice and snow caused widespread damage to utility infrastructure across the Midwest, and historically low temperatures tested the U.S. electric grid.

For the first time in history, the Southwest Power Pool, which manages energy delivery for 14 states including Kansas, called for rolling blackouts (interruptions in power) across our region to combat the high demand for

A dust wall appears behind one of Wheatland’s digger derrick trucks during violent wind storms on Dec. 15, 2021.



energy. For at least a dozen straight days, temperatures hovered below freezing, causing significant strain on energy supply and natural gas prices to skyrocket.

Despite the damage, destruction and difficulty, the co-op spirit was evident. Some industrial members voluntarily shutdown to conserve energy or used their own generation resources to operate. Our residential members also conserved energy during Energy Emergency Alerts. Without this co-op spirit from all our members, this winter storm could have had much more devastating economic consequences.

### Through Rain or Shine

Over the decades, we’ve been challenged by a number of natural disasters. However, we’ve always been there to answer the call.

No matter the power of Mother Nature, we promise to power your lives through rain or shine!

1960

**JULY 1960** | The WEC system includes a total of 30,000 kW of generating capacity installed in six plants, 2,013 miles of distribution lines serving 6,400 customers, and 174 miles of transmission line.

**1962** | A 115 kV transmission line is built from Scott City to Garden City to tie generating facilities together. Another 115 kV transmission line is built from Dighton to Ness City to give a firm power tie to the Western Power System.

1961



**1972** | Lewis E. Mitchell was appointed as the third general manager.

**1974** | Peak demand on the WEC system is 80,095 kW, servicing 9,517 members: 6,405 residential and farming operations, 665 irrigation systems, 2,439 business or commercial services, and 10 others.

**1983** | At 35 years old, WEC includes 2,570 miles of distribution lines, 16 major substations with wholesale electric power supplied by Sunflower Electric Power Corp.

**1984** | Wheatland Electric line crews participate in the first Lineman’s Rodeo in Manhattan, Kansas.

**1959-1961** | WEC enters into an operating agreement with Garden City to construct a new \$3 million generating plant (at the city’s expense) on WEC property. This contract enables the city to purchase additional power from WEC when electricity demand exceeds the city’s supply.

**1962** | Peak demand is 33,050 kW servicing 6,611 members: 4,896 residential and farming operations, 299 irrigation systems, 1,399 business or commercial services and 17 others.

**SEPT. 29, 1970** | WEC breaks ground on a new 94 MW natural gas-powered plant west of Garden City. The \$14 million facility is operated under a contract with Sunflower. Former Kansas Gov. Robert Docking attended the groundbreaking and said this project “mean(s) so much to the future progress of our state.”

**JULY 18, 1973** | A cloud of uncertainty hangs over a dedication ceremony at the 94,000 kW Sunflower natural gas plant west of Garden City. The federal government has indicated it wants natural gas plants to convert to coal by the end of the year.

1986

**1980-1981** | The Iowa Beef Processors plant near Holcomb (known as Tyson Fresh Meats today) is completed and becomes a contributing factor in WEC load growth.



**AUG. 6, 1983** | Holcomb Station, a 296 MW coal-fired plant in Finney County, is brought online to provide a stable and economical source of power for the western Kansas region.





## Power of Community

Cooperatives are motivated by our members and their needs, not by profit. The Seven Cooperative Principles guide electric cooperatives to operate differently from other utilities, putting the needs of their members first. We base the way we conduct business on these Seven Cooperative Principles:

- ▶ Voluntary and Open Membership
- ▶ Democratic Member Control
- ▶ Members' Economic Participation
- ▶ Autonomy and Independence
- ▶ Education, Training and Information
- ▶ Cooperation Among Cooperatives
- ▶ Concern for Community

Concern for Community, our Seventh Cooperative Principle, is one of the core principles that sets cooperatives apart from other types of utilities and businesses.

At WEC, we've always taken this responsibility to heart because it's who we are: a member-owned organization committed to the communities we serve.

Our organization gives back to the communities we serve, and we empower our employees to do the same. Here are a few ways that WEC is actively applying this principle locally.



WEC employees serve hamburgers and hot dogs during a Cram the Van event at Syracuse High School on Sept. 24, 2021.

