

WHEATLAND ELECTRIC

Delivering Energy for Life

WHEATLAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

NEWS

Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Bruce Mueller—General Manager

Board of Trustees

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
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District Offices

- | | |
|--|---|
| Garden City
2005 W Fulton
P.O. Box 973
Garden City, KS 67846
620-275-0261 | Scott City—Main
101 Main Street
P.O. Box 230
Scott City, KS 67871
620-872-5885 |
| Great Bend
2300 Broadway
P.O. Box 1446
Great Bend, KS 67530
620-793-4223 | Syracuse
206 1/2 N Main
P.O. Box 1010
Syracuse, KS 67878
620-384-5171 |
| Harper
906 Central
P.O. Box 247
Harper, KS 67058
620-896-7090 | Tribune
310 Broadway
P.O. Box 490
Tribune, KS 67879
620-376-4231 |
| Leoti
N Hwy 25
P.O. Box 966
Leoti, KS 67861
620-375-2632 | |

FROM THE MANAGER

Empowering the Membership

Cooperatives operate based on a set of seven cooperative principles: voluntary and open membership, democratic member control; members' economic participation; autonomy and independence; education, training and information; cooperation among cooperatives; and concern for community.

For Wheatland to accomplish principle No. 5, "education, training and information," we need to engage in meaningful dialogue and provide the membership with useful information.

As our industry transforms and expectations increase, members will

more often ask us: "What have you done for me lately?"

Today, it is imperative that we do more to keep our members engaged and to the greatest extent possible, involved in our efforts to serve them better and to advocate on their behalf.



Bruce Mueller

Member Engagement Meetings

In 2014, for Wheatland to accomplish this objective, we formed Member Engagement Teams made up of Wheatland members. Wheatland

Continued on page 16-F ▶

<p>VOLUNTARY AND OPEN MEMBERSHIP</p> <p>Cooperatives are voluntary organizations open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.</p>	<p>AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE</p> <p>Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.</p>
<p>DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL</p> <p>Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. The elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary cooperatives, members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and cooperatives at other levels are organized in a democratic manner.</p>	<p>EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION</p> <p>Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so that they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public, particularly young people and opinion leaders, about the nature and benefits of cooperation.</p>
<p>MEMBERS' ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION</p> <p>Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the cooperative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing the cooperative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefitting members in proportion to their transactions with the cooperative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.</p>	<p>COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES</p> <p>Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.</p>
<p>CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY</p> <p>While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies accepted by their members.</p>	

Get to Know Your Co-op Staff

Maria Carrasco

Dispatcher

1 month in Garden City



Maria Carrasco

TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAMILY.

I am married to Isaul Torres and we have three children: Esmeralda (12);, Perla (8); and Isaul (6).

WHERE ARE YOU FROM ORIGINALLY?

Garden City

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME?

I like to spend time with my family and exercise (crossfit).

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE VACATION?

Going to Cancun. I enjoy the beach very much.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE BOOK?

At this time, my favorite book is Unbeatable Mind by Mark Divine because it is a motivating book.

WHO HAS INSPIRED YOU IN YOUR LIFE AND WHY?

I find inspiration in my family each and every day in different ways. I always try to look at the positive side of things and learn from anyone and any situation.

Tip of the Month

Use small electric pans, toaster ovens or convection ovens for small meals rather than your stove or oven. A toaster or convection oven uses one-third to one-half as much energy as a full-sized oven.

Wheatland AMI Inst

18,000 AMI Meters Have Been Installed. Pro

Last September, Wheatland Electric began installing new Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI) across our service territory. We estimated that the entire conversion process would take approximately two years to complete, with the majority of our members expected to have new meters in place within 12-18 months. As we near the 10-month mark into the conversion process, we are happy to report that, to date, we have installed more than 18,000 new meters and supporting infrastructure and are officially more than half-way through the conversion process. Our crews and operations staff have been busy installing new meters almost as quickly as we can get them. We remain on track to complete the conversion to the new AMI system within the anticipated time frame.

