

**WHEATLAND
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

NEWS



Wheatland Electric Co-op Inc.

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Great Bend, KS 67530

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906 Central, P.O. Box 247
Harper, KS 67058

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

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

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

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

FROM THE MANAGER

Members Are the Heart of Everything We Do



Bruce W. Mueller

Author Anthony J. D'Angelo observed that, "Without a sense of caring, there can be no sense of community."

To a large degree, this reflects

Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc.'s (WEC) philosophy toward our members and the broader service territory we serve. As a cooperative, we have a different "bottom line." While our strategic vision is always to provide safe, reliable, and competitively priced electricity, there is another equally important part of this equation. Your well-being and that of the larger communities we serve are of paramount concern.

To us, you are not just a consumer; you are a member-owner of our co-op and without you, we would not exist.

In 1948, nine visionary western Kansas residents took matters into their own hands and formed Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc. because they were tired of being left behind by big for-profit power companies who didn't want to spend the dollars it would take to connect rural America to the national electric grid.

In 1950, after learning about the electric utility business, taking out loans, setting up offices, and laying hundreds of miles of lines, they welcomed an additional 2,246 cooperative members to WEC.

That grit and determination in our earliest years has lived on through

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SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

Severe weather can be both frightening and dangerous for travelers. Winter storms, bad weather and sloppy road conditions are a factor in nearly half a million crashes and more than 2,000 road deaths every winter. Allow more time, increase your following distance and slow down!

5 Reasons to Love Your Cooperative



Traci Goddard, director of finance, (left) visits with a co-op member in Finney County during our recent Capital Credits Harvest Day in December 2022. Capital credits are operating margins returned to consumer-members like you, determined by our democratically elected board of trustees. It's just one of the ways it pays to be a cooperative member!



Mary Hoisington (middle) presents a check for \$3,291 to USD 428 in Great Bend as part of our capital credits retirement in 2022. Also pictured from left are: Andrea Bauer, public information officer, and Chris Thexton, USD 428 superintendent.

Just some of the ways your co-op works for you!

February is often known for being a month dedicated to, and all about, love. So, as we celebrate love this month, we want to share some of the reasons to love your electric cooperative.

1 WE SUPPORT OUR MEMBERS & COMMUNITIES Over the years, you have probably heard or read about Concern for Community, our seventh cooperative principle. This is one of the core principles that sets cooperatives apart from other types of utilities and businesses. At WEC, we have always taken this responsibility to heart because it is who we are: a member-owned organization committed to the communities we serve.

Over the past nine years, we have helped strengthen the food safety net for our communities. We have done this through Cram the Van, our annual food drive. To date, our co-op and members have raised 226,908 pounds or just over 113 tons of food!

While our purpose is to provide safe, reliable and competitively-priced energy to you, the members we serve, we have another important mission — to be a catalyst for good. So many families look to our local pantries to help put food on the table. We support these food banks and the hard-working and generous individuals who give their time for the benefit of others because we live and work where you do. We want to make it a better place for all.

You can count on Wheatland Electric to be there to fulfill our mission:

DELIVERING ENERGY FOR LIFE.

In addition to our annual food drive campaign, Wheatland awards higher education scholarships to high school seniors planning to attend an accredited university, community college, or technical school. Additionally, each year Wheatland sends two high school juniors to Washington, D.C., to participate in the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour and two high school juniors to Steamboat Springs to participate in the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp.

In 2022, Wheatland distributed \$1,000 grants to 25 community-based organizations through our Sharing Success fund to assist special projects.

Wheatland employees and trustees sponsored gifts for 105 children through St. Francis Ministries Christmas for Kids program, as well as contributed to local schools and numerous non-profit organizations, on top of employees volunteering countless hours.

2 WE ARE MEMBER-OWNED Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their cooperative members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. Trustees are elected by and are accountable to the membership. This defines exactly what our second

cooperative principle is all about: Democratic Member Control.

WEC is run by a democratically elected board of trustees, a board given the privilege to serve because of your vote. Our trustees are members of your community. They are concerned with the same issues you face every day because they face them too.

This year is special as we celebrate 75 years since our inception! As a member of WEC, you have a valuable perspective — and we invite you to share it with us at this year's annual meeting. Join us on April 26, 2023, for a very special annual meeting.

3 WE PROVIDE SAFETY EDUCATION

Safety is our top priority, not just for our employees, but for our members. According to Electrical Safety Foundation International, thousands of people in the U.S. are critically injured or electrocuted as a result of electrical fires and accidents in their own homes. Many of these accidents are preventable. Electricity is a necessity, and it powers our daily lives. But we know firsthand how dangerous electricity can be because we work with it 365 days a year.

You will find our WEC safety team and lineworkers hosting safety demonstrations in schools, at community events, and with first responders across our service territory.

At these safety demos, we demonstrate exactly what can happen to the human body or objects if they come in contact with energized power lines. We also discuss emergency scenarios, such as what to do in a car accident involving a utility pole and downed power lines.

