

WHEATLAND
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

NEWS



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FROM THE MANAGER

Where Will the Young Go?

In June, Wheatland Electric will send **DERIAN GARRISON**, Norwich, and **ESSIE RATZLAFF**, South Haven, to Washington, D.C., for the annual Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. There they will join over 1,600 high school students from rural areas around the country. Like past years, these young people will have the trip of their lives.

They will meet senators and congressmen, hear from co-op leaders, see the U.S. Capitol, Arlington National Cemetery, Smithsonian Institution museums and meet hundreds of kids just like them. They will return home filled with great memories. Then what? Where will the young go when they graduate from high school? Will they leave the place they've called home? Or will they stay in Kansas to help create stable communities?

Nearly 60 percent of rural counties shrank in population in 2013, and the trend is up from 40 percent in the 1990s. While some economists might see this as simply the "market" acting efficiently, we know

communities like ours cannot survive if this trend continues.

According to a study on Rural Youth Migration, many young people living in rural areas have a negative view of their community when compared to major urban centers. There is a perception that rural areas offer limited economic and social opportunities. As we all know, your perception is your reality.

Co-ops are a business model. But unlike investor-owned companies that focus almost exclusively on turning a profit, co-ops serve both an economic and social purpose. So if the co-op is operating in concert with our seven co-op principles and values, we can change the perception that rural areas offer limited opportunities. We can ensure that our young people know and understand they have a critically important role to play in Kansas communities.

Wheatland Electric was created with the purpose to improve the quality of life in rural Kansas by providing safe, reliable and com-

petitively priced electricity. That's our mission and we continue to try to achieve that goal each day. However we need to expand that mission to include our younger members of the co-op.

Sending our best and brightest to Washington, D.C., for a week is a wonderful first step, but we need to take the next step. We're committed to engaging youth in our community through sponsoring youth sports teams, the Electro-Rally (student electric car race) program, safety demonstrations, career days, scholarships, and leadership camps; just to name a few.

Ensuring that everyone in our community is working together to find economic and social opportunities for them to stay in rural Kansas is our challenge. Together, we can do this. Since none of us is as smart as all of us, we welcome your thoughts.

**Until next time,
take care.**



Bruce Mueller

HVAC

rebate program

Wheatland Gives Away Thousands in Rebates

Summer is right around the corner. If you're dreading the heat—and the AC bills—Wheatland Electric has a hot deal that could bring you some cool cash.

Wheatland offers residential members rebates for installing energy-efficient new heating and cooling systems. Typical rebates range from \$200 to \$500, and members who buy larger systems could see a larger rebate.

Wheatland offers rebates for three reasons. First, replacing your heating and cooling system can be an expensive proposition, the rebate helps to soften the blow to members' pocket books.

Second, home heating and cooling make up the majority of home electric bills, replacing old systems with newer more efficient ones saves members' money every month.

Third, energy efficient heating and cooling systems create less stress on the electric grid, which is better for the cooperative and the entire community.

"Wheatland's rebate pays for part of your new HVAC unit, and then you save even more money on your monthly electric bills. Talk about a win-win," said Bruce Mueller, Wheatland's General Manager.

Word is slowly filtering out, and so far 30 homeowners have applied for the rebates. Raymond Jacobs,

**Co-op
Awards
Nearly
\$7,000 for
Energy
Efficiency**

“We want more members to take advantage of this offer. Our members tell us they want more information and assistance on how to be energy efficient, and this is one way we’re answering that call.” **BRUCE MUELLER, MANAGER**

a Wheatland member in Great Bend, recently applied for a rebate and received his check in seven days!

I sure appreciate it,” said Jacobs. “A new HVAC system is a big expense, so having that free money to put toward it was a godsend. Getting a check back so quickly made it even better!”

The following are some of the key conditions for getting a rebate:

- ▶ Home has to be located within Wheatland’s service area.
- ▶ Must be an existing single-family home (not new construction.)
- ▶ Homeowners and landlords are both eligible.
- ▶ Existing HVAC system must be at least 10 years old.
- ▶ New system must have a qualifying energy efficiency rating.

Wheatland started the rebate program in 2014 and has given away \$6,970 in rebates so far.

“We want more members to take advantage of this offer,” said Mueller. “Our members tell us they want more information and assistance on how to be energy efficient, and this is one way we’re answering that call.”