### Cram the Van

In 2014, our cooperative set out to find a new way to expand our Concern for Community — the belief that, by working together, we can bolster local economies and deal more effectively with social and community needs.

What started off as local community barbecues has now grown into so much more. Not only do we host events in every one of our seven districts, but we also coordinate an annual Co-ops Care Charity Golf Tournament, multiple friendly school competitions in four area school districts, promote online donations and host a fall finale.

Over the last nine years — thanks to the generosity of our cooperative membership — we've collected 226,908 pounds or just over 113 tons of food for a dozen food banks! Every

year, we Cram the Van because we care. And every year, our members show us why the travel and time are worth all the toil and sweat.

In 2023, we are excited to do things a little differently and help our local food banks in ways we could have only dreamed of!

### Sharing Success Fund

WEC's Sharing Success program awards \$1,000 grants to local organizations to help fund special projects. These grants are made possible through contributions by WEC and CoBank and are administered by the Scott Community Foundation. Since its inception in 2012, we've made \$125,000 available to community-based projects across our service territory.

### Rural Economic Development Loans

WEC is committed to economic growth in the communities we serve. This is why we have loaned more than **\$2 MILLION** for community and economic development projects in the form of zero interest loans and grants in partnership with the United States Department of Agriculture.

### Christmas for Kids

Christmas can be a difficult time for many, but it is especially difficult for children in our foster care system. For the past six years, WEC employees and trustees have opened their hearts to sponsor children, by providing gifts and donations to Saint Francis Ministries' Christmas for Kids, helping make the holidays a little brighter for children in need.

### Higher Education Scholarships

Each year, Wheatland awards a \$1,000 scholarship to a senior at each of the 13 schools in our service territory, as well as one at-large award for a member's child not attending a school in



Each year, WEC and CoBank each contribute \$10,000 to the Sharing Success Fund managed by the Scott Community Foundation.

our service territory. High school seniors planning to attend an accredited university, community college or technical school can apply for consideration from November through January each year.

### Electric Cooperative Youth Tour and Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp

High school juniors, whose primary residence is in the WEC service area, can apply from November through January each year for the opportunity to attend youth trips. The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour is a weeklong, all-expenses paid trip to Washington, D.C., to learn about our nation's government and how rural electric cooperatives interact with legislators. Additional applicants are selected to attend Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp near Steamboat Springs, Colorado, to learn about cooperatives and government and further develop communication and leadership skills.

1990



**JAN. 1990** | Neil K. Norman was appointed as the fourth general manager of WEC; he was previously a WEC system engineer.

2000

**2000** | WEC owns and maintains 25 substations and serves 17,345 meters.



**JAN. 1, 2000** | WEC becomes a Touchstone Energy Cooperative, joining a national network of electric cooperatives across 45 states.

**2002** | WEC establishes Wheatland Broadband to build a fixed-based, wireless network to serve as our communications backbone and offers internet service to rural western Kansans.



**APRIL 1, 2007** | WEC joins forces with fellow distribution co-ops in western Kansas to form Mid-Kansas Electric Co-op and complete the purchase of territory in central Kansas formerly owned and operated by Aquila Inc., for a base price of \$255 million. The addition brings Great Bend and several communities across Kingman, Harper, Sedgwick, and Sumner counties into our service territory.



**MAY 15-16, 1995** | Two back-to-back tornadoes cause significant damage and power outages.

**2000** | In response to water quality issues in the region, plans for a reverse osmosis treatment plant and formation of the Wheatland Water Division begin. Today, Wheatland Water provides over 2.5 billion gallons of treated water annually.



**DEC. 28-31, 2006** | An ice storm with up to 6 inches of freezing rain hammers southwest Kansas, causing significant and widespread damage to utility infrastructure. Nearly 10,000 power poles across the region are taken down by the weight of the ice, and nearly 60,000 residents are without power at the height of the crisis.

**2009** | System load has grown to 193,000 kW. WEC now owns and maintains 51 substations and serves 34,409 meters



## The Power of Tomorrow A Shared Future

While time and technology will continue to change over the next several decades, one thing remains the same: our commitment to cooperative members like you.

