



# NEWS

## Wheatland Electric Co-op Inc.

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### District Offices

**Garden City — 620-275-0261**  
2005 W. Fulton, P.O. Box 973  
Garden City, KS 67846  
**Great Bend — 620-793-4223**  
2300 Broadway, P.O. Box 1446  
Great Bend, KS 67530  
**Harper — 620-896-7090**  
906 Central, P.O. Box 247  
Harper, KS 67058  
**Leoti — 620-375-2632**  
N. Hwy. 25, P.O. Box 966  
Leoti, KS 67861  
**Scott City-Main — 620-872-5885**  
101 Main St., P.O. Box 230  
Scott City, KS 67871  
**Syracuse — 620-384-5171**  
206 1/2 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

# Getting Through This Together



**Bruce W. Mueller**

As we all deal with the new realities brought on by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, I want to assure you that Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc. is here to help you. We have an emergency plan that has served us well in a variety of circumstances, from ice storms to tornadoes. Early in this crisis, our staff updated that plan with a special emphasis on ensuring we can continue to provide the safe, reliable and competitively priced electric service you have come to expect from Wheatland Electric.

So far, that is exactly what has happened. We know that after a sufficient supply of food and water, electricity is

the No. 1 thing you need to maintain some sense of normalcy as we hunker down in our homes. With that in mind, keeping the power flowing is priority No. 1 for everyone involved in maintaining Wheatland's electric system.

That starts with our generation cooperative, Sunflower Electric, which has taken extreme measures to ensure its workforce is healthy and its power plants are functioning as needed. It extends to the 27 electric cooperatives (including Wheatland Electric) that wheel that electricity across Kansas.

We thought you might want to know some of the steps we have taken in order to keep your power flowing. We've closed our lobbies to prevent the spread of the pandemic. Instead, we are encouraging members to use our drop boxes, online and phone payment options and the good ol' U.S. Postal Service to pay bills.

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**MEMORIAL  
DAY** We will be  
\*\*\*\*\*  
**CLOSED**

In observance of the Memorial  
Day holiday on Monday, May 25,  
our office will be closed.

## Emergency Hand Cleanser in 3 Steps



**1** Separate the interior gel from the outside of the aloe leaf.



**2** Put the aloe into a blender and strain the mixture to remove the pulp.



**3** Mix isopropyl alcohol with blended aloe and pour into labeled bottle.

## Finding Cleansing Solutions



Becky Lopez, Sheena McKinley and Megan Sneath, Garden City consumer service representatives, used aloe leaves and isopropyl alcohol to make homemade hand cleanser for every office in Wheatland's service territory.

New Orleans Saints quarterback, Drew Brees, and his wife committed \$5 million to the State of Louisiana for relief efforts to fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. In his social media announcement of the financial commitment, Brees also encouraged his followers to "all do our part, maintain hope, and get through this together."

**BECKY LOPEZ, SHEENA MCKINLEY** and **MEGAN SNEATH**, all consumer service representatives (CSRs) in Wheatland's Garden City office, did just that. When Wheatland Electric was without hand cleanser, in a time when chemical companies, breweries and perfumeries took to making a vital commodity that was in short supply, so did the Garden City CSRs.

After a quick search, the trio discovered the Quick Gel recipe, isopropyl alcohol and aloe vera gel. On a normal day these two ingredients would be easy to find; however, as public health experts recommended that Americans use do-it-yourself methods to make up for nationwide shortages of antibacterial products the ingredients were in short supply.

Becky, Sheena and Megan were able to divide and conquer by visiting several retail stores in Garden City to purchase enough isopropyl alcohol to make 15 2-quart jars. Unfortunately, all aloe vera gel was sold out, so the three

**We are fortunate to have employees like Becky, Sheena and Megan who think outside the box. Because of their efforts, each office in Wheatland's service territory now has hand cleanser to help keep our employees and members safe and protected.**

**BRUCE W. MUELLER, GENERAL MANAGER**

got creative. They purchased aloe vera leaves from the local Mexican and Asian markets and filleted them like fish. The gel from one leaf was enough to make two jars of cleanser.

