



NEWS

Wheatland Electric Co-op Inc.

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FROM THE MANAGER

Why We Love Serving Our Co-op Members



Bruce W. Mueller

February may be the shortest month, but it's packed with special observances like Presidents Day, Black History Month and Valentine's

Day, in addition to a host of unofficial "national" days you've probably never heard of like "National Tater Tot Day." But they all have something in common. They were created to draw attention to a particular issue or theme.

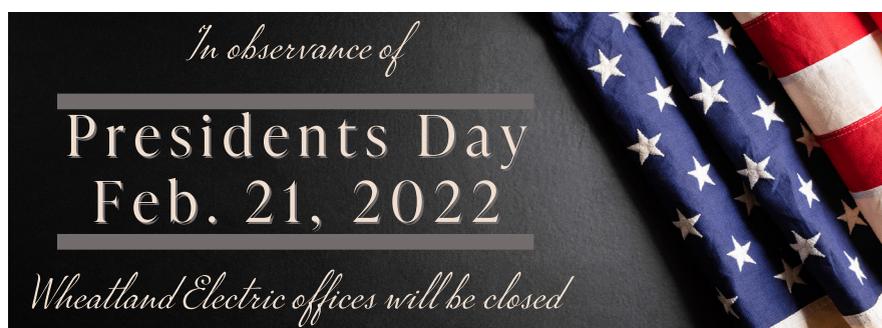
Valentine's Day may seem like an observance originally created by a greeting card company, but over time, it's become a widely celebrated day with millions of dollars spent on flowers, candy, gifts, and more. But Valentine's Day isn't just for the

lovebirds. It's also the perfect time to let our friends, family, co-workers, and other special people in our lives know we care about them — with or without a store-bought greeting card.

With that in mind, we're here to show our Wheatland Electric lineworkers some love (see page F-G). They are the individuals who work around the clock and in all kinds of weather to keep the power on for all of us. It's why our mission of **DELIVERING ENERGY FOR LIFE** is a true labor of love. From our lineworkers on our power lines to the consumer service representatives on our phone lines, our dedicated employees keep our cooperative running smoothly. And as CEO/General Manager, I'm proud of the great work they do.

In the spirit of February and Valentine's Day, there are also several

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Conine Promoted to Director of Member Services and Corporate Communications

Congratulations to **ALLI CONINE**, on her promotion from manager to director of member services and corporate communications as of Jan. 1, 2022.



Alli Conine

A familiar face around Wheatland Electric since 2015, Conine served as manager of the department since 2018. She leads her team in all internal and external communications for

the cooperative, in addition to coordinating all community and school programs and membership meetings.

“I am proud of the progress our team has made in increasing Wheatland’s visibility and membership engagement in the communities we serve,” says Conine. “I look forward to my expanded role and the opportunity to contribute further in Wheatland’s vision of providing essential services to enhance the lives of our members.”

Conine, a native of Great Bend, holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Family Studies and Human Services from Kansas State University and Certified Key Accounts Executive (CKAE) credentials through NRECA (National Rural Electric Cooperative Association).

McVay Promoted to Assistant General Manager

Wheatland Electric Cooperative Inc. has a new assistant general manager.

JIM MCVAY, the cooperative’s general counsel since Jan. 2018, was given the additional role following the departure of Trey Grebe.

An attorney from Great Bend, McVay received his Bachelor’s degree in political science and Juris Doctor from Washburn University. He served 23 years in the U.S. Marine Corps and has been an attorney in Kansas for 30 years, trying several hundred bench and jury trials. McVay will also retain his role as Wheatland’s general counsel.

We wish Grebe the best in his new role at Medina and appreciate his years of service to Wheatland Electric Cooperative Inc.



Jim McVay



Trey Grebe

Grebe, whose last day was Jan. 3, 2022, served as our assistant general manager since Aug. 2016 and is assuming a new role at Medina Electric Cooperative in Hondo, Texas, as CEO.

He said the thing he will miss the most about working at Wheatland are the people he interacted with daily.

We wish Grebe the best in his new role at Medina and appreciate his years of service to Wheatland Electric Cooperative Inc.

Goddard Promoted to Director of Finance

Wheatland Electric Cooperative Inc. has a new director of finance.

TRACI GODDARD, our former manager of accounting, has stepped into the role following the retirement of Radona Ayers.