The culture of trust — the one that helped our cooperative become what it is today — will continue to be nurtured over the next 75 years as we continuously improve our electric service and adapt to the ever-evolving energy landscape.

Over the past decade, we've witnessed a dramatic transformation as consumer demand for renewable energy sources has grown, innovations in technologies have skyrocketed, and public perceptions have impacted energy priorities.

Some of you might already be witnessing this energy evolution firsthand, such as when you drive past fields of solar panels on our rural highways or



In 2021, WEC added a Hyundai Kona Electric to our fleet. Since then, we have traveled across southwest and central Kansas to share the advantages of EV and educate cooperative members about plugging in at home or on the road. We continue to host Ride & Drive events to give members an opportunity to get behind the wheel of an EV!

read major news headlines about car makers' plans to go all electric in the decades ahead.

In light of our desire to be a future-focused co-op, we introduced three new programs in 2022: services to advance electric vehicle adoption;

*We won't always know what's on the road ahead, but we'll work to make sure that whatever it is, we're steering course in the right direction.*

services to connect you with local, trusted electricians; and services to provide back-up generation so that life without power is a thing of the past.

Why? Because we're not only here to **DELIVER ENERGY FOR LIFE** — we're also here to **DRIVE** it.

What that means is that our commitment to you doesn't end at your electric meter. Our relationship and responsibility extend beyond that, to your needs, your principles, and your everyday life.

We're responding to shifting expectations in the auto industry by helping members across our service territory discover the power of driving electric: better performance and drive, coupled with a significantly lower-cost and more reliable fuel source.

As other sectors of the energy industry also change, know that we'll continue to charge forward in powerful and innovative ways.

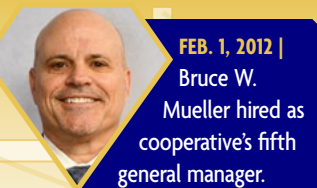
We won't always know what's on the road



The Johnson Corner Solar Project, the largest commercial solar project in the state, helps Sunflower Electric Power Corp., our power supplier, meet electrical demand during sunny days. Johnson Corner Solar will be used to source our community solar program, allowing members to invest in renewable energy sources as a reliable and less costly alternative to rooftop solar. Plans are currently in the works for another 20-MW community solar farm in Russell County.

ahead, but we'll work to make sure that whatever it is, we're steering a course in the right direction. Whether it's examining green energy options or exploring how emerging technologies can better serve our members, we'll continue to explore these opportunities so that we can better serve you, now and in the future.

And — as always — we will lean on our co-op members as we plan for that future, learning from you about our shared priorities. Thank you for allowing use to serve you — yesterday, today, and for the next 75 years to come!



**FEB. 1, 2012 |** Bruce W. Mueller hired as cooperative's fifth general manager.



**2014 |** WEC begins a competitive selection process to sponsor local high school juniors for the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., and the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp near Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

**2015 |** WEC is recognized nationally as the recipient of an NRECA Spotlight on Excellence Gold Award in the "Best Event" category for our inaugural Cram the Van food drive in 2014.



**MARCH 30, 2021 |** WEC dedicates a new 115/15 kV substation in Finney County to Phillip Shelley, a former director of operations who made key contributions to the cooperative.



**MAY 2022 |** WEC is recognized nationally as the recipient of an NRECA Spotlight on Excellence Gold Award in the "Best Total Communications Program" category. Our cooperative is awarded for our 2021 Cram the Van campaign — "Yes, WE Can!" — the eighth season of our annual food drive.

### 2010

**DEC. 1, 2012 |** WEC partners with CoBank to launch our Sharing Success Fund, through which local community-based organizations can apply for grants. CoBank matches annual contributions by WEC and the funds are managed by Scott Community Foundation. Over \$125,000 has been distributed across our service territory to date.

**FALL 2014 |** WEC hosts its very first Cram the Van food drive, collecting 6,615 pounds of food for local food banks.



**2015 |** WEC begins awarding up to \$14,000 in scholarships annually to graduating seniors across 13 high schools on our distribution lines and one at-large recipient.

### 2020

**JAN. 1, 2022 |** WEC sells its broadband division to S&T Communications, which shares our mission to broaden fiber connectivity across the region.