Benefits of AMI Meters

As we continue the conversion process, we would like to remind our members of the benefits of this new technology. Implementation of the AMI system will result in improved operational efficiencies at Wheatland and enhanced member services. This new metering infrastructure will help Wheatland continue to provide reliable electricity at a competitive price,

while providing these improvements:

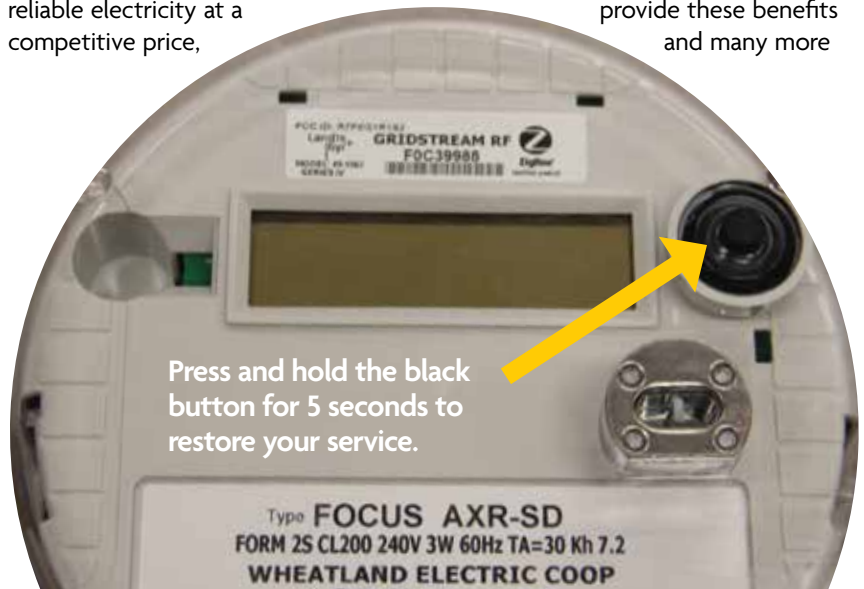
- ▶ Reduced meter reading costs
- ▶ More accurate billing
- ▶ State-of-the-art outage management system
- ▶ Power quality improvement
- ▶ Transformer loading analysis
- ▶ Safer and more efficient daily operations

This new infrastructure will also allow Wheatland the opportunity to offer time of day rates and prepayment options in the future.

Access Usage Information on SmartHub

In addition to these improvements, installation of these new meters will allow members the ability to access their usage data down to the hour, on a daily basis on their SmartHub accounts. This data will be available, once we've implemented our new meter data management which we expect to be in place sometime in August. Accessing this data will put a wealth of information at your fingertips, allowing you to make informed decisions about your energy usage and compare usage to previous days, months and years.

Investment in and implementation of this new technology will provide these benefits and many more



Press and hold the black button for 5 seconds to restore your service.

Installation Over 50% Complete

Project is on track for 2017 completion.

to your cooperative for years to come, ensuring that reliable and competitively priced electricity is a part of our future.

Installation Process

Wheatland Electric will continue installing AMI meters during the next few months. When Wheatland's employees change out the meter, they will notify the member by knocking on the door. If the member is home, the employee will explain the meter exchange process.

The impact of the installation is minimal, and we will work with businesses to minimize any inconvenience. Wheatland Electric members can expect to lose power for a few minutes on the day of installation. Following the installation, members will receive a bill with two readings: one for the old meter and one for the new meter. The large majority of our members will have the

new meters in place within the next 10-12 months.

Reconnecting Your AMI Meter

As we mentioned, this new technology will help to make our operations more efficient. One of those areas of improved efficiency is the ability to remotely connect and disconnect meters. If your service has been disconnected for non-payment and the required payment amount has been completed and processed, you can automatically reconnect your service. **Please note:** Automatically reconnecting service can only be utilized by members with AMI meters.

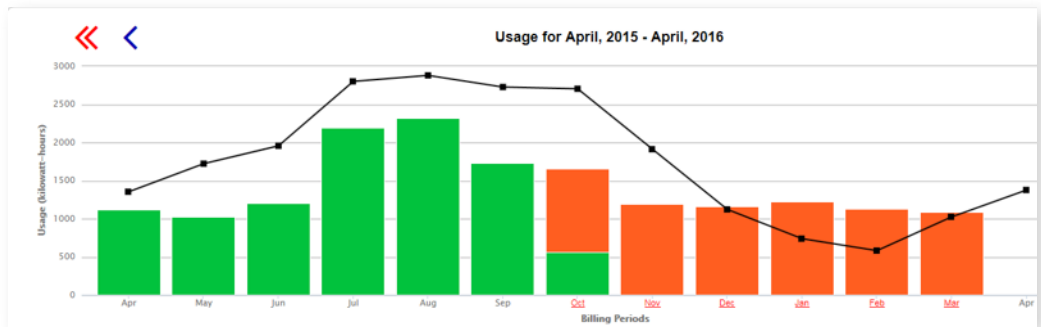
To reactivate your service, push and hold the black button on your meter for five seconds. If your service is not automatically restored or if you do not have an AMI meter, please contact 800-762-0436. For after-hours assistance, please call 800-662-4246.