"We are fortunate that we have employees like Becky, Sheena and Megan who think outside the box. Because of their efforts each office in Wheatland's service territory now has hand cleanser to help keep our employees as well as members safe and protected," said Bruce W. Mueller, Wheatland's general manager.

The Garden City CSRs saw a need and came up with a solution. During this time of uncertainty, one thing is certain: Becky, Sheena and Megan should be applauded for their efforts.

**CORONAVIRUS DISCLAIMER:** This hand cleanser recipe is not a substitute for proper hand-washing. And while this home remedy contains commonly-accepted natural antiviral ingredients, it has never been tested in a lab to determine its efficacy against viruses such as the coronavirus.

# Wheatland Broadband Offers Hot Spots, Speed Increases

Wheatland Broadband recognizes the need for connection in these uncertain times. For many, internet service is vital for work and homeschooling. Wheatland has set up hotspots throughout our territory to help those who might not have a current provider. These hotspots are free to the public and can be found in the following locations:

## ▶ SCOTT CITY

Wheatland Broadband's office back parking lot, 416 Main Street, 24/7 accessibility

## ▶ GARDEN CITY

Wheatland Electric office parking lot, 2005 W. Fulton  
Accessibility Monday-Friday from 5-8 p.m., and Saturday-Sunday from 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

In collaboration with the Southwest Kansas Library System, and these local libraries, WiFi hotspots will be open at the following locations:

## ▶ SCOTT CITY

Scott County Library parking lot, 110 W. 8th St., 24/7 accessibility

## ▶ LEOTI

Wichita County Library parking lot, 208 S. 4th St., 24/7 accessibility

## ▶ TRIBUNE

Greeley County Library parking lot, 517 Broadway Ave., 24/7 Accessibility

## ▶ SYRACUSE

Hamilton County Library parking lot, 102 W Ave. C and Syracuse Sand Dunes Park, 24/7 accessibility

## ▶ HOLCOMB

Empty lot across from Wheatland's tower, corner of Railroad Ave. & Sunnie Baird Road, 24/7 Accessibility

## Increased Speeds

Additionally, Wheatland Broadband will be increasing service speeds temporarily for members currently on the economy or basic package through May 31, 2020, upon request. Speeds will increase from 3/1 Mbps and 5/1 Mbps to the maximum speed available up to 10/4.

Members who may need increased speeds include teach-



**Need faster internet for work and school? Wheatland Broadband will be increasing service speeds for those currently on the Basic or Economy plans through May 31, 2020, upon request.**

ers hosting web-based education tools, members who are working remotely, or households with multiple students trying to connect at one time.

To receive the increased speeds, existing members will need to call 866-872-0006 or email [billing@wbsnet.org](mailto:billing@wbsnet.org).

"Our hope is that broader access and faster speeds will help all of our members access educational resources and more easily work from home," said Bruce W. Mueller, general manager.

And while you are on the internet, check out virtual tours through museums, historic sites, zoos and aquariums. Here's a list of some of our favorites:

- ▶ Choose from lots of live cam options at **THE SAN DIEGO ZOO** <https://kids.sandiegozoo.org/videos>
- ▶ Take virtual tours of several exhibits at **THE NATIONAL AQUARIUM** <https://aqua.org/media/virtualtours/baltimore/index.html>
- ▶ View live cams of exhibits through **THE MONTEREY BAY AQUARIUM** <https://www.montereybayaquarium.org/animals/live-cams>
- ▶ Walk through every exhibit (and some older exhibits that are no longer there!) at **THE SMITHSONIAN NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM**. Make sure to look up and down, follow the arrows, and zoom to read about the amazing artifacts! <https://naturalhistory2.si.edu/vt3/NMNH/>
- ▶ Tour several exhibits in **THE LOUVRE**, one of the most famous museums in the world. Did you know the Louvre was originally a fortress? You can see the remains of the moat in one of the virtual tours. <https://www.louvre.fr/en/visites-en-ligne#tabs>
- ▶ Take a walk along **THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA** <https://www.thechinaguide.com/destination/great-wall-of-china>
- ▶ Explore one of the world's most diverse habitats through this interactive tour of **THE GREAT BARRIER REEF** <http://attenboroughsreef.com/>
- ▶ Watch pre-recorded operas every night at **THE METROPOLITAN OPERA** <https://www.metopera.org>.