Get Your HVAC Rebate in 5 Simple Steps

- 1** Have a qualifying system installed by a licensed, registered HVAC contractor.
- 2** Download a Wheatland rebate application from www.weci.net or pick one up at a Wheatland office.
- 3** Supply information such as details of the old and new systems, and your member account number.
- 4** Provide copies of the certificate showing the energy efficiency rating and your installation invoice.
- 5** Submit application to Wheatland within 60 days of installation.
- 6** Wheatland then processes your application, usually by verifying all paperwork is in order and by confirming all the information with the installing contractor. The approval process to receive your check takes three to five weeks, but the savings on your electric bill are immediate.

Upgrade Your HVAC—Save Energy, Save Money

Did you know that Wheatland offers rebates to residential members for the installation of energy-efficient heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems?

Heating and cooling a house often accounts for the majority of a household’s monthly energy costs. Many homeowners have a great opportunity to save energy and money by installing a more efficient HVAC system.

Essentially, higher efficiency equates

to lower monthly energy bills and improved comfort. For example, you could receive a \$410 rebate for a four-ton (48,000 BTU) heat pump.

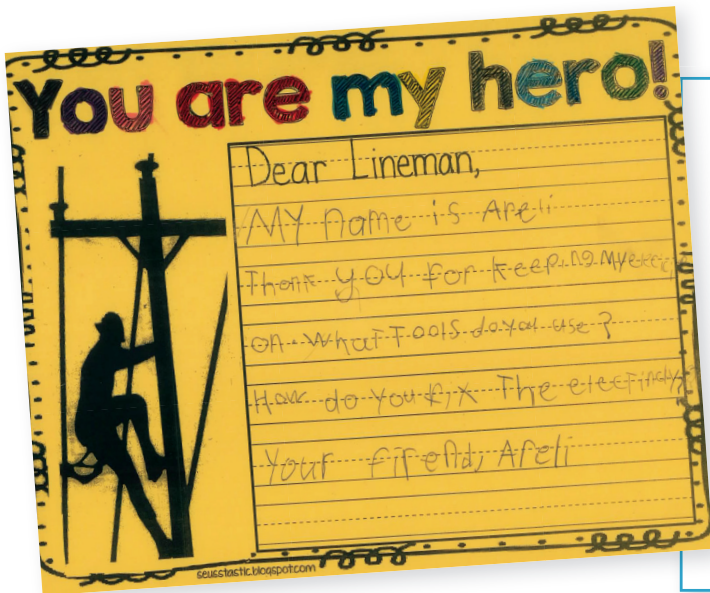
For eligibility requirements or to download a rebate form, visit www.weci.net and click on the “Energy Education” tab and then on “Rebates.” You can also contact any local office.

Rebate Levels

BTU	Min SEER	Central A/C	Heat Pump
Up to 36,000*	13	\$200	+\$150

*Add \$30 for each ½ ton above 3 ton (36,000 BTU)

Plug-in to Savings!



Dear Areli:

Your welcome for keeping the Electricity On. As a lineman we have all kinds of tools, anything from bucket trucks, digger trucks, skinning knives, wrenches, ect. We also have special spikes we put on our boots to climb poles. As far as fixing the electricity, it all depends on the problem we have.

Thanks,

P.S. - Thanks for the cookies!! Trent S. Journeyman Lineman

Thank You, Linemen!

Local First Graders Show Their Appreciation

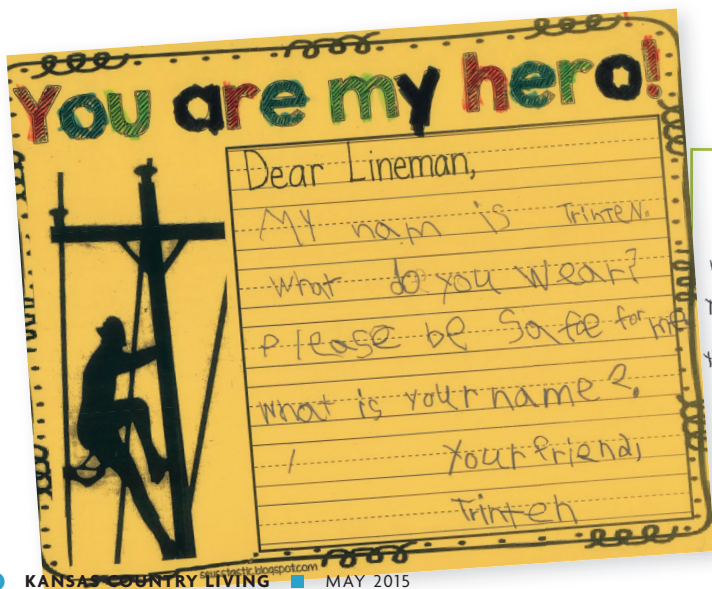
Mrs. Forsyth's first graders, Riley Elementary in Great Bend, recognized the local Wheatland linemen on National Lineman Appreciation Day, April 13.