AMI Meters Help SmartHub Track Your Electric Usage Data

Make Informed Choices

Login to your online Wheatland Electric account and you'll notice a more powerful, efficient and streamlined experience designed to help you make smarter energy choices. By utilizing SmartHub technology, co-op members can now access these great benefits:

- ▶ View your electric usage data, down to the hour (once new AMI meter is installed and new meter data management system is active);
- ▶ See how temperature affects heating and cooling usage;
- ▶ Compare usage between months with temperature data;
- ▶ Set usage markers, thresholds and alerts;
- ▶ Receive bill reminders; and
- ▶ View Wheatland's social media feeds.



With the new meter data management system (coming in August) members will be able to analyze their usage data in SmartHub to make more informed decisions to improve energy efficiency.

Logon today!

To access SmartHub from your desktop, simply click "Pay Bills" at the top right of our website at www.weci.net and login with your email address and password. Setting up a new online account is quick and simple, too.

Free Mobile Apps

To download free mobile apps for Apple or Android devices, search for "smarthub" in your app store.



Use Caution Near Co-op Equipment

As you find yourself spending more time outdoors this summer, Wheatland Electric reminds you to exercise caution near co-op electrical equipment.

Substations and power lines carry extremely high voltages, and if contact is accidentally made, the results can be dangerous—or even deadly.

Never climb trees near power lines. If you make contact with a tree that is touching a power line, your body could become the path of electricity from the line to the ground. If you encounter an animal trapped in a tree near power lines or inside a substation, do not attempt to remove it—no matter how furry and cute! Call Wheatland or 911 for assistance.

Drones, airplanes and other remote-controlled devices are becoming more popular, which can be a great way to have fun outdoors, but these gadgets also bring new safety concerns. Remote-controlled devices should never be flown near power lines, substations or other electrical equipment.

Remember these safety tips when flying a remote-controlled device:

- ▶ Keep a safe distance from electrical equipment when you fly. If contact is accidentally made with a power line or a transformer inside a substation, many members of your community could be left without electricity.
- ▶ Keep the remote-controlled device in sight at all times.
- ▶ Avoid flying if weather conditions are unfavorable. High winds could cause you to lose control of the remote-controlled device.

Here at Wheatland, your safety is important to us. We hope you will share the message of electrical safety so that you and others can enjoy plenty of summer days filled with fun!

Upcoming Cram the Van Events

Over the last two years we've held 22 events, in 10 different communities throughout our service territory to help local food banks. With your help, we've collected over seven tons of food! Along the way, we've gained a new appreciation for the important, yet often overlooked role food banks play in our communities.

This year, we're looking forward to collecting even more food and surpassing the 10-ton mark. Next month we'll be announcing the dates of our first Cram the Van events in September.

Be sure and check next month's



issue of *Kansas Country Living* magazine and also our website and Facebook page for the dates of when the big red van will be in your community. We look forward to seeing you, and thanks for helping us Cram the Van!

Save Using Your Co-op Connections Card

Papa Murphy's—they call it Love at 425 Degrees—and we know that you will love this month's featured deal! Enjoy \$3 off a family size pizza straight from their kitchen to yours.

Papa Murphy's pizzas are made to order; if you want a little more or a little less, they've got you covered. It's a meal that makes everyone happy and at a great price with your Co-op Connections Card!

Use your Connections Card



at these other local businesses for more great savings!

- ▶ The Taylor House, Scott City
- ▶ High Call Outfitters, Great Bend
- ▶ Gift Etc., Scott City

Visit www.connections.coop/weci for a complete list of deals.

Still need a Connections Card? Contact your local office for more information on how to start saving now with the Co-op Connections Card!

