



WHEATLAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

NEWS

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FROM THE MANAGER

Co-ops Are Ready to Work for You



Bruce Mueller

I wanted to start this month's article with a wish that all of the Wheatland Electric Cooperative membership has a safe and prosperous new year.

As the nation prepares to welcome a new Congress and Administration, America's electric cooperatives are ready to welcome back old friends and meet the newcomers.

The co-ops' message to elected officials, both old and new, Republican and Democrat, will be the same: We need to work together to protect member access to safe, reliable and

competitively priced electric service.

We have reason to believe this message will be well-received. After all, co-ops speak for more than 42 million electric consumers nationwide, a sizeable constituency by any measure.

Moreover, whatever you thought of the 2016 campaign, one message came through loud and clear: Many, many people don't believe their concerns are being heard. For member-owned cooperatives, listening to people is at the heart of our business model. And we carry our members' concerns to public officials every day.

As co-ops reach out to engage with elected officials, they will build on the strength of Co-ops Vote, the grassroots initiative to reverse declining voter turnout in rural areas.

Co-ops Vote did more than register voters. This initiative sent a strong message to the country's elected officials that rural electric members matter.

Co-ops will be reinforcing this message with a request that policymakers keep the needs of electric cooperative member's front and

Continued on page 16-G ▶

"We need to work together to protect member access to safe, reliable and competitively priced electric service."

Happy New Year
from Wheatland Electric



Attention High Sc



Each year, students from Kansas join more than 1,700 youth in Washington, D.C., to attend the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. This year's Youth Tour is scheduled for June 8-15, 2017.



Marcos Martinez and Erin Hall pose in front of the U.S. Capitol during Youth Tour.

Don't Miss These Leadership Experiences

Wheatland Electric will select four students to take an all-expense-paid trip in the summer of 2017.

Two winners will be chosen to join over 1,700 young people in Washington, D.C., for the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. Delegates will fly to our nation's capital to visit with government officials and the many historic sites. To see what's in store, visit <http://bit.ly/dcytvideo2015>.

Two winners will be chosen to attend the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in Steamboat Springs, Colo. Campers will stay

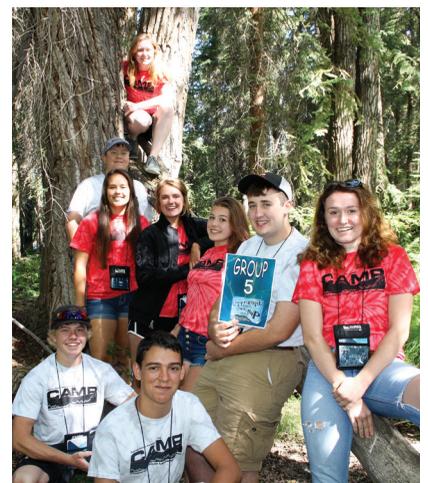
Being in D.C., I have had the opportunity to see first-hand the true values that our country upholds—one being respect. So many diverse countries can be seen here and each one is respected and seen as an equal. The second would be integrity. I have seen the integrity of a soldier as he stood guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

ERIN HALL, 2016 YOUTH TOUR PARTICIPANT

Scan these Codes to Get More Information

Washington, D.C.

Steamboat Springs, Colo.



Breanne Akiu poses with her small group during the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp.

hool Juniors

I was inspired by the World War II veteran, Frank Matthews, who talked to us and told of his experiences in the Marines and at Iwo Jima. Realizing the sacrifices people made for our country encourages me to want to do more.

MARCOS MARTINEZ, 2016 YOUTH TOUR PARTICIPANT

at the scenic Glen Eden Resort in the beautiful Rocky Mountains. At camp, they will join winners from other cooperatives in Kansas, Colorado, Oklahoma and Wyoming to form one of the most outstanding leadership camps in the country. Get more information at <http://bit.ly/CYLCVideo>.

Both trips are funded entirely by Wheatland Electric Cooperative. All you need is spending money for souvenirs and a desire to have a great leadership experience. The winners

will gain knowledge and experience that will help them grow as they pursue their future career.