The class brought the linemen homemade cookies and handwritten notes. The following day, Wheatland linemen sent personalized replies to each student.

Wheatland thanks these students for their efforts and our linemen for their hard work and dedication.



Wheatland enjoy treats and letters from Mrs. Forsyth's class on April 13 for National Lineman Appreciation Day.

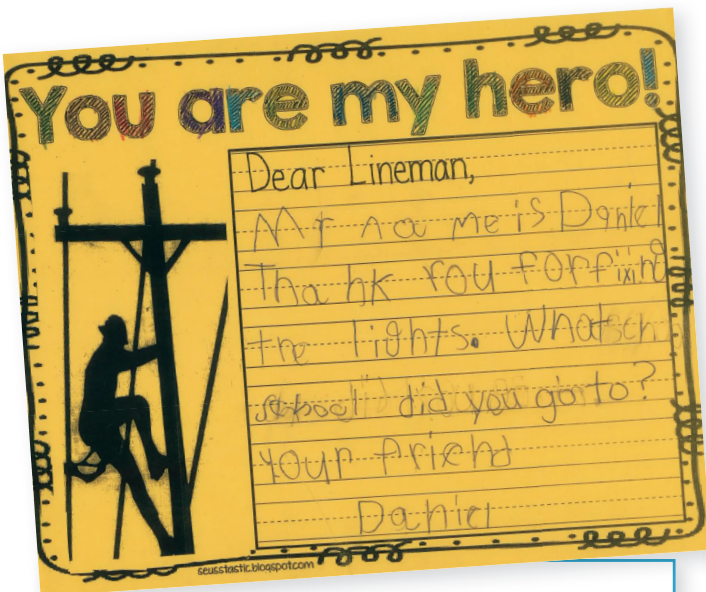


Dear Trinten:

We as Electric Linemen wear many different types of clothing. Typical items include steel toe boots, Flame Retardant shirts & pants, safety glasses, & a hard hat. These items protect us from the hazards we face on a daily basis, We will be safe, thanks for your letter & cookies!!

Journeyman Lineman

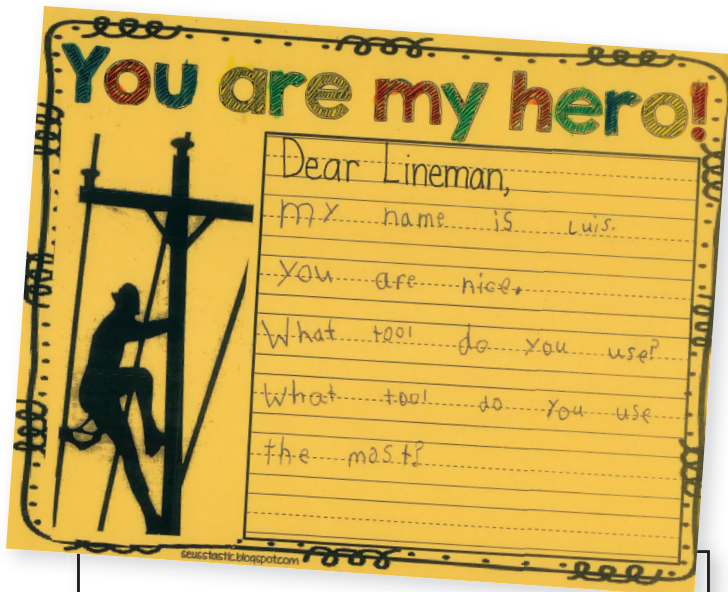
Andy Pivanka



Dear Daniel:

Thank you very much for the letters. When I started in 1981 I started right out of High School. Now you have to go to Lineman School to become a lineman. Thanks again for the letters