Check Out a New Way to Curb Your Energy Usage

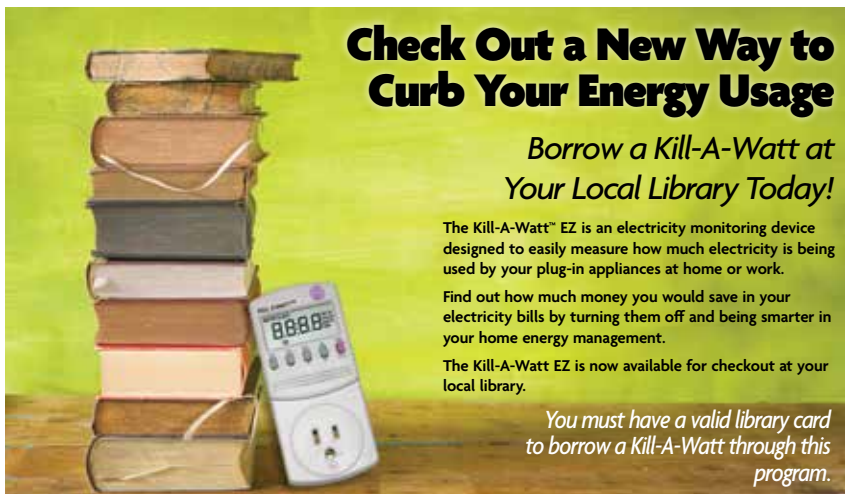
Borrow a Kill-A-Watt at Your Local Library Today!

The Kill-A-Watt™ EZ is an electricity monitoring device designed to easily measure how much electricity is being used by your plug-in appliances at home or work.

Find out how much money you would save in your electricity bills by turning them off and being smarter in your home energy management.

The Kill-A-Watt EZ is now available for checkout at your local library.

You must have a valid library card to borrow a Kill-A-Watt through this program.



Youth Learn Kansas History at the State Capital

CARSON HAUPT and **HAYDEN NEVILLS** from Scott Community High School and **REINA SEAL** and **MADISON WILSON** from Syracuse High School recently had the opportunity to visit the state's capital city on a trip sponsored by Wheatland Electric, with the help of Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. The whirlwind tour of Topeka included the Kansas State Capitol, Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site, a guided tour of Ward-Meade Park, and the Kansas Museum of History.

The students took a guided tour of the recently renovated State Capitol. A 13-year basement-to-dome renovation that cost nearly \$325 million included updates to the building's infrastructure and the addition of office space, a visitor's center and an underground parking garage. Workers also restored the Capitol's original features, from paint stenciling on the walls to copper on the roof and dome.

The spectacular Senate Chamber in the east wing and Representative Hall in the west wing were important stops. The State Library of Kansas in the north wing was equally impressive. Built to include the first electric lighting in the Capitol, the library's second



Above: Wheatland Topeka Youth Tour participants view the state Senate chambers during a guided tour at the Kansas State Capitol.

Right: Carson Haupt, Hayden Nevills, Reina Seal and Madison Wilson traveled to Topeka as part of Wheatland's annual Topeka Youth Tour trip. Students visited the Capitol, Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site, Ward-Meade Park, and the Kansas Museum of History.

deck floors are glass to take advantage of the flow of light.

Next, the students visited the Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site, which is the only national park named after a U.S. Supreme Court case, and located in the former all black Monroe School. Students learned about the "Road to Justice," and the story of Brown v. Board of Education, which ended legal segregation in public schools.

"I think it's crazy how recently it all happened. Desegregation only happened five years before my parents were born, which is really weird to think about," Haupt said when he was asked what about Brown v. Board was the most eye opening.

The tour continued at Ward-Meade Park where the students toured the original homestead, depot, schoolhouse, church and the 1870 Victorian mansion, which was the largest home in Topeka at the time it was built. Students also had the opportunity to visit the General Store and the Potwin Drug Store where they could shop the vintage-era candy.

The tour concluded at the Kansas Museum of History, which tells the story of our state's past. Students discovered the stories of native peoples, forts and trails, Bleeding Kansas and the Civil War, settlement, trains and towns, 20th Century, fast food and recent past. The special exhibits



The students enjoy ice cream at the old-fashioned soda fountain at historic Ward-Meade State Park.

gallery featured *Captured: The Extraordinary Adventures of Colonel Hughes*. The museum pays tribute to all Kansas soldiers, past and present, by telling the story of Kansas soldier James Clark Hughes.

When asked about the trip as a whole, Madison Wilson said she has a new perspective on Kansas history.

"As a young child, my grandparents told me about their stories and classes told me the facts, but to actually see the artifacts and the history is different. I think this trip is beneficial because not everything you hear from others or in class you believe. However, seeing it and reading the stories of others makes it truly seem possible."

"I learned a lot," added Seal, "I was amazed with the restorations [Capital Building]."

Each year, Wheatland Electric sponsors two students to attend Youth Tour in Washington D.C. and one student to attend Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in Colorado as

part of our strong commitment to the community and our mission to help future generations become strong leaders. Students not selected for one of the national trips are invited to attend Wheatland's Topeka Youth Tour trip. Look for more information on how to apply for one of Wheatland's national youth trips later in the year. Applications are due in February each year.