Goddard, who has been with Wheatland since 2015, was born and raised in Dodge City and received her MBA in accounting from Saint Leo University in Florida. She is a certified public accountant, licensed in the state of Kansas.

As head of finance, Goddard is responsible for the day-to-day operations, as well as the administrative, regulatory, and reporting duties of the co-op.

Ayers, whose last day at Wheatland was Jan. 7, 2022, served as manager of accounting at Wheatland from Oct. 2004 prior to being promoted to finance director in Nov. 2014. She said she has enjoyed the diversity



Traci Goddard



Radona Ayers

of challenges during her time at the cooperative and being part of what she called a “cooperative family.”

“I remember during the spring blizzard 2017 URSA weather event and being at the office at 6 a.m. to make breakfast burritos for the lineworkers, everyone pulling together to pitch in however and whenever they could,” she said.

We wish Ayers the best in her retirement and thank her for her many years of service to Wheatland Electric Cooperative Inc.

**Save
the Date!**

***Wheatland Electric
74th Annual Meeting***

**April 27, 2022
Scott Community Building
600 Fairground Rd.
Scott City, KS**



***Driving Energy
for Life***

Join us as we put 2021 in the rearview and lay the road map for what's ahead with your local electric cooperative!

Join us in Scott City or a remote location near you!

Electric LINGO WHAT IS SWITCHING?



One of the many broken poles in Finney County during the severe windstorm that swept across southwest and central Kansas on Dec. 15, 2021.

SWITCHING — When we think of the light switches in our homes, we think of them as either **OFF** or **ON**.

In the electric industry, lineworkers and other industry professionals use the terms **OPEN** (for 'off') or **CLOSED** (for 'on') when considering the flow of electricity from one source to another.

When restoring power following an outage or natural disaster, broken poles and downed power lines are very common, and it's our lineworkers' job to assess the damage and consider how to restore power as quickly and safely as possible.

To do so, they must isolate the problem (such as a broken pole or faulty equipment) and, when possible, **SWITCH** the direction of electricity in a loop feed to restore power to homes, businesses or others who have lost it.

In the wake of several powerful windstorms that affected much of our service territory Dec. 15, 2021, Mother Nature was responsible for multiple broken poles and downed power lines across southwest and central Kansas.

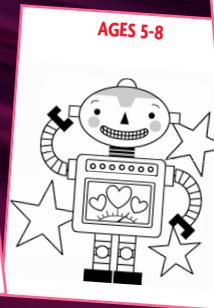
Thanks to switching, line crews were able to quickly restore power to most areas before moving on to the more time-consuming task of fixing or replacing damaged power lines. After restoring as much power as possible within 24-48 hours, our crews then returned to these sites to replace or repair poles and other equipment as needed.

Switching is a powerful tool that allows us to get the lights back on for members like you without delay!

ENTER OUR 2022

Valentine's Day Coloring Contest!

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY! Wheatland Electric is once again holding a coloring contest for our mini members! Prizes are available for our winners in the following age categories: 4 and under, 5 to 8, and 9 and older. Starting Jan. 28, download our coloring sheets at www.weci.net. Email your entry to memberservices@weci.net by **11:59 P.M. CST ON FEB. 14, 2021**. Entries can also be submitted on Facebook @Wheatland Electric via message. Be sure to include your child's name, age, and Wheatland member's name (i.e., parent or guardian). **OUR WINNERS WILL BE ANNOUNCED** during that same week on social media!



K.C. Wolf Storms Southwest Kansas – A Cooperative Lecture Series Presentation

DAN MEERS, AKA K.C. WOLF, had a little bit of fun off the football field while visiting Scott City and Leoti in January.

The Kansas City Chiefs' Mascot Hall of Famer travels the world sharing his story of tragedy and perseverance, while having a lot of fun. Wild and rowdy K.C. surprised students at Scott City and Leoti schools during a two-day visit. Each evening, the more subdued Meers took off the costume and shared with the communities an inspirational message of life and leadership. Students and attendees had the opportunity to pose with K.C. and Meers for photos and autographs.

Meers is the first presenter in the Cooperative Lecture Series, a new collaboration between Wheatland Electric Cooperative Inc. and Scott Cooperative Association. The series is the brainchild of Jason Baker, CEO of Scott Co-op.

"I attend these seminars and hear amazing speakers that get me excited to return to work with renewed passion and I just wanted to bring some of that enjoyment and inspiration to our local communities as well," says Baker. He hopes to bring a new speaker or presentation to the community on an annual basis.