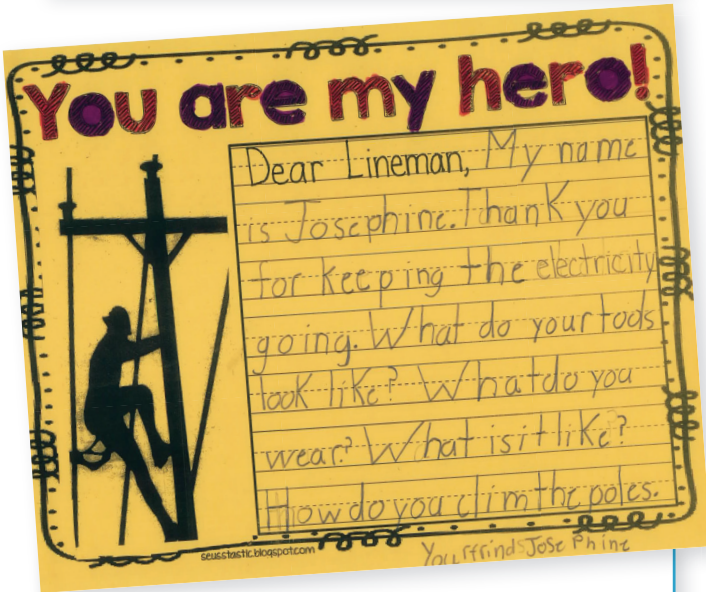
Great Bend Lineman
Zerry Rebel



Dear Luis:

Hi, Luis. My name is Don. I am a serviceman/lineman. I use a lot of different tools. The main thing I use is an underground locator to find electric lines buried under ground. I do this to make sure nobody gets hurt digging. Thank you for the delicious cookies.

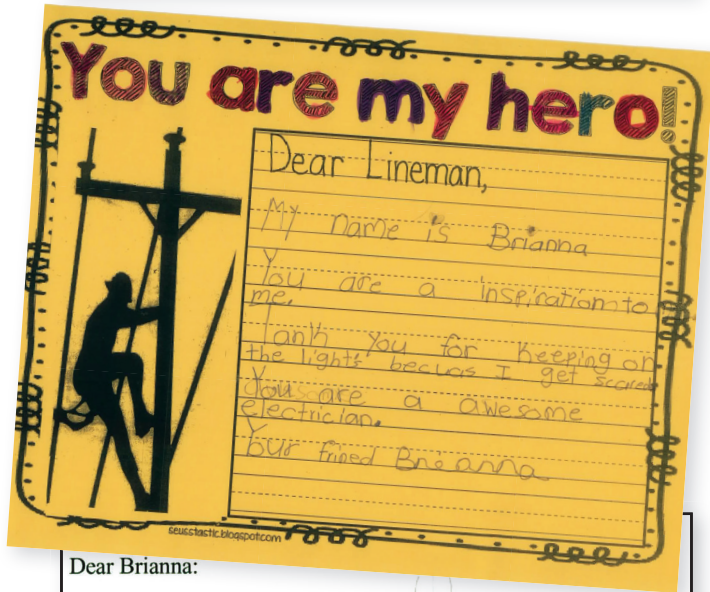
Your friend
Don



Dear Josephine:

My name is Tyson. We use bucket trucks and digger truck a lot. We protect ourselves with rubber gloves and rubber sleeves. It is a dangerous job but it is a rewarding job.

Thank u
Tyson



Dear Brianna:

Hi Brianna my name is Dax. I'm sorry you get scared when the lights go out. I will do my best to keep your lights on.

Your friend
Dax Volk

Get to Know Your Co-op Staff *Rhei Thurman*



Rhei Thurman

NAME: Rhei Thurman

JOB/LOCATION: CSR in Leoti

TIME AT CO-OP: 6 months

FAMILY: Husband, Joe; two sons Tyrelle, 19, and Spenser, 17; twin daughters, Katelyn and Evy, 7; and an English Mastiff, Ruby.

ORIGINALLY FROM: Leoti

HOBBIES: Gardening and golfing

FAVORITE SPORTS/TEAMS: College basketball, KU in particular

FAVORITE BOOK OR MOVIE: *Lord of the Rings* books and movies

WHAT IS SOMETHING NOT MANY PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT YOU? My mother created my name using my grandmothers' first and middle names, R is for Rosalyn, H is for Hester (Rosalyn Hester was my maternal grandmother's name) E is for Evelyn and I is for Irene (Evelyn Irene was my paternal grandmother's name).

WHO HAS INSPIRED YOU IN YOUR LIFE AND WHY? My grandma E.I. with her faith, kindness, compassion and joy. She loved her family deeply and they always came first.

Putting Safety First Th

It's May—and Wheatland Electric Cooperative is celebrating National Electrical Safety Month. While safety for our members is the top priority year-round, Electrical Safety Month is a time to acknowledge the importance of safety excellence.