## Wheatland Electric Cooperative Named 5-Star Co-op



Wheatland Electric hosted a Co-ops Vote event at the Garden City office last fall. During the event, co-op members and employees visited with local representatives.

Co-ops Vote is a non-partisan project of America's electric cooperatives designed to inform its members on the critical issues facing electric co-ops. The Co-ops Vote campaign encourages our members to vote and to support their co-ops and the communities they serve when they go to the polls. We do not endorse or recommend any candidates for election.

Wheatland Electric Cooperative has been named a "5-Star Co-op" by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. The 5-star designation recognizes Wheatland's high level of participation in Co-ops Vote, a national get-out-the-vote campaign. The non-partisan campaign seeks to engage voters and boost voter turnout in areas served by electric co-ops across the country.



(From left) Woody Barnes, Wheatland board president; Jim McVay, Wheatland's general counsel; Representative Don Hineman; and Bruce W. Mueller, Wheatland's general manager/CEO, gathered at the Kansas State Capitol to advocate for electric cooperatives.

The program emphasizes the importance of all elections, at all levels. Wheatland helps provide awareness of our civic duty on Election Day and every day.

Five-star status marks the highest level of engagement in Co-ops Vote program.

The Co-ops Vote program can make a difference in our community. More information on Co-ops Vote is available at [www.vote.coop](http://www.vote.coop).

Co-ops Vote provides constituents with valuable information. Check out your resources at [www.vote.coop/voterresources.aspx](http://www.vote.coop/voterresources.aspx). Kansas resources can be found at [www.voteks.org/guides.html](http://www.voteks.org/guides.html).

Do you need to register to vote? [www.vote.coop/register.aspx](http://www.vote.coop/register.aspx).

## Kleysteuber Obtains National Certificate

**JOHN KLEYTEUBER**, Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc. director, recently received the Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) certificate from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

An ever-changing business environment has imposed new demands on electric cooperative directors, requiring increased knowledge of changes in the electric utility business, new governance skills and a solid knowledge of the cooperative principles and business model. Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc. has a commitment to work through NRECA to sharpen this body of knowledge for the benefit of our electric cooperative members.

The NRECA Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) program requires attendance and demonstrated understanding of the basic competencies contained in five core courses:

- ▶ Director Duties and Liabilities
- ▶ Understanding the Electric Business
- ▶ Board Roles and Relationships
- ▶ Strategic Planning

### ▶ Financial Decision Making

"The CCD certificate speaks volumes of John's commitment to Wheatland and to its members," said Bruce W. Mueller, Wheatland Electric's general manager. "All of our board members take very seriously the duties they have been entrusted with."

NRECA represents the nation's more than 900 private, consumer-owned electric co-ops, which provide electric service to more than 42 million people in 47 states, with over 7,200 directors.

Wheatland Electric Cooperative Inc. serves about 32,500 meters in 14 Kansas counties and parts of two Colorado counties.



John Kleysteuber received his Credentialed Cooperative Director certificate from NRECA.

# Congratulations, Scholarship Winners

Wheatland is proud to support our youth through opportunities such as the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, Youth Leadership Camp and the Wheatland Electric Scholarship Program. Every year, up to 14 scholarships are awarded to deserving high school seniors (one for each of the 13 high schools Wheatland serves and one At-large.)

Wheatland prefers to announce our scholarship winners at our annual meeting. Unfortunately, this year's meeting — like so many things — has been postponed. However, we would still like to honor our scholarship recipients and the hard work they have put in to reach their goals. Congratulations to Wheatland Electric's 2020 Scholarship Recipients!

**HOPE CASNER** attends Argonia High School. She plans to attend the University of Kansas where she will study exercise science.

