

WHEATLAND
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

NEWS



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FROM THE MANAGER

Empowering Our Co-op Membership

Every one of us has an innate need to belong, to be connected and to be a part of something bigger than ourselves. It is human nature. With that in mind, member-centric organizations like electric cooperatives have an opportunity to meet our members right where they are and work together to not only power our communities, but also make them brighter with the power of belonging.

Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc. is owned by you, our members. Cooperatives are not-for-profit businesses organized by and for the members they serve. Cooperatives are based upon principles — seven, to be exact: Open and Voluntary Membership; Democratic Member Control; Members' Economic Participation; Autonomy and Independence; Education, Training, and Information; Cooperation Among Cooperatives; and Concern for Community.

Engage

At WEC, one of our goals is to engage with our members. Be visible, consistent and relevant. Over the last several months we have hosted a successful Business After Hours at Dry Lake Brewing in Great Bend. We have also sponsored game nights with the Great Bend Bat Cats and the Garden City Wind. We strive to be immersed in the communities we serve.

Equip

WEC is determined to be your energy

experts because we know our members are overwhelmed with more choices than ever before. We introduced three new service programs earlier this year to advance electric vehicle adoption; connect you with local, trusted electricians; and provide back-up generation so that life without power is a thing of the past.



Bruce W. Mueller

Educate

In addition to educating our members in the powers and possibilities of renewable energy, our new Great Bend building, which opened last fall, boasts a public green space **NOW** available for tours. This outdoor space is open to the public and formal tours are open to any interested community group — more information is available on page 12D-E!

Empower

At WEC, we are working to evolve our members from casual consumers to passionate partners. Wheatland is gearing up for our Cram the Van food drive and we are preparing for our **BIGGEST, BRIGHTEST AND BEST** year yet because of members, like you.

We'll keep working to **DELIVER ENERGY FOR LIFE.**

UNTIL NEXT TIME, TAKE CARE

WHEATLAND ELECTRIC

Championing the Cooperative Spirit

Electric cooperatives have a unique and storied place in our country's history

We democratized the American dream by bringing electricity to rural areas when for-profit electric companies determined the effort was too costly.

At Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc. this occurred in 1948 when nine visionary western Kansans decided to take matters into their own hands and form an electric cooperative. And through their own grit and determination, welcomed an additional 2,246 members in 1950.

Today, nearly three-quarters of a century later, that spirit of equity, inclusion and perseverance is a vital part of our co-op DNA. It's why we're here to champion the cooperative spirit in everything we do to serve and engage members just like you!

Our Power Comes from You

Did you know that we're different from your ordinary electric company because we're a cooperative? That means we're owned by members like you, and we belong to the rural southwest and central Kansas communities that we serve.

In fact, our business model sets us apart even further because we adhere to seven guiding cooperative principles that reflect our core values of honesty, transparency, equity, inclusiveness and service to the greater good for the communities we serve.

Because we answer to local members as opposed to far-away shareholders, we're here to serve and respond to the needs of our local communities. We value our members and the economic contributions they make, which is why a portion of our excess revenue is returned to the membership.

Better known as capital credits, we've returned on average **\$1 MILLION** annually during the last five years (since

2017) to our cooperative membership. That brings our total capital credits returned to **\$5 MILLION** to eligible members in the past five years!

Members' Economic Participation is one of our seven guiding co-op principles, and capital credits are just one of the many ways we honor that cooperative spirit.

Meeting Members Where it Matters

Your role as a cooperative member doesn't end at economic participation — it's merely the beginning!

We aim to be a catalyst for good that spurs prosperity for the communities we serve, and we're here to do that in many ways: giving back to our communities through charitable funds and volunteer service, supporting local economic development efforts, engaging young adults so that our rural communities continue to grow and thrive, and much more.

It also means lending our support to existing community programs and events. Just this summer alone, we've hosted a number of after-hours and local events in places like Finney and Barton counties. Just recently we partnered with the Great Bend Area Chamber of Commerce to host one of their most well-attended Business After Hours at Dry Lake Brewing in Great Bend. We've also sponsored game nights with the Great Bend Bat Cats and Garden City Wind!

Growth and development are important to western and central Kansas, so we recently joined the Southwest Kansas Builders Association, to lend our support to much-needed housing development efforts across our rural region. We're hosting a lunch later this month to share cooperative

news and information and look forward to our continued partnership with this local advocacy group to promote housing development and growth in our communities.

Membership in groups like chambers of commerce and economic development agencies and dialogue with industrial leaders helps us to be active members in our communities and in sync with the goals of local community and business advocates.

We love meeting our co-op members at community events where these discussions happen, to serve you and find out what we can do to not only improve our services but help our communities thrive!

Connecting to Our Communities

Though our primary mission is to **DELIVER ENERGY FOR LIFE** by providing services that are safe, reliable and competitively priced, we're also focused on improving quality of life across the communities we serve.