Get to Know Your Co-op Staff

Mike Ille

Warehouseman
14 years at Great Bend



Mike Ille

(Miniature Australian Shepherd)

TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAMILY.

Wife Marilyn
of 20 years
and our two
dogs Izzy (Toy
Australian
Shepard)

and Coupe

WHERE ARE YOU FROM ORIGINALLY?

Great Bend

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME?

Riding ATV's, camping and shooting
competitions

WHAT SPORT TEAM IS YOUR FAVORITE?

K-State football

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE VACATION?

Taking our fifth wheel and ATV's to
Colorado

WHAT WOULD YOUR IDEAL JOB BE?

ATV trail guide in Colorado

WHAT ACCOMPLISHMENT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

Taking first place in my division at the
Sunflower Shoot Out last year in Topeka

Office Closed 4th of July

Wheatland Electric Cooperative's
offices will be closed on Monday,
July 4, 2016, in observance of the
4th of July holiday.

Empowering the Membership *Continued from page 16-A*

will be conducting Member Engagement Meetings again this year. The Wheatland Electric Board of Trustees will be asking groups of members to participate in these Member Engagement Team meetings in August. We will hold four meetings during the month in Scott City, Syracuse, Great Bend and Caldwell. All districts will have member participants invited. The primary objectives of the meetings will be to:

- ▶ Help the Wheatland Board of Trustees and management better understand the feelings of the members relating to the community, the co-op, and its members.
- ▶ Serve as a sounding board for the evaluation of existing and development of new programs, policies and initiatives.
- ▶ Foster a higher degree of understanding with the membership for their co-op and the co-op business model.
- ▶ Enable the co-op to be member-oriented and responsive to the expectations and needs of the membership.

Topics we will be discussing at the Member Engagement Meetings will be:

- ▶ **Meter Data Management** – Wheatland is in the process of converting to a new metering system: Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI). This new metering system will allow Wheatland to offer, in the near future, new products and services such as time of use rates, pre-pay ability (pay as you go) with a credit card and the ability for members to see their actual usage, daily (Meter Data Management).
- ▶ **New Payment Options** – Wheatland has focused on new ways for the membership to pay their bills other than the conventional pay at the Wheatland office or by mail. Wheatland now offers the ability to pay online or from a mobile device via our SmartHub application or Pay by Phone.

We hope you will participate in this important member activity, if asked. We would like to walk away with actionable items to implement to better serve the membership.

Co-ops Vote Meet and Greet

Lastly, one of the topics I discussed in last month's article was the **CO-OPS VOTE** initiative. This new effort is being led by our national organization, National Rural Electric Cooperatives of America. The program is designed to boost the number of electric co-op voters on Election Day. Wheatland will support this initiative by hosting three candidate "Meet and Greet" events throughout our service territory.

We recently hosted the first of these events at the Garden City office. We had six candidates, from both the state and national races, speaking to the 40 members in attendance. Gov. Brownback called the Legislature back for a special session on the June dates we had scheduled our "Meet and Greet" events in Great Bend and Harper. The new dates for these meetings are:

- ▶ **Great Bend Wheatland office** – July 11, 2016 at 3 p.m.
- ▶ **Harper Wheatland office** – July 12, 2016 at 3 p.m.

These meetings are designed for you to become acquainted with the candidates and allow you time to visit, one-on-one, about issues that concern you in your communities and across the state.

Again, this program focuses on enhancing the political strength of electric cooperatives and its members through voter engagement. The goal is to boost voter turnout in cooperative areas, making sure that our members exercise one of their basic rights—the right to vote. Please join us at one of the candidate "Meet and Greet" events and get to know the candidates. Please visit the Co-ops Vote website at www.vote.coop

Until next time, take care.

Your Wheatland Payment Options

Wheatland Electric has six convenient payment options for our members. All members receive a standard monthly bill for your electrical use. Bills are due and payable upon receipt. We realize one method of payment does not fit every Wheatland Electric member's needs, so we have several payment options available for your convenience.



1. SmartHub/Online Bill Pay

Online bill pay is also available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Click the Pay Bills button located in the top-right corner of Wheatland Electric's website or follow wheatland.smarthub.coop/login.html.

Members can also download the "SmartHub" app from the Apple or Android marketplaces on any mobile device.