**CARSON LINENBERGER** is Wheatland's at-large scholarship recipient. He attends Garden City High School. Carson plans to attend Fort Hays State University where he will study music education.

**DELANEY MAYO**, a past Youth Tour winner, attends Caldwell High School. She plans to attend Butler County Community College where she will study chemistry/pre-pharmacy.

**AUDREY BEBERMEYER** attends Chaparral High School. She plans to attend Wichita State University for pre-medical.

**VICTORIA KUNZ** attends Conway Springs High School. She plans to attend Garden City Community College where she will study pre-dental.

**LUKE MANETH** attends Great Bend High School. He plans to attend the University of Kansas and study pre-medical.

**KAMRYN YOUMANS** attends Greeley County High School in Tribune. She plans to attend Wichita State University to study physical therapy.

**GRACELYNN RUPP** attends Holcomb High School. She plans to attend Wichita State University where she will study physical therapy.

**TORI POE**, a past Leadership Camp winner, attends Norwich High School. She plans to attend Fort Hays State University to study accounting.

**MADISON SHAPLAND** attends Scott Community High School. She plans to attend Fort Hays State University where she will study psychology.

**RACHEL TUREK** attends South Haven High School. She plans to attend Kansas State University where she will study biology/pre-nursing.

**ALEX MOSER** attends Syracuse High School. He plans to attend Northwest Kansas Technical School where he will be studying electrical energy.

**JOHANNA RIDDER** attends Wichita County Junior-Senior High School in Leoti. She plans to attend Kansas State University to study biology.

## New Office Hours Effective June 1

Our Tribune office will be open  
from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. MT.

Our Syracuse office will be open from  
7 a.m.-11:30 a.m. MT and 12:30 p.m.-4 p.m. MT.

## 4 COMMON CULPRITS OF ELECTRICAL FIRES

Outdated wiring and overloaded circuits are the most common causes of electrical fires. Check the following areas of your home to ensure your home's electrical safety is up to par.

### ELECTRICAL OUTLETS:

Faulty electrical outlets are a leading cause of home fires. As outlets age, so do the wires behind them that you can't see. Loose, damaged or warm-to-the-touch outlets should be repaired or replaced.



### ELECTRICAL WIRING:

Outdated wiring is another common cause of electrical fires. Frequently tripped breakers, flickering lights and burning smells are clear warning signs. Homes older than 20 years may not be able to handle today's increased power load. If you suspect your home's wiring is outdated, contact a qualified electrician.



### OVERLOADED CORDS AND OUTLETS:

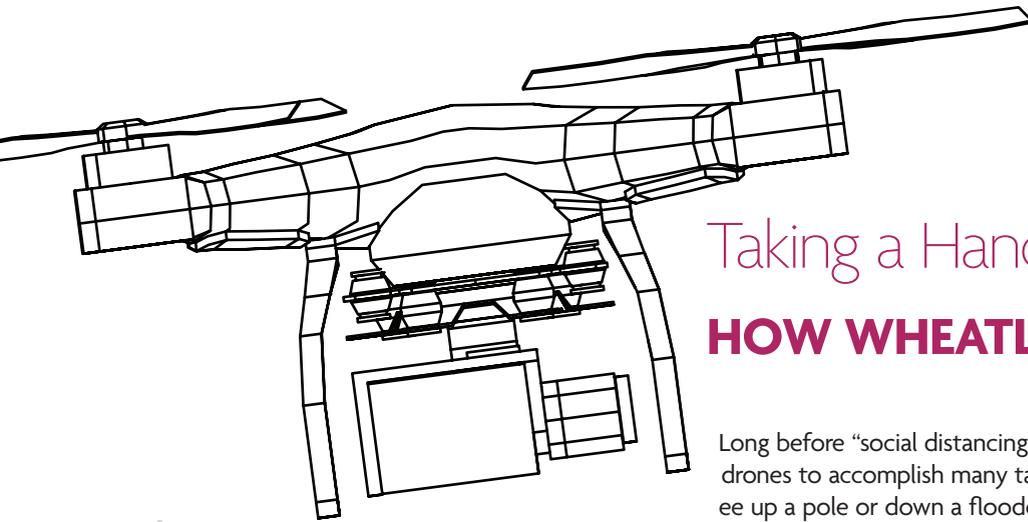
Extension cords are not permanent solutions. If your big-screen TV, computer and other electronics are plugged into one extension cord, it's time to call an electrician and install additional outlets.