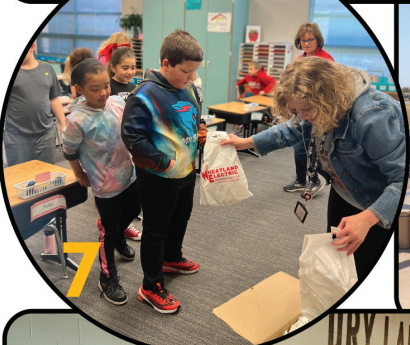
Some of that is done through our charitable giving, including our **SHARING SUCCESS FUND**. Thanks to annual matching contributions from CoBank, our financial lender, we've been able to award over **\$125,000** to community-based groups across our service territory since 2012!

In recent years, we've made available up to 20 \$1,000 grants to non-profit and other organizations during each grant cycle, which groups are eligible to receive up to once per year.

Grants are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis, and every effort is made by our selection committee to spread these funds across southwest and central Kansas.

Over the years, these dollars

Continued on page 12G ►



1. WEC staff served free hot dogs and hamburgers during a Bat Cats baseball game in Great Bend on June 15, 2022.
2. WEC staff assist fifth grade students with a renewable energy solar oven activity at our new Great Bend office on May 17, 2022.
3. On July 9, 2022, WEC staff grilled and served steak at the Beef Tasting Booths in Scott City as part of the Scott County Fair.
4. WEC gave away prizes during the Great Bend Chamber After Hours event on June 8, 2022.
5. WEC staff serve free hot dogs and hamburgers during a Bat Cats baseball game in Great Bend on June 15, 2022.
6. Cooperative staff passed out candy and drove our 100% electric vehicle during the Beef Empire Days parade in Finney County on June 11, 2022.
7. In February, WEC staff hosted a pizza party and gave prizes for coloring contest winners of Jefferson Elementary School in Great Bend.
8. WEC lineworkers attend Career Day at Holcomb Elementary School on April 29, 2022.
9. The Great Bend Chamber After Hours event was hosted by WEC at Dry Lake Brewing on June 8, 2022.
10. Quinten Wheeler, safety manager at WEC, gives an electrical safety demonstration to fourth grade students in Scott City in February.

Green Space Tours *Now Available*

Schedule a Green Space Tour Now

We invite interested school, civic and other community-based groups to come tour our new outdoor green space and learn about fossil-free energy sources (wind generator, solar generator and battery storage) and irrigation by a water recovery system at our new Great Bend facility.

To learn more or schedule a tour, contact Mary Hoisington, member services and key accounts manager, at mhoisington@weci.net or call 620-786-6001.

In 2021, we reached an incredible milestone in Great Bend with the opening of our new building, warehouse facility and innovative outdoor green space!

The outdoor green space, which sits just outside our new office building, features off-grid solar panels, a corrugated steel rainwater tank, and a turbine that provides up to 30 kWh of electricity per month to assist with the space's outdoor lighting.

We developed this green space as an opportunity to inform visitors about the Earth's precious resources and engage with our cooperative members about why "going green" can be beneficial to our communities, our country and our planet.

At Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc., we're constantly striving to balance environmental protection with the need to provide reliable and competitively priced electricity.

From big changes, like diversifying our electric generation portfolio, to smaller ones, such as installing wildlife-friendly infrastructure, we are committed to promoting ecological development and conservation in cost-effective ways.

To share our future-focused priorities with groups of all ages, we invite and encourage school and community-based groups to visit our new innovative outdoor space. Visitors are welcome to tour on their own using our self-guided signage or contact us directly to schedule a formal tour guided by a WEC representative.

Additionally, an hour-long, age-specific program (including planned, instructor-led indoor activities) is available for fifth-grade classrooms on a first-come, first-served basis. Contact us today to learn more!

We want to share the future of energy with you! School and community-based groups of all ages are welcome to visit and tour our new innovative outdoor space.



In western and central Kansas, rain is a precious resource. That's why we installed the RainFlo 3400 corrugated steel rainwater tank that can harvest more than 3,000 gallons of rain water and is currently being used to irrigate these grounds in conjunction with a built-in well system.



At the center of the green space is an AIR 30 Turbine that provides 30 kWh of electricity or more per month. These and other features of the green space are explained in signage for visitors to enjoy and learn from during self-guided tours.



Wheatland Electric welcomes area fifth-grade classrooms to learn more about fossil-free energy resources from our outdoor green space. Most recently, we hosted fifth graders from Park Elementary. Guided tours are limited and given on a first-come, first-served basis.



The Great Bend facility features an electric vehicle charging station with two ports that can power two vehicles simultaneously. The Level 2 EV charger is available 24/7 to the public.



Electricity generated by the green space's wind turbine is used in tandem with the electricity captured by four, off-grid Solarland 12-volt panels to provide accent lighting and fulfill any other electrical needs in our green space.