In fact, in 2022 alone, we reached over 1,500 participants with our live, safety demonstrations — from the very young to older generations, too. We caution students on the dangers of playing around pad-mounted transformers and warn the public about overloading circuits with too many electronic devices.

4 WE HAVE A STRONG FOUNDATION

For 75 years, WEC has proudly served our members with safe, reliable and competitively priced electricity. Our commitment to our core principles remains as steadfast today as it was decades ago. How we deliver services might look a little different today, but we still aim to improve the quality of our members' lives.

5 WE ARE INVESTED IN YOU, OUR MEMBERS

We know our members have a valuable perspective. That is why we continually seek your input through community events, social media, our annual meeting, and other local events. We always want to hear from you.



Quinten Wheeler, manager of safety and compliance, (right) shares lineworker safety equipment with elementary school students in Scott City.



A co-op member donates canned goods at a 2022 Cram the Van event during a Scott City Middle School game. Cram the Van is a cooperative-wide effort, and all cash and can donations are donated to the food banks in the same communities that the donations are made.



For nearly a decade we have grilled hamburgers and hot dogs for generous co-op members at our Cram the Van events as our thank you for their cash or can donation.



The 2022 Cram the Van season ended with a Fall Finale with lots of games and activities at the Spencer Flight and Education Center in Scott City.



Trent Suchy, substation maintenance journeyman (center), visits with Great Bend Little Panthers Preschool during a recent safety demonstration. Wheatland hosts safety demos with audiences young and old to emphasize the importance of electricity safety, especially outdoors and around downed power lines.



2023 **POWER YOUR YEAR!**

**Win FREE
electricity for
ONE YEAR!**



One residential co-op member (active account holder) will be selected for a total maximum prize value of \$1,200. Participants must register for paperless billing through their SmartHub account and sign up for automatic payments through Wheatland Electric using a bank draft or recurring debit or credit card on or before March 31, 2023, to be entered to win. View additional promotional details at www.weci.net/win-free-power.

Members Are the Heart of Everything We Do

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three-quarters of a century and made us the organization that we are today.

Over time, folks in the community may have come to think of us as simply another energy provider. But we are not. We are a co-op that is constantly evolving to meet the needs of the communities we serve, and we are able to do this because of members like you.

Since our inception, we have sought feedback and engagement from you to guide our long-term decisions. This is why we hold annual meetings and other events throughout the year, such as our Chamber After Hours. We host events like this to engage with you and listen to your ideas and suggestions.

WEC members help guide important co-op decisions that improve and

enrich the communities we serve. We value the perspective of our board of trustees, who govern the cooperative and are members of the co-op and community — just like you.

As a local business, we have a stake in the community. That's why we support numerous community-based and non-profit organizations and we've established our own programs like Cram the Van, our annual food drive to support food banks across our service territory.

Working together, we can accomplish great things for you, our members, and the communities we serve now and in the future, as we always strive to stay true to our mission of Delivering Energy for Life.

UNTIL NEXT TIME, TAKE CARE.



Enter Our 2023

VALENTINE'S DAY COLORING CONTEST



Directions To Enter:

- Coloring sheets can be found at www.weci.net or scan the QR Code above
- Print off the coloring sheet for the correct age category:
4 and under, 5 to 8, or 9 and older
- Be sure to include your child's name, age, and Wheatland member's name (i.e., parent or guardian)
- Submit entry by emailing contests@weci.net or Facebook message [@WheatlandElectric](https://www.facebook.com/WheatlandElectric)

Entries Due
Feb. 14!

Prizes are available for our winners in each age category!
OUR WINNERS WILL BE ANNOUNCED shortly after the close of our contest on our website and social media!





Love on the Lines

With Valentine's Day just around the corner, we're here to show our lineworkers all the love!

At the heart of our cooperative are the lineworkers who work through all types of weather — heat, hail, wind, rain (if we're lucky) and snow — to keep the power on 24/7!

It is truly a labor of love for these individuals who work tirelessly on our lines for the communities we serve. We're thankful to our linemen for all they do and we're thankful to you for trusting us to power your lives!



Walt Lovins

Area Wide Supervisor, Scott City



Derek Holt

Journeyman Lineman, Harper



Kreyton Demel

Journeyman Lineman, Great Bend



Bruce Loy
Line Foreman, Leoti



Mark Douglas
Line Foreman, Harper



Justin Skelton
Line Foreman, Garden City



Garret Wilson
Apprentice Lineman, Tribune



Tuan Herrell
Serviceman, Garden City



Adam Parker
Journeyman Lineman, Harper



Tyson Ryff
Line Foreman, Great Bend



Mike Olson
Area Wide Supervisor, Syracuse



Celebrating *75 Years* of
Our Shared Cooperative History

Feel the
POWER

April 26, 2023

Join us for a very special

**ANNUAL
MEETING**

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

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



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