### OLD APPLIANCES:

Older appliances are more likely to have loose or damaged wiring, which means they're more likely to catch fire. Check older appliances for damage and determine if it's time to upgrade or replace. Also check to ensure you're using appliance-grade outlets. A qualified electrician can help with installation.





## Taking a Hands-Off Approach HOW WHEATLAND USES DRONES

Long before “social distancing” was trending, Wheatland was using drones to accomplish many tasks without physically sending an employee up a pole or down a flooded road.

After winter storm URSA dropped 17-inches of snow and ice that damaged more than 1,100 Wheatland power poles during a freak blizzard in late April 2017, Wheatland made the investment in drone technology to better be positioned in the case another devastating storm was to occur.

“Having access to a couple of drones during URSA would have been immensely helpful,” said **MARK DINKEL**, GIS/OMS manager said. “We spent a lot of man-hours inspecting equipment and trying to figure out which equipment was damaged.”

Now Wheatland has three drones that help the co-op save time and money by being able to quickly locate damage, inspect repairs and help with construction planning.

Currently, there are two Wheatland employees qualified to fly drones. Along with Dinkel, **JEVIN KASSELMAN**, director of information technology and broadband, are both licensed by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to operate unmanned aircraft for commercial applications.

There are two types of drones Wheatland uses, each with specific applications. Quadcopters are typically what people think of when they hear drone. These drones have four rotors with a camera centrally mounted to capture images and videos.

Quadcopters are used to find damaged equipment, quickly check work done by contractors, inspect towers, assess storm damage, and to check road conditions before dispatching crews and equipment. The high-definition cameras on these drones are equipped with 30x magnification and can identify the smallest details, including loose nuts and broken strands of wire.

Knowing exactly what is damaged before our crews get there creates efficiency and takes some of the guesswork out of the equation.



GIS/OMS Manager Mark Dinkel gets one of Wheatland’s quadcopters ready for flight.



Jevin Kasselmann, director of IT and broadband, holds the fixed-wing drone during the member engagement meeting last winter.

“Knowing exactly what is damaged before our crews get there creates efficiency and takes some of the guesswork out of the equation,” Dinkel said.