This year, we're focusing on electrical safety in the home. Electricity is the cause of more than 140,000 fires each year, resulting in approximately 500 deaths, 4,000 injuries and \$1.6 billion in property damage, according to Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI).

There are many measures you can take to ensure the safety of your loved ones. Use these helpful tips from ESFI to safeguard your home.

In the kitchen

- ▶ Vacuum refrigerator coils every three months to eliminate dirt buildup that can reduce efficiency and create fire hazards.
- ▶ Ensure all countertop appliances are located away from the sink.
- ▶ All appliance cords should be placed away from hot surfaces. Pay particular attention to cords around toasters, ovens and ranges. Cords can be damaged by excess heat.
- ▶ The top and the area above the cooking range should be free of combustibles, such as potholders and plastic utensils. Storing these items on or near the range may result in fires or burns.

Light the way to safety

- ▶ The wattage of the bulbs you use in your home should match the wattage indicated on the light fixture. Overheated fixtures can lead to a fire.
- ▶ Check lamp cords to make sure they are in good condition—not



damaged or cracked.

Do not attempt to repair damaged cords yourself. Take any item with a damaged power cord to an authorized repair center.

- ▶ Extension cords should not be used to provide power on a long-term or permanent basis. Have additional receptacles installed by a professional to provide power where needed.

Be prepared

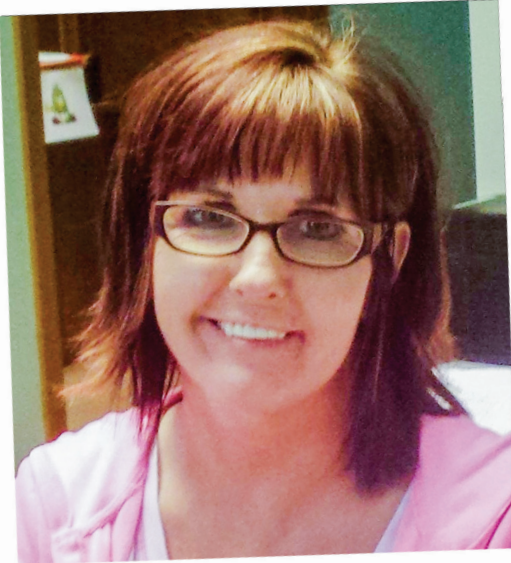
- ▶ Nearly two-thirds of fire deaths result from fires in homes without working smoke alarms. Smoke alarms should be located on every level of your home, inside each bedroom and outside each sleeping area.
- ▶ Test smoke alarms every month. Batteries should be replaced at least once a year—or sooner if indicated in the manufacturers' instructions. All smoke alarms should be replaced at least every 10 years.
- ▶ Talk to your family about an emergency plan in the event of a fire in your home. If you have small children, include them in planning an emergency escape route—they are more likely to remember the plan if they're involved in creating it.

Electrical safety awareness and education can save lives. For more tips and information about electrical safety, visit www.esfi.org.