For more information or to apply, contact your guidance counselor at one of these participating high schools: Argonia, Caldwell, Chaparral, Conway Springs, Deerfield, Great Bend, Greeley County, Holcomb, Norwich, Scott Community, South Haven, Syracuse or Wichita County. Children of Wheatland employees are not eligible to apply. Applications are due by **FEB. 1, 2017**.

The people I spent the week with inspired me. We all got along great and worked together to get the most out of our camp experience. BREANNE AKIU, 2016 CAMPER



Nearly 100 students representing Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma and Wyoming attended the 2016 Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp.

Wheatland Offers 13 Scholarships

Applications for Wheatland Electric's Empowering the Next Generation Scholarship Program are now available. Wheatland will award 13 \$1,000 scholarships to graduating seniors going on to a post-secondary institution.



Shyla Mason from Leoti accepts a 2016 scholarship.

Those who qualify for the scholarship must:

- ▶ Have a parent/guardian who is a member of Wheatland Electric.
- ▶ Attend one of the 13 high schools in Wheatland's service territory.
- ▶ Attend an accredited college or a technical or vocational school.

Children of Wheatland employees are not eligible to apply. Seniors who meet the qualifications will need to complete the application found on Wheatland's website www.weci.net under the Community Tab by **FEB. 1, 2017**.

A committee will then choose the winning applicant from each school, and the scholarships will be awarded at the Annual Meeting in April 2017.

**Application
Deadline
Feb. 1, 2017**

Youth Tour & Camp Participants Share Their Experiences

LOOKING BACK 2016

Wheatland Electric Cooperative is proud to offer once-in-a-lifetime youth tour experiences. In 2016, we had an impressive group of youth winners who attended either the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., or the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in Steamboat Springs, Colo. Read their first-hand experiences as they share how they benefited from these opportunities.

Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp

Breanne Akiu

This summer, I got an amazing opportunity, to represent my local electric cooperative at Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in Steamboat Springs, Colo. The adventure began as soon as I got on the bus in Salina. At first, I was pretty nervous considering I've never experienced anything quite like this or been

away from my family for that long. But once I met the counselors and the other camp members, those nerves faded. Everyone was extremely friendly making the long bus ride much more enjoyable. Once we made it to the camp, I got to meet all of the campers and see

where I'd be calling home for the next week. The camp was absolutely gorgeous. It was right next to a river and you could see the mountains in the distance. I stayed in a cabin with two other girls who became really good friends of mine that I still talk to today. From there, I knew that this place was going to be fun.

Every day was a new adventure. We learned how to make ourselves into better leaders, what it takes to be in a cooperative, toured the Craig Power Plant, shopped at the local stores, and even went white water rafting. One of my favorite things that I participated in while at CYLC was the power plant tour. It was very interesting and I learned a lot about how power plants are operated. It showed me that running a power plant is a pretty elaborate and time consuming job. Another really fun thing was the white water rafting. The water was freezing but because this was a once in a lifetime opportunity I braced for the cold and jumped in anyway.

This camp taught me so many things about myself that I didn't know as well as let me experience things that I never even dreamed of doing. You meet some really great people that you develop friendships with that still go on once camp is over. Overall, this camp was spectacular with all it's about and all it has to offer, and I hope to encourage other youth to go and try new things because you just might end up loving every second of it.

Above: Breanne poses by the Elk River at the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp.

Left: Campers tour the Craig Generation Station to learn how electricity is generated.



Electric Cooperative Youth Tour

Erin Hall

Washington, D.C., is a life-changing city. I can't even count how many times I saw the past and present working hand-in-hand. The historical education I gained was incredible. My eyes were opened to the awesome nature of our country.

I was also given the opportunity to dive deeper into the workings of an electric cooperative. I was nearly overwhelmed by all the information I had been missing out on. My education began with my preparation for the Wheatland Electric competition. A long drive to and from Scott City proved to be worth while—and then some. I was overjoyed by the news that I had won the opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C., with over

40 of the best and brightest kids in Kansas and Hawaii. The best part about the trip was building the lifelong relationships with my Youth Tour peers. It was inspiring to hear their life stories and aspirations for a better future. I made memories in D.C. that I will certainly cherish forever. I would like to thank Wheatland Electric for this opportunity of a lifetime.