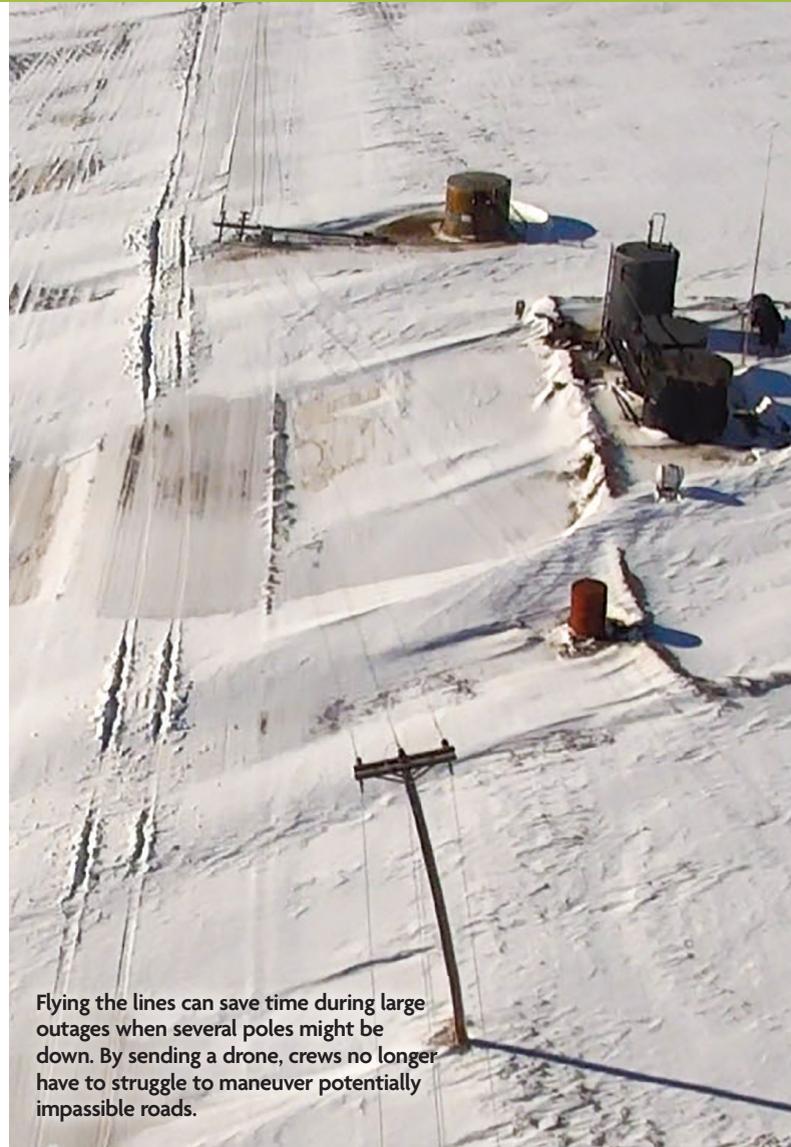
Wheatland also utilizes a fixed-wing drone primarily for mapping applications. Although it may look like a glider your kids would play with in the backyard, the fixed-wing drone is outfitted with a sophisticated GPS and camera system. This type of drone is used to fly large swaths of land, taking pictures as it goes. After the drone is retrieved, images are uploaded to a mapping program that produces clear aerial maps that are extremely accurate.

These maps can be overlaid with Wheatland’s poles, lines, substations, and underground lines. Having an accurate snapshot is crucial to planning new projects, knowing exactly which equipment is on each pole, and site prep for large infrastructure jobs such as new substation construction.

“Our fixed-wing creates an aerial with a 1-inch pixel, when you look at Google or any mapping service you are looking at a 1-foot pixel. Add in an accuracy of 2-inches and it provides a great tool for planning,” said Dinkel.

It’s amazing what three drones, two pilots, and a willingness to modernize processes can accomplish. Wheatland has placed an emphasis on staying ahead of technology trends the past several years, and it is starting to pay-off for our members.

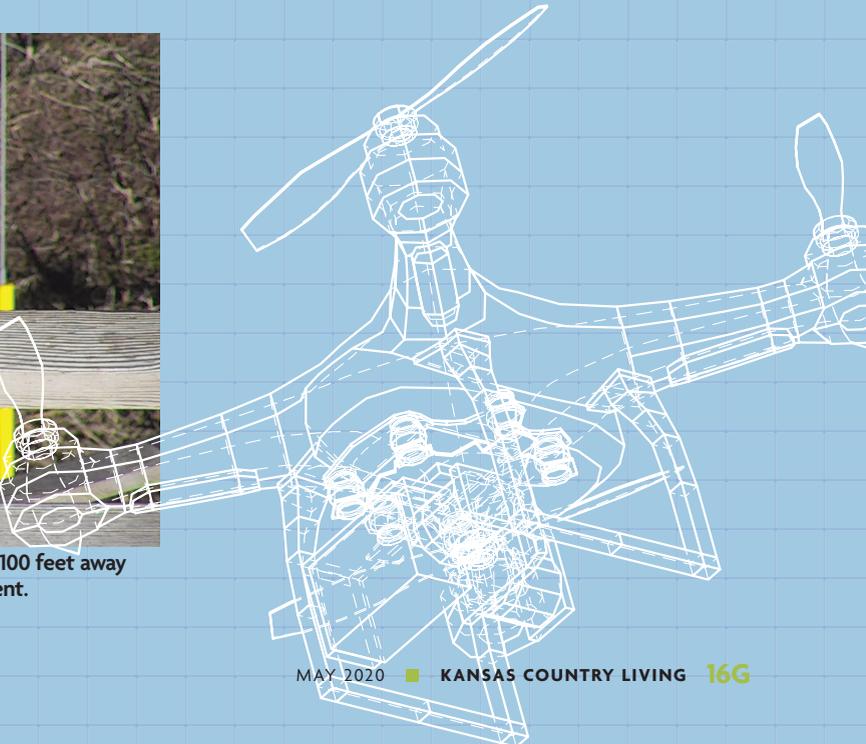
“Drones are becoming more and more a part of our everyday lives,” said Bruce W. Mueller, general manager. “Hopefully, in the future we will continue to expand their use in the field and help create efficiencies that will save our members time and money. Also, whenever you can accomplish a task without putting an employee at risk it’s a good thing. We can always get another drone; we can’t afford to risk the safety of our employees when there is an alternative method to accomplish the same mission.”