**FALL 2022 |** WEC hosts its ninth season of Cram the Van and collects a record-breaking 54,599 pounds of food through our "WE Think Big!" campaign.



**OCT. 25, 2023 |** WEC celebrates its 75th anniversary of our REA charter.





# Wheatland Electric Board of Trustees



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DISTRICT 7



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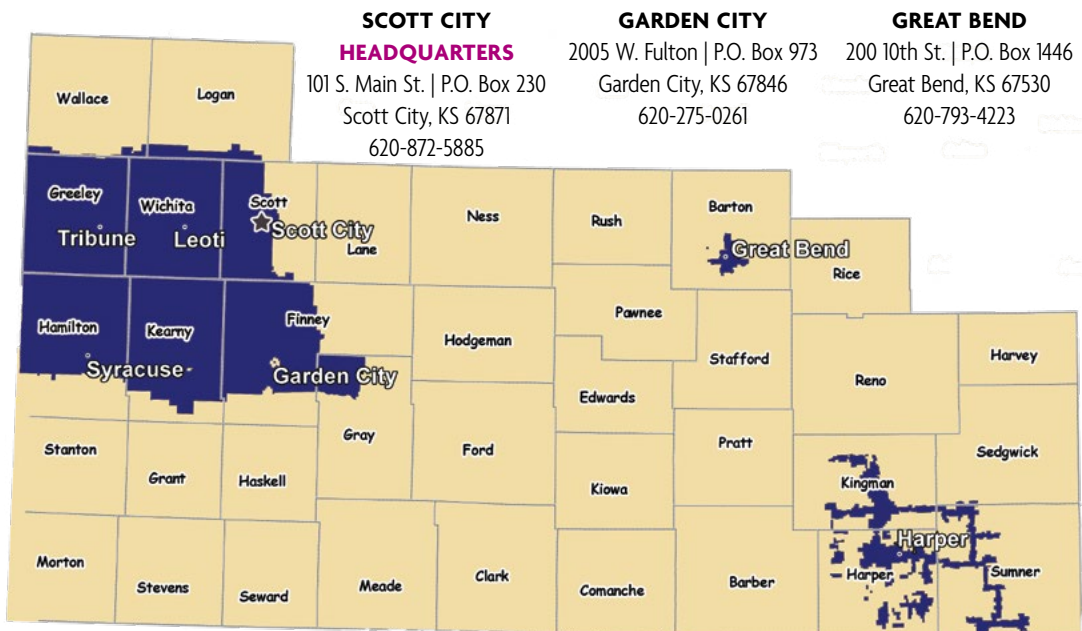


**PAM BRUNGARDT**  
Director of  
Consumer Services



**LUKE WEST**  
Director of Corporate  
Services & Water Division

## Our Service Territory



### SCOTT CITY

**HEADQUARTERS**  
101 S. Main St. | P.O. Box 230  
Scott City, KS 67871  
620-872-5885

### GARDEN CITY

2005 W. Fulton | P.O. Box 973  
Garden City, KS 67846  
620-275-0261

### GREAT BEND

200 10th St. | P.O. Box 1446  
Great Bend, KS 67530  
620-793-4223

### HARPER

906 Central | P.O. Box 247  
Harper, KS 67058  
620-896-7090

### LEOTI

101 W. F St. | P.O. Box 966  
Leoti, KS 67861  
620-375-2632

### SYRACUSE

206 N. Main | P.O. Box 1010  
Syracuse, KS 67878  
620-384-5171

### TRIBUNE

310 Broadway | P.O. Box 490  
Tribune, KS 67879  
620-376-4231



**ALLI CONINE**  
Director of Member  
Services & Corporate  
Communications



**QUINTEN WHEELER**  
Manager of Safety  
& Compliance



**RHEI THURMAN**  
Executive Assistant





# WHEATLAND ELECTRIC

Delivering Energy for Life

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

## *Our Mission*

***Delivering  
Energy for Life***

## *Our Vision*

***Wheatland Electric  
Cooperative will  
provide essential  
services that are  
safe, reliable, and  
competitively priced  
to enhance the lives of  
our members.***