Above: Erin poses in front of a large mineral at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History.

Left: Erin takes a selfie with Screech during a Washington Nationals baseball game.



Marcos Martinez

For a small-town Kansan, visiting the state's capitol in Topeka was a life-changing experience which opened my eyes to the enormity this world has to offer beyond the boundaries of my hometown, Great Bend.

Because of Youth Tour, I was able to experience what I reflect upon as my favorite part of visiting the Kansas capitol: learning the history of Kansas through the beautiful murals. For example, the Tragic Prelude is something the everyday student can see in his or her textbook, but viewing this in person, one could never imagine the wonder to be experienced while viewing this masterpiece in real life.

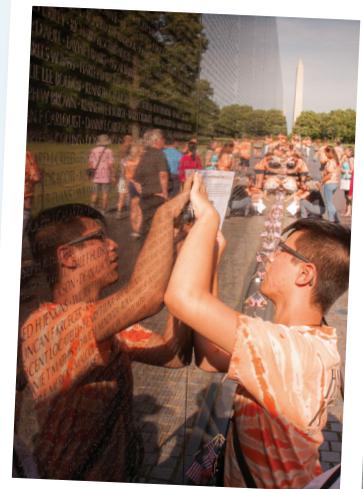
In the same way, I was in awe when I flew into Washington, D.C., and viewed the landmarks I never believed I would get the chance to experience. The Iwo Jima memorial can only be summed up as breathtaking; I was proud to live in a country with brave men who will continue to fight for a better tomorrow. Moreover, I was able to see the U.S. Constitution and the Declaration of Independence; two impressive documents belonging to this great nation that humbled me.

Choosing juniors in high school to go on this

trip is a wise idea, because juniors will have just finished classes involving these subjects and will be able to appreciate the monuments. Equally as inspiring were the delegates I had the honor of meeting; each and every one of the other delegates who came to Washington, D.C., were highly intelligent and made for an awesome experience. Overall, Youth Tour was wonderful and those who orchestrate the whole ordeal will never be thanked enough for this life-changing experience. Truly, Youth Tour inspires young men and women to do great things for this country.

Above: Marcos makes a rubbing at the Vietnam Wall.

Right: Marcos poses in front of the White House.



Get to Know Your Co-op Staff

Jevin Kasselmann

Director IT & Broadband
18 years at Scott City



Jevin Kasselmann

TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAMILY.

My wife, LaLani, and I have five children: Christian, Jack, Jay, Josh and Lesa. We have a dog, Marly (who lives up to her name), two cats,

Delilah and Butch, as well as any critter that my family drags in that I am forced to nurse back to health.

WHERE ARE YOU FROM ORIGINALLY?

I was born and raised in Scott City.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME?

What is that?

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE VACATION?

Loaded the whole family in a RV and drove to Disney World.

IF YOU COULD HAVE ANY SUPER POWER, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

I would be invisible, so no one could find me.

WHAT WOULD YOUR IDEAL JOB BE?

That's obvious—the one that I have!

WHO HAS INSPIRED YOU IN YOUR LIFE AND WHY?

Many people have inspired me, but the most important would be my father. He has taught me that even in failure, you can still find success.

Wheatland Awards Caldwell Public Library \$1000 Sharing Success Grant



Shawn Powelson, manager of member services and corporate communications, presents the Caldwell Public Library with a \$1,000 Sharing Success grant.

Wheatland recently announced that its Sharing Success Fund, managed by the Scott Community Foundation, has awarded a \$1,000 grant to the Caldwell Public Library.

The Caldwell Public Library submitted their request for a \$1,000 grant to help with the cost of purchasing a large flat screen TV for their young adult area. The new Young Adult area debuted just before this year's Summer Reading Program. The library will be holding monthly "Movie and Pizza Nights" for the middle school and high school students. The large flat screen TV will replace a smaller TV that they purchased through a grant from the state.