New, Improved Bill Design This August

In last month's *Kansas Country Living*, we shared a comprehensive breakdown of the new look and features of our electric bill redesign, which you'll see starting this month.

One of our top priorities at Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc. is to find new ways to better serve our consumer-members. Our redesigned bill gives members like you clearer and more useful information about your electrical usage, accounts, and upcoming cooperative news and information.

If you missed last month's infographic, check it out at WECI.NET/INTRODUCING-YOUR-NEW-BILL or call your local Wheatland office with questions. We're hopeful this new look and feel will empower consumer-members like you to explore cost-saving opportunities!

Find more information online at weci.net/introducing-your-new-bill or call your local Wheatland office.



Championing the Cooperative Spirit Continued from page 12C ▶

have funded a multitude of various community projects, including public art, charity work via churches, food banks, playgrounds, schools, community parks and trails, health care centers, and so much more!

Your Energy Experts

We're more than your energy provider — we're your local energy experts.

It's why we spend our time hosting multiple electrical safety demonstrations every year to a wide range of audiences — from elementary-age students to seasoned first responders and other professionals.

At these demos, we illustrate first-hand the dangers of outdoor activities near low-hanging or downed power lines (and other electrical infrastructure). We do these demos because we care about community safety and want to prevent unnecessary injuries and accidents. Our demos reached nearly 1,500 participants last year alone!

Our line crews also often participate in career days at local schools, to discuss the importance and value of careers in the electric industry and share their energy expertise.

It's just another way we're here to engage with our communities, especially local youth. What's more, we've even started hosting young students at our outdoor green space in Great Bend, where the workings of renewable fossil-free energy sources such as solar, water and wind are on full display.

This outdoor space is open to the public, and formal tours are open to any interested community group — more information is available on page 12D-E!

Fact-Driven, Future-Focused

We're here to be your first point of contact for your energy needs because we know our co-op members have more choices than they used to when it comes to powering their homes and businesses.

Our co-op is always striving to anticipate and plan for the future needs of our members and the communities we serve, which is why we've invested in areas like our outdoor green space in Great Bend, public electric vehicle chargers at two of our offices, and new services like our generator, EV charger, and electrician services.

Starting this year, you can partner with your cooperative (that's us!) to install and finance a Generac generator so that extended power outages become a thing of the past. Or we can help you setup and install an EV charger for your home or business using the services of local, trusted electricians that we've partnered with to prioritize our cooperative members.

Ready to Think BIG

Many of you also know that we **CRAM THE VAN** every fall to support our local food banks and the work they do year-round to curb hunger in our rural communities.

It's a mission we've taken seriously since we first rolled out this charitable campaign in 2014. In 2021, we donated a record-setting **44,576 POUNDS** of food to a dozen food banks, bringing our total to a whopping 86 tons donated to date.

Every year has been bigger and better, thanks primarily to members like you, our business partners and

vendors, and the generosity of the communities we serve. In recent years, we've built our Co-ops Care Charity Golf Tournament from the ground up, increasing the size and proceeds of our kick-off tournament and adding donation-driving ideas like a 50/50 raffle.

In fact, members can register now for our next tournament, to be held Sept. 16 at the Golf Club at Southwind in Garden City. Check out all the details on page 12H!

As we head into our ninth consecutive year of Cram the Van, we're ready to **THINK BIG — BIG IDEAS, BIG ENERGY AND BIG IMPACT!**

Stay tuned as we share more information and learn how you can get involved to make this year's Cram the Van our **BIGGEST, BRIGHTEST** and **BEST** year yet!

Thank You for Being Part of Your Co-op

Our consumers are also our member-owners, which is why we value member service and engagement so much.

You don't have to be an expert on the co-op business model or the electric utility industry to share the value our co-op brings to our communities. There's multiple ways to get involved, support your local co-op and community and help us shape our future, which is looking brighter than ever!

Our electric co-op was built by our communities, belongs to our communities, and continues to be led by our communities — that's the cooperative spirit and at the core of everything we do!

SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

With the start of school this month, we encourage you to learn about the Kansas school bus laws, as well as the "flashing signal light system" that school bus drivers use to alert motorists of pending actions.

- ▶ **YELLOW FLASHING LIGHTS** indicate that the bus is preparing to stop to load or unload children. Motorists should slow down and prepare to stop their vehicles.
- ▶ **RED FLASHING LIGHTS** and extended stop arms indicate that the bus has stopped, and that children are getting on or off. Motorists must stop their cars and wait until the red lights stop flashing, the extended stop sign is withdrawn, and the bus begins moving before they can start driving again.

4TH
ANNUAL
CHARITY
GOLF
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8 AM
REGISTRATION

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SHOTGUN START

Sept. 16, 2022

*Golf Club at Southwind
Garden City, KS*

BENEFITING