Flying the lines can save time during large outages when several poles might be down. By sending a drone, crews no longer have to struggle to maneuver potentially impassible roads.



This photo was taken from the quadcopter with 20x zoom from 100 feet away and gives the pilot the perfect vantage point to inspect equipment.



# IT CAN WAIT

## AVOID ALL DISTRACTIONS WHILE DRIVING

Our crews often work roadside. Please pay attention when approaching a work zone and respect and obey orange work zone signs. Slow down, move over, and follow any other instructions when approaching and moving through a work zone.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration:

- ▶ **9%** of fatal crashes in 2017 were reported as distraction-affected crashes.
- ▶ In 2017, there were **3,166 people** killed in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers.
- ▶ **6%** of all drivers involved in fatal crashes were reported as distracted at the time of the crashes.
- ▶ Ages **15-19** have the largest proportion of drivers who were distracted at the time of the fatal crashes.
- ▶ In 2017, **599 pedestrians, bicyclists and others** were killed in distraction-affected crashes.

# Getting Through This Together

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Some of our employees are working from home. All employees are practicing proper social distancing even when in the office. We are emphasizing all employees wash their hands frequently. We passed out hand sanitizer, face masks, disinfecting wipes and gloves to protect our employees from germs. All Wheatland vehicles are sanitized daily. As always, if you call, the phones will be answered.

Wheatland is handing out hand sanitizers to all first responders, having snacks delivered to all hospitals in our service territory and making cash donations to all food banks in our service territory.

All material and delivery vendors are being asked to practice proper social distancing.

Our management team is meeting constantly to fine-tune this plan. We are in constant contact with the other electric cooperatives in Kansas and with Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., which in turn is working closely with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the state legislature and Gov. Laura Kelly.

So far, it is working well and everyone has adapted to the new norm. That's

**The cooperative way of doing business has brought us this far, and the cooperative way will help us through this crisis.**

because we've done this before. Nothing brings out the best in our employees better than a crisis situation.

Our mission of "Delivering Energy for Life" depends on Wheatland Electric doing its part to keep your life as normal as possible through this situation and beyond.

The cooperative way of doing business has brought us this far, and the cooperative way will help us through this crisis.

I would also like to mention that **MAY IS MILITARY APPRECIATION MONTH**. I hope you will join me this month in pausing to reflect on those who gave the ultimate sacrifice so we can enjoy the freedoms their service affords us in this great country. It's also timely and appropriate to thank those who are integral to our country's response in times of crisis.

All the best to everyone. Stay healthy, stay home and we will get through this together the cooperative way!

**UNTIL NEXT TIME, TAKE CARE.**

## SAFETY Tip of the Month

Springtime is also severe weather time. If the skies look threatening, check to see if a storm watch or warning has been issued before you initiate outdoor activities. If you're already outside and thunderstorms threaten, go immediately into a building or enclosed vehicle. For tornadoes, go to the nearest safe structure, or the basement or interior first-floor room or your home.