The Caldwell Public Library has been at their new location for seven years now. The building has had several projects funded by the Sharing Success program, beginning in 2013

with a grant to help complete the Youth Services Area. Over the course of three years, they have completed framing, electrical, lighting, dry wall and painting to create a space for Summer Story Times, a youth area after-hours, children's activities and other community events.

The Scott Community Foundation began formally accepting applications for grants from the Wheatland Electric Sharing Success Fund from non-profit organizations on Dec. 1, 2012. Wheatland Electric and CoBank have contributed an additional \$5,000 each year to the fund. The program will continue to run until the funds are exhausted. Non-profit groups interested in receiving funding from the Wheatland Electric Sharing Success Fund should contact the Scott Community Foundation at 620-872-3790 for further details.

Tip of the Month

According to the Consumer Electronics Association, the average household owns 24 consumer electronics products, which are responsible for 12 percent of household electricity use. Energy Star-certified audio/video equipment is up to 50 percent more efficient than conventional models.

Co-ops Are Ready to Work for You *Continued from page 16-A*

center: needs such as funding for infrastructure, especially transmission lines and access to natural gas; increasing the efficiency of the electric system; and determining the future of hydropower and nuclear energy. Elected officials will be making decisions affecting every aspect of the electric system.

Advocating for these issues is nothing new. In fact, we've been doing it for years. And we're ready to continue the fight on your behalf.

The time is now to reach out to all elected officials, new and returning. Here at Wheatland Electric Cooperative, we will be reaching out to local, state and federal officials. We will explain the unique member-owned, not-for-profit co-op business model and remind long-time politicians of our co-op's commitment to its members.

In Washington, D.C., our national trade association, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, will be conducting similar introduc-

tions, speaking with key agencies and departments within the new administration. It is likely many of these new policymakers will know little about the co-op model.

Forging an energy future that serves rural electric co-op members and protecting access to safe, reliable and competitively priced electric power will be a bipartisan effort. Electric co-ops are optimistic. As we work with our elected leaders, we hope to renew a spirit of cooperation in the nation's capital and in statehouses across the country. After all, cooperation is what co-ops do best.

I want to close with a heartfelt thank you to everyone who sent cards, emails, flowers, phone calls and prayers to me and my family after the recent passing of my Dad. We really appreciated it. Your kind gestures made a difficult time a little easier for us to endure.

Until next time, take care.

Save Using Co-op Connections Card

In 1954, Harold Becker founded **BECKER TIRE AND TREADING, INC.** Starting with one location in Great Bend, it has grown to be one of the largest tire distributors and retreaders in the Midwest.

Becker Tire has more than 150 employees who work the company's retail stores, commercial truck center, wholesale division, warehouse, used tire center, retread plant and Hunter Equipment Division.

Visit Becker Tire at their website www.beckertire.com/.

Use your Co-op Connections Card at Becker Tire and receive \$25 off a new set of tires!



Receive \$25 off a new set of tires using your Co-op Connections Card at Becker Tire and Treading, Inc.

For more great savings, use your Co-op Connections Card at these other local businesses:

- ▶ Dairy Queen, Scott City
- ▶ Renewal by Anderson, Great Bend
- ▶ Suzy B's Flowers & More, Scott City

For a complete list of deals visit <http://www.connections.coop/weci>.

Still need a Co-op Connections Card? Contact your local Wheatland Electric office to learn how to save with the Co-op Connections Card.

Get to Know Your Co-op Staff

Natalia Barb

Broadband Support
4 months in Scott City

TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAMILY.

My husband, Matt, is a musician and jack of all trades. We've been married eight years this December. My parents call our dog, Turkish, their grand-dog. He is very spoiled and very smart.



Natalia Barb

WHERE ARE YOU FROM ORIGINALLY?

I am originally from Emporia, which is halfway between Wichita and Kansas City.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME?

During football season, we watch NFL games on Thursday, Sunday, and Monday