"When Scott Co-op approached us about this series, we knew it was something that we wanted to be a part of," says Alli Conine, director of member services and corporate communications at Wheatland Electric. "This is what Wheatland is all about — investing in our communities and bringing initiatives that will resonate with our members."

Scott Co-op is a Wheatland member serving Scott and Wichita counties.



K.C. Wolf mascot Dan Meers visited the Scott City and Leoti schools during a two-day trip to share his inspirational message about life and leadership.

Do you rely on electricity for your life-saving equipment?

When the power goes out, you don't have to worry.



Call us today to see how we can help give you the peace of mind you deserve, with a **GENERAC** automatic standby generator.



LABOR OF

LOVE

This February, we're here to show our lineworkers some love! Through all types of stormy weather — rain, wind, hail, snow, and more — our lineworkers are there, helping us deliver safe and reliable energy for our most basic daily needs. Thank you to those who put their lives on the line every day — it truly is a **LABOR OF LOVE** for our cooperative and our communities!

Gary "Manny" Gonzalez, Journeyman Lineman
Syracuse



Bryan Mulligan, Serviceman
Scott City



Kyle Strickert, Substation Maintenance Foreman
Garden City



Keith Vrbas, Journeyman Lineman
Garden City



Brandon Ritchie, Journeyman Lineman, Great Bend



Jesse Harbrige, Lineman Apprentice Leoti



Chris Oliver, Journeyman Lineman Syracuse



Riley Waggoner, Lineman Apprentice Tribune



Matt Riley, Line Foreman Syracuse



Joe Thomeczek, Journeyman Lineman Syracuse

Why We Love Serving Our Members

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reasons that we LOVE serving you – our co-op members. Here are the top reasons why:

1 We love serving our members because without you, the co-op wouldn't exist. Our vision is to provide essential services that are safe, reliable, and competitively priced to enhance the lives of you, our members. Simply put, Wheatland Electric exists to serve you. That's why we were formed in 1948 — to bring power to our region when for-profit utilities would not. For nearly 75 years we've been working to not only keep the power on, but make sure it's delivered safely, responsibly, and economically — all for the members who make up our cooperative.

2 You enable us to complete our mission by supporting our efforts to give back. A major part of our mission is to serve our communities. With your assistance, we're able to help the most vulnerable members of our communities through our annual **CRAM THE VAN** food drive. In 2021, thanks to our generous members and communities, we collected 44,576 pounds of food for a dozen local food banks across our southwest and central Kansas service territory. Every fall, co-op members step up with donations to support their local food bank — to make sure their food pantries are stocked for the holidays and that no family in need is turned away for lack of supplies. Thank you for your cooperation in this annual effort — we simply couldn't do it without you!

3 Members of our co-op also serve on the board of trustees. They provide guidance for setting co-op priorities and help make big decisions. Because our trustees live in the same districts as you, they're able to sense the pulse of the community and identify immediate and long-term needs. The broader co-op membership provides helpful input through your vote on trustee elections and by weighing in on co-op and community issues.

4 You help us get it right. Wheatland Electric members are great about keeping us in the know. We do our best to avoid power outages,

“It's why our mission of Delivering Energy for Life is a true labor of love. From our lineworkers on our power lines to the consumer service representatives on our phone lines, our dedicated employees keep our cooperative running smoothly.”

but Mother Nature can occasionally throw us a curveball, like last December when widespread windstorms across our region damaged homes, farms and many power lines. Our members were quick to report any power disruptions and were patient as our crews worked to safely restore power. We know outages are frustrating, and your support as we work through storms means so much to our employees. Thank you!

5 You and other Wheatland members make up the communities we serve — and for us, it's all about community. Our employees live and work where you do and care about our communities the same way you do. We're invested in helping our area thrive. It's also why we invest in economic development, and why you'll see our employees volunteering and getting involved in charitable and community endeavors.

As a co-op, we strive to enhance the lives of our members through the services we provide. We love serving our members and our local community, and just like you, want to see it continue to thrive. Happy Valentine's Day, and I hope you take the time to show someone in your life you care about them.

UNTIL NEXT TIME, TAKE CARE.

SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

Take the time to construct an emergency escape plan for your home. Note all possible exits, including windows. Draw a floor plan of your house and mark two ways to escape from each room. An annual check to make sure that the doors and windows leading to the outside can easily be opened by everyone in the family would be a great habit to develop.