is Month & Throughout the Year

National Electrical Safety Month—Daily Tips

1. Little ones should always ask an adult for help when plugging or removing cords from an outlet.
2. Bulb wattage matters! Light bulbs with wattages that are too high for the light fixture can overheat the fixture, causing a fire hazard. (ESFI)
3. Do you have little ones in the home? Make sure your loved ones are protected by installing tamper-resistant receptacles. (Occupational Safety and Health Admin)
4. Surge protectors for cable and phone jacks provide protection for your computer, modem, TV and phone. (ESFI)
5. Entertainment centers and computer equipment are pricey items for the home! Make sure to leave plenty of space around these items for proper ventilation. (OSHA)
6. Working outdoors? Play it safe and use a wooden or fiberglass ladder. Remember to keep a minimum of 10 feet between the ladder and power lines. (National Fire Protection Association)
7. NEVER touch anyone or anything that's in contact with a downed power line! Power lines may be live, so it's best to stay a safe distance away. (NFPA)
8. Smoke detectors in your home should be tested every month to ensure they are properly working. (ESFI)
9. Never place extension cords in high traffic areas, under carpets or across walkways, where they pose a potential tripping hazard. (OSHA)
10. Using a window A/C unit? Before installation, make sure the electrical circuit and the outlet are able to handle the load. Large units should have their own separate electrical circuit so the system is not overloaded.
11. When you're cooking up a storm in the kitchen, remember to set a timer to remind yourself to check on food that is simmering or in the oven. Always double check to make sure burners and appliances are turned off when you're done. (ESFI)
12. How well do you know your home's electrical system? Make a map showing which fuse or circuit breaker controls each switch, light or outlet. (ESFI)
13. Smoke detectors should be installed in every bedroom, outside of each sleeping area and on every level of your home. (ESFI)
14. If you're working outdoors in a damp location, inspect all electrical cords and equipment being used. Make sure they are in good condition and free of defects—and remember to use a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) if possible. (OSHA)
15. Recurring tripped circuit breakers or multiple blown fuses? This can signify a serious and dangerous electrical problem! Contact a licensed electrician immediately.
16. Lamps are great accents for our homes—make sure to place them on level surfaces, away from items that are flammable. (NFPA)
17. Flickering or dimming lights? This could mean bigger problems ahead. Contact a qualified electrician to check your home's wiring.
18. Frayed or damaged extension cords are dangerous and should never be used. Damage to the cord can expose wires and cause fire and shock hazards.
19. Do you have a wobbling ceiling fan? This can wear out the fan's motor over time. Turn off the fan and tighten the screws to correct the problem.
20. Power strips are great—but relying on them too much can be a problem! You may need to install more outlets in your home. Call a qualified electrician for help. (ESFI)
21. Any time you see an overhead power line—you should assume the line is energized, even if the wire is down or appears to be insulated.
22. For outdoor equipment, use lighting and power tools that have the label of an independent test laboratory, and make sure they're made for outdoor use. (NFPA)
23. Flying a kite is great for outdoor fun! But remember to always be mindful of overhead power lines. (Safe Electricity)
24. Never throw water on an electrical fire! This may seem obvious, but in the heat of the moment, grabbing a bucket of water to extinguish the fire can be tempting. Use your chemical fire extinguisher instead. (Popular Mechanics)
25. Install light bulbs with extended lifespans in hard-to-reach locations to limit the number of times you have to climb a ladder, move furniture or otherwise engage in potentially dangerous activities. (ESFI)
26. Remember: Power strips and surge suppressors do not provide more power to a location, only more access to the same limited capacity of the circuit into which it is connected. (ESFI)
27. All switches and lighting equipment should bear the mark of a nationally recognized testing laboratory such as UL, Intertek, or CSA. (ESFI)
28. When cooking in the kitchen, remember to keep appliance cords away from hot surfaces like the oven range or toaster. (ESFI)
29. DIY project for the home? Always turn off the power to the circuit that you plan to work on by switching off the circuit breaker in the main service panel.
30. Use covers on outdoor power outlets, especially near swimming pools. Keep cords and electrical devices away from the water, and never handle electrical items before you've dried off. (ESFI)
31. When using a portable generator, make sure the extension cords used are rated for the load, are free of cuts or frays and have three-pronged plugs. (ESFI)



Secret Imel
 Harper Consumer Services Representative
 8 Years at Wheatland

A Day in the Life

Secret Imel

BY BETH LOONEY,
 ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER

As a Consumer Services Representative, **SECRET IMEL** is the face of Wheatland in Harper. When you walk into the office, her sunny disposition doesn't end with her big smile and cheerfully pink jacket. She genuinely is a lively, warm individual who immediately makes one feel welcome. As I settled into a chair next to her, she assured me that I picked a good day to come, as she did not expect to be too busy. Boy was she wrong!

The first thing I noticed was the stack of envelopes on her desk that was about a foot tall. She tackled those envelopes with gusto, quickly removing and sorting payments.

Next, she began adding all the payments received on the 10-key machine to prepare her daily deposit. Her fingers moved so fast I couldn't even keep up. After multiple interruptions to address other pressing tasks, she would resume her adding. In the end, she wasn't even off by a penny! I would have had to do it nine times to get the figures right.

All the while Secret prepares the deposit, she takes 10 to 15 calls from members and places four or five calls to the service-

men and linemen. Simultaneously, she enters information into the computer and printing and faxing documents. I had no idea the multi-tasking skills necessary to be a Consumer Services Representative.

During a brief lull in her activities, I was able to draw some secrets out of Secret. She told me that she grew up in Anthony and has lived there her whole life. She is very close to her three daughters and two grandchildren. She even gets up at 5 a.m. every morning to take care of her baby granddaughter, Julisa.

In her spare time, Secret and her husband like to go boating on Kaw Lake. She particularly likes lounging around in the sun listening to music.

As I was leaving for the day, I asked Secret what her favorite thing was about working for Wheatland. "Taking care of the members," she immediately replied.

After watching her talk with the members in person and by phone, taking time to meet their every need, I knew she genuinely enjoyed each and every one of them.