2. Pay-by-Phone

TOLL FREE NUMBER 1-844-262-2417

Now you can pay your electric bill at your convenience, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week! Pay-by-Phone is the newest of the many options members have for paying their electric bill. To get started, you'll need your account number, located in the upper right hand corner of your bill.

For security reasons and to comply with Federal Red Flag Rules, Wheatland Electric employees cannot accept payments over the phone. Call 844-262-2417 to Pay-by-Phone.



3. Auto Payment/Bank Draft

Wheatland is proud to offer automatic bank draft as a method of bill payment to its members. The account balance (how much you owe for your electric bill) is drafted from your checking account on the 5th of each month. If the 5th falls on a weekend or a holiday, the draft will occur the next business day.

Fill out the bank draft application form located at www.weci.net/content/bank-draft-application, attach a voided check and either mail or hand deliver to any Wheatland office.



4. Wheatland Electric Offices or Authorized Pay Agents

You may pay by check, cash, or credit/debit card at any of our offices or authorized pay agents.

All of our offices are open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. CST (7 a.m. to 4 p.m. MST) Monday-Friday, except for select holidays. (See website for holiday closings.)



5. Mail

Wheatland Electric's monthly bill comes complete with a return envelope that you can enclose your bill payment stub and a check or money order in and mail back to your local Wheatland office.

** All payments must be in a Wheatland Electric Office before 5 p.m. on the **Delinquent after Date** printed on your bill to avoid late payment penalties.



6. Drop Boxes

Deposit your payment, including payment stub and check or money order in the payment drop box at any of our office locations or at City Hall, 221 West 5th Street, Scott City.

Wheatland Electric also has budget billing for those members who prefer to pay the same amount each month. Payments are set at your monthly average, making it easy to budget. An accurate 12-month history of your use at your current residence is helpful in determining payments. If you are interested, please call your local Wheatland Electric Office to see if you qualify.

A DAY *in the* LIFE

BY SHAWN POWELSON



Jim Welker
Manager of Broadband
9 years in Scott City

The first thing you notice when you arrive at **JIM WELKER'S** desk is his bank of four computer monitors. Each monitor is devoted to a specific task, including one dedicated to a network map.

The map features every tower site (link) that makes

up Wheatland's information network (both for Wheatland Electric internal communications and for Wheatland Broadband). Each link is represented with a corresponding color on the map that indicates its current status. Green is good, red is bad. "We don't want red," Jim emphasized. If for some reason one does go red, that means a link is down and Jim's job is to assess the problem and coordinate fixing it. If the problem can't be fixed remotely, field personnel are dispatched to perform site repairs. Jim has a five-person crew that reports to him and helps maintain the network and perform broadband member installations.

With seven offices, over 135 employees and more than 3,500 broadband members relying on our network for internet and communications, it's imperative that the problem is solved quickly.

Aside from ensuring that the network is firing on all cylinders, Jim spends his "free time" answering broadband support calls, troubleshooting various other problems within our broadband business, ordering parts and supplies for the network and broadband installations and serving as the official company cell phone guru.

Multiple times a day Jim gets emails, texts, phone calls and people stopping by with a cell phone question or problem. Part of our day

spent together included setting up and delivering a new cell phone to an employee in our Garden City office. In all, Jim provides support to and manages more than 170 mobile data accounts—that in itself would be a full-time job for most people.

Throughout the day, it was obvious that wherever we went, whether it was our own office in Scott City or one of the other offices, everyone enjoys working with Jim. Or at the very least, relishes the opportunity to give him a hard time which was always quickly reciprocated.

Between his time spent answering calls, texts and emails, Jim and I found time to chat about his hobbies and family. Jim is a native of Syracuse along with his wife of 15 years, Teri. They spend most of their nights and weekends chasing their two children, Brady and Bailey, from one sporting event to the next. He is a die-hard Denver Broncos fan and enjoys riding four-wheelers with his family whenever they find time.

As we talked over lunch, I asked Jim what he enjoyed most about working at Wheatland. He said he enjoyed getting to work with the other departments and offices throughout the company and appreciated the fact that everyone was willing to help each other. And on a more personal level, he really appreciates the fact that Wheatland promotes a family-first culture that he experienced first-hand last year when his daughter Bailey battled a serious bone infection. "The support from everyone in the company, even people we didn't know, was amazing," Jim said. And with that, we were off to pick up a new cell phone for another employee. As if it wasn't clear enough already, he is a man whose work is never finished. Thanks for sharing the day with me, Jim.

SHAWN POWELSON, Manager of Member Services and Corporate Communications