

WHEATLAND
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

NEWS



WHEATLAND ELECTRIC

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District Offices

Garden City
2005 W Fulton
P.O. Box 973
Garden City, KS
67846
620-275-0261

Great Bend
2300 Broadway
P.O. Box 1446
Great Bend, KS
67530
620-793-4223

Harper
302 W. 6th
P.O. Box 247
Harper, KS 67058
620-896-7090

Leoti
N Hwy 25
P.O. Box 966
Leoti, KS 67861
620-375-2632

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

Syracuse
206 1/2 N Main
P.O. Box 1010
Syracuse, KS
67878
620-384-5171

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

FROM THE MANAGER

Wheatland Moves Forward with AMI



Bruce Mueller

Automated grid! Power system automation! Advanced metering infrastructure! What's the big deal? Well, the short answer is, it's a pretty big deal indeed. Especially when it comes to reliability and information.

All over the world, countries are pursuing grid modernization for the benefits provided to the environment, economy and energy security. But what does that mean?

The definition of “power system automation” is the act of automatically controlling the power system via instrumentation and control devices. A simple explanation is: “The automated grid describes the next-generation electrical power system typified by the increased use of communications and information technology.”

Okay, so simple may be a stretch, so let's try this. First off, “the grid” consists of the poles, wires, transformers, switches, fuses, meters and other components that make up Wheatland Electric Cooperative's electric distribution system.

Currently, the majority of equipment used in the grid has limited ability to communicate with its operators. So, when a piece of equipment fails on

Wheatland's electrical system, our employees back at the co-op's dispatch center may know there is an outage, but likely will not know exactly where it's located. Crews must be sent out to patrol and find the problem, which takes time and extends the outage's length for the members.

In an automated grid, equipment has the ability to communicate with the systems back at Wheatland's dispatch center. These communications will allow our employees to pinpoint outages, check on the health of equipment to avoid outages and control the flow of electricity to route it around an outage. All of this helps the automated grid improve reliability and reduce outage length.

How about an example? Let's say a tree limb falls on one of Wheatland's member's power lines and causes the circuit breaker to open. With an automated recloser, Wheatland could pinpoint where the fault (problem) is on the system.

Now, combine that with an advanced metering infrastructure (AMI), and Wheatland could determine the number of members without power. Our dispatch center, would send our crews to the exact location to fix the damaged equipment, and have the ability to post outage updates, such as the estimated time to restoration

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Bringing Broadband to Western Kansas

After trying and failing to get other companies to deliver the communications infrastructure their members and Wheatland themselves needed, the Wheatland Electric Board of Trustees decided to do what their forefathers had done, build it themselves.

In 2002, Wheatland Electric formed a subsidiary, Wheatland Broadband, to deliver reliable, high-speed internet service to its members in rural Western Kansas that had been seemingly left behind by larger telecommunications companies.

Wheatland set out to build a fixed-based, wireless network that would serve as the backbone of their own communications system and at the same time, offer internet access to better serve its members.

“Before we made the decision to build our own network, we tried to work with some of the larger telecommunications companies to get the infrastructure we needed,” said Jevin Kasselmann, Director of IT/Broadband at Wheatland. “At one point, we even offered to pay for upgrades to existing networks that would benefit the entire community. At that time, the larger companies just weren’t willing to invest in the infrastructure we needed. We also saw the need for access to high speed internet for our rural members and thought, what if we can do both?” As the demand for access to reliable internet service grew, so did Wheatland Broadband.

In much the same fashion that poles and lines brought electricity to its rural members for the first time back in 1948, Wheatland Broadband brought reliable internet access to previously underserved areas of rural Kansas.

With a customer-first approach, live, local and friendly support, along with 24/7 after-hours connection assistance, Wheatland’s internet service quickly gained interest in the local communities it served.

“I’ve been a customer since the beginning, actually since before the beginning, I was a part of their pilot program,” said Julie Rumford, a longtime Wheatland Broadband customer. “At the time, I really didn’t have any options for reliable internet

service. We lived in the country and there was nothing. I love that they are a local company and that they are there when I need them.”

Today, Wheatland Broadband serves more than 3,000 member customers across 17 southwest Kansas counties. In a truly connected world of smartphones, tablets, home computers and the like, Wheatland has seen its customers’ appetite for increased speed and accessibility grow exponentially.

“We live in a different world now than when we started,” says Kasselmann. Internet is the new utility, people have to have it. And they want more of it. It’s not uncommon for a typical customer to have four or five devices connected to the internet at any one time and that takes more speed. We’re working hard to upgrade our network infrastructure to accommodate this explosive growth and stay competitive in this market.”

Kasselmann goes on to explain that these infrastructure upgrades have been a multi-year process and not something they can just do overnight. Among the upgrades is a move to new equipment that will allow Wheatland Broadband to have a fixed LTE network similar to that of cell carriers.

With these upgrades, Wheatland will be able to provide data speeds to homes and businesses comparable to that of 4G cell service. These upgrades, which are expected to take close to three years to complete across the entire network, will allow Wheatland to provide the new FCC standard for broadband access speeds of 25 MB download and 3 MB upload.

If I have trouble with something, I can just pick up the phone and call them or even stop in and visit with one of the staff face-to-face. I love the personal service I get from the local Scott City office and the comfort of knowing they’re just a phone call away at any time of day or night.

JULIE RUMFORD, WHEATLAND BROADBAND CUSTOMER



Gearold Leverett installs Wheatland Broadband equipment for a customer.

In addition to providing reliable internet service to its member customers, Wheatland Broadband has made it a point to give back to the communities it serves as well.

“Concern for Community is one of the cooperative principles we focus on everyday,” said Bruce Mueller, Wheatland Electric General Manager. “And our Broadband business is no different. We’re proud of the things we’re able to do in our communities and we love getting to be a part of all of the great things happening in our members’ lives.”

Those great things include providing free internet service to every public library in its Broadband service territory and providing free internet Wi-Fi hotspots at community events like air shows, county fairs and community gatherings just to name a few. With the recent acquisition of a mobile tower site or cell on wheels



The equipment needed for Wheatland Broadband is small and compact when mounted on a roof top.

(COW for short) Wheatland has been able to provide temporary internet service for the Governor’s Ringneck Classic Pheasant Hunt, a number of youth swimming meets and even its own annual meeting. Most recently, Wheatland used its COW to help the local high school communications class to live-stream the All-School Reunion parade in Scott City.

In addition to that, Wheatland Broadband’s Scott City office is also home to the Bryan Conference Center.

The conference center is rented out, for free, to local organizations and individuals for meetings, conferences, birthday parties, bridal showers and more.

For more information about Wheatland Broadband www.wbsnet.org or call 866-872-0006.

Get to Know Your Co-op Staff

Jim Zorn

IT Specialist in Great Bend
25 Years at Wheatland



Jim Zorn

TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAMILY.

Donna is my wife of 22 years and a great mom. Our son Gabe, 17, plays high school baseball and the saxophone for Great Bend High School jazz and concert band. Our son Matt, 14, plays middle school football and the trumpet for Great Bend Middle School jazz and concert band.

WHERE ARE YOU FROM ORIGINALLY?

Hoisington

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME?

Being involved with all the activities of my family, bicycling, metal detecting and surfing the internet for cool stuff.

WHAT SPORT OR TEAM IS YOUR FAVORITE?

Kansas City Royals

WHAT ACCOMPLISHMENT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

Assisting with raising two boys to become fine young men.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE BOOK OR MOVIE AND WHY?

I'm a fan of movie series James Bond, *Star Trek*, *Mission Impossible* and *Fast and Furious*. You should be able to tell that I enjoy action movies.

WHAT IS SOMETHING NOT MANY PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT YOU?

I have held an Amateur Radio License since 1985.

Wheatland AMI Installation Timeline

As you may have already read in this month's article from the General Manager, Wheatland is planning to install a new Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI) system in the coming months.

This new AMI system will bring a whole host of benefits to you, our members. The benefits of updating our metering infrastructure are widespread. We'll be able to streamline operations and improve customer service. Automation of our metering system will also help you, the member, by providing you with information and tools that will make energy efficiency easier.

Currently, our plan is to begin the conversion process in September. We will begin the meter conversion simultaneously across our entire service territory and start with the highest density locations first. We expect the conversion process to take approximately two years to complete.



New meter installations will begin in September and take approximately two years to complete.

The large majority of our members will have the new meters in place within 12-18 months of the initial rollout in September.

The actual process of changing out your current meter for a new one will only take 5-10 minutes. Our servicemen will be sure and give a courtesy knock to let you know we're there to change your meter.

Over the next few months we will communicate with you in further detail all of these great new features.

Wheatland Moves Forward with AMI

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and the number of members without power. In addition, Wheatland operators would be able to switch power around the fault to turn on members' power before the crew arrives, resulting in a shorter outage for all members involved.

In the automated grid, it is all about communicating system status information to cooperative system employees so they can remotely operate the grid, keeping it at peak efficiency. When combined with an advanced metering infrastructure (AMI), Wheatland will be able to identify exactly who is without power, making restoration easier and allowing us to communicate with affected members.

This brings us to the meter used in the AMI system. The meters' tasks are simple, they record and report power use, usually in 15-, 30- or 60-minute intervals. They also record power quality information as electricity is delivered to your home. Finally, they can be directly queried, which is an enormously helpful tool in pinpointing Wheatland

distribution system problems, reducing system losses and reporting outages for faster restoration.

More than 60 percent of America's electric cooperatives have implemented AMI systems, ensuring more accurate bills, faster restoration efforts and lower cost of operation. The overwhelming majority of the Kansas electric cooperatives have converted to an AMI system. Wheatland Electric has been studying the benefits of installing an automated power system in conjunction with an AMI for several years. The decision has been made and approved by the Wheatland Board of Trustees, and we have begun the process of switching to an automated power system with an AMI.

This conversion should take approximately two years. The automated grid will be a great benefit in the future to Wheatland's membership by allowing the membership the ability to: utilize time of use rates, pre-pay with credit card, and the ability to see your energy usage daily.

Until next time, take care.

Help Us Cram the Van Again!

Last year's **CRAM THE VAN** food drive was a huge success thanks to the generosity and support of all of our members. With your help, Cram the Van collected more than three and a half tons of food for hungry people in Kansas!

In fact, Cram the Van was such a huge success that we've decided to do it again this year.

We're planning to fire up the big red van again in September and we'll be headed to an event near you.

Our first events kick off the second week of September and we keep

right on rolling till we get to the end of October.

This year's final event on Halloween will be even bigger and better than last year, complete with

pumpkin painting and carving for the kids! We've got lots of other great events and fun giveaways planned again for this year (free night stays at the

Hotel at Waterwalk) and we're still working on more! Be sure and watch the September issue of *Kansas Country Living* for a schedule of events and your chance to help us Cram the Van!



Wheatland Plans to Construct New Harper Office

Wheatland Electric has announced plans for the construction of a new business office in Harper. The new office will be located at 906 Central St in downtown Harper, adjacent to This & That.

"When we added the Harper area to the Wheatland family in 2007, there were a number of improvements we needed to make to both distribution infrastructure and facilities. We chose to focus our energy and resources first on improving system reliability," said Bruce Mueller, General Manager of

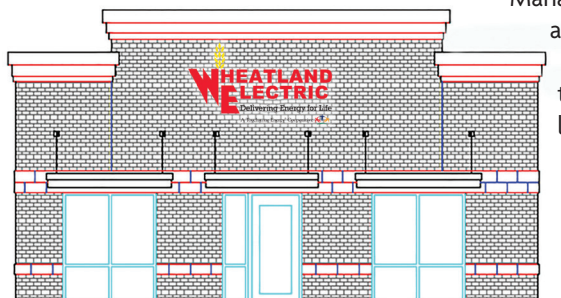
Wheatland Electric. "Now, we feel it's time to make some much-needed improvements to our office facilities to create a better service experience for our members."

The new business office will feature a number of operational improvements and enhancements compared to the current facility located at 302 W 6th. One such improvement will be the addition of a drive thru window.

"We know that people are busy, and our members are no different," said Steve Wilson, Harper District Manager. "We're excited to be able to offer the added convenience of drive thru service at our new location to better serve our members."

Construction of the new facility is slated to begin in August 2015.

Wheatland hopes to open its Harper office doors by January 2016.



An artists rendering of the new Wheatland office in Harper scheduled to be complete in January 2016.

Syracuse Office Renovation is Underway

The remodel work on our Syracuse office has officially begun! The business office located at 206 N Main St, is now closed and will remain closed for the duration of the construction/remodel process. Our new temporary business office is located at 2 S Barber.

Members may continue to make payments and transact business with us as you normally would at the temporary location. Office hours at the temporary office are Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. MST. Please find below our contact information for the duration of the remodel process:

Wheatland Electric
PO Box 1010, 2 S Barber
Syracuse, KS 67878-1010
Phone: 620-384-5171 Fax: 620-384-5773

Please note that the dropbox at 206 N Main will remain open for after-hours payments during the remodel.

We apologize for the inconvenience and we look forward to serving you from our new and improved facility once the remodel process is complete.



Renovations are under way to the Syracuse office. Our temporary office is now located 2 S Barber in Syracuse.

Garrison & Ratzlaff Meet with L Electric Cooperative Youth Tour

DERIAN GARRISON, Norwich, and **ESSIE RATZLAFF**, South Haven, were selected by Wheatland Electric to attend the 55th annual Electric Cooperative Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., from June 11-18. These local youth joined more than 1,700 high school students to tour important historical sites, learn about our nation's government, and to develop their leadership skills.

The 37 Kansas delegates first met in Topeka where they heard from several youth tour alumni. Brant Laue, Chief Counsel for Gov. Sam Brownback, sponsored by C&W in 1978; Representative Steven Johnson, District 108, 1983 Youth Tour Delegate; and Representative Kyle Hoffman, District 116, 1989 Youth Tour delegate, spoke to the students at a kick off banquet in Topeka before the youth departed for Washington, D.C.

While in our nation's capital, the students met with Congressmen Tim Huelskamp and Mike Pompeo, and Congresswoman Lynn Jenkins. They also visited with Senators Pat Roberts and Jerry Moran. On Wed., June 17, Sen. Moran gave a short speech

about the youth tour program on the Senate Floor.

As part of his speech, Moran said, "Electric Cooperatives are more than just poles and wires. They're about people and communities." Moran added, "Recognizing that youth are the future of those communities is what the rural electric cooperative program is all about."

This trip opens the eyes of many students to future possibilities in leadership roles, while building life-long friendships.

"The people that I spent the week with have the utmost respect and are just great people. I think the

chaperones were amazing and they are very inspirational. It is amazing how much effort they have put into this trip," said Garrison.

The youth toured the U.S. Capitol, Holocaust Memorial Museum,



Essie Ratzlaff (left) and Derian Garrison enjoy the view at the Jefferson Memorial during Youth Tour in June.



The 2015 Kansas and Hawaii delegates stop in front of the White House for a photo.

Legislators while on to Washington, D.C.

the Smithsonian museums, Mt. Vernon, Arlington National Cemetery, several memorials, along with seeing the Broadway musical Disney's *Newsies* at the National Theatre and attending a professional ballgame at the Nationals Stadium. The

delegates also attended the NRECA Youth Day that brought together 1,700 youth from 43 states.

Garrison enjoyed seeing a glimpse of the country's history. "Seeing all of this has made me grateful to live in such a great country," she said.

"All of the different memorials had a real impact on me," said Ratzlaff.

Each year, the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour is coordinated by Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. (KEC), the statewide service organiza-



Garrison holds a grasshopper during her visit to the Smithsonian Natural History Museum.

tion for rural electric cooperatives in Kansas. Formed in 1941 and headquartered in Topeka, KEC represents the interests of and provides needed services and programs to the electric cooperatives that serve in Kansas.

Wheatland Electric sponsors the Youth Tour each year as part of our strong commitment to the community and our mission to help the future generations to become leaders. For more information about the trip, contact Shawn Powelson, Manager of Member Services, at 620-872-5885.



During Youth Tour the Kansas delegation met with Senators Jerry Moran (left) and Pat Roberts.

Get to Know Your Co-op Staff

Karry Deschner

Customer Service Representative in
Great Bend

4 Years at Wheatland Electric

TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAMILY.

I have three children, Matt, 32, who is truck driver; Josh, 30, who is an accountant at Koch Industries; and Barbara, 28, who is a registered nurse at Stanford University. I have three grandchildren, Tyler, 9; Brooke, 2; and Paige, 3 months. I have been married for 34 years and have two dogs: Cooper, a bloodhound, and Bell, a mutt.



Karry Deschner

WHERE ARE YOU FROM ORIGINALLY?

I was born in Youngstown, OH, moved to Warren, MI, when I was two. I then moved to Natoma when I was 14. I moved to Great Bend when we married.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME? We like to go to the river on our razor and on other trails, play with our grandkids whenever we can, hang out and barbecue.

WHAT SPORT OR TEAM IS YOUR FAVORITE? I have two favorite sports—NASCAR and football. We try to go to at least one race a year at Kansas Speedway, as many KSU football games as we can and a Chiefs game.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE VACATION? We like to go to Cancun in February. It is nice to go somewhere warm when it is freezing in Kansas.

WHAT ACCOMPLISHMENT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF? I am most proud of my kids. They are good kids with great family values and very successful. I think I did a pretty good job of raising them and teaching them right from wrong. I know some days I often thought this has to be the hardest job around.

WHAT IS SOMETHING NOT MANY PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT YOU? That I love to do crafts as in sewing, cross stitching, scrapbooking, etc. I like to look at something and say I did that all by myself.



Lewis Brown
Wireless Service Installer
3 Years at Wheatland Broadband

A Day in the Life

Lewis Brown

BY BETH LOONEY,
ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER

The weather report indicated that it was going to be nearly 100 degrees and humid the day I was set to work with **LEWIS BROWN**, Wireless Service Installer for Wheatland's Broadband service. Not knowing what to expect and assuming broadband installation was inside work, I wasn't too concerned—I should have known better.

Lewis and I started our day loading his truck with parts and supplies. Lewis keeps a tidy truck; there is a place for everything and not a spot of dirt to be found. I met his installation partner, Erin Carter, and off we went to the Broadband office to get our service orders.

While at his desk, Lewis told me about his family. His wife is a photographer in Scott City (hopefully my picture of Lewis is up to par). He also has a daughter, who is a teacher, and a son in college.

Our first stop of the day was at High Plains Christian School in Garden City. They requested new service from Wheatland.

"We chose Wheatland Broadband, because my parents are happy with their Wheatland service and customer support," said Julia Jorda, owner.

While performing the installation, Lewis had to climb the steep two-story roof to mount the outdoor unit (ODU). Then he had to run cable from the ODU into the attic and down the wall to the terminal ending. Needless to say, I was none too willing to scale the roof or crawl into the scalding hot attic! Without complaint, Lewis made quick work of it and had them up and running in no time.

Our next stop was a residence in Garden City that was having connectivity issues. We arrived to find out that the customer had an older style of equipment. Lewis went about determining the best new equipment to install and quickly performed the change out as I stood by watching and melting in the lawn.

We ended our day cooling off and enjoying some Chinese food. We talked about work and life. He enjoys hunting and fishing in his spare time. It's also evident he values his family.

When asked what his favorite thing about working for Wheatland was, he said that he appreciates the work-life balance that Wheatland promotes. Thanks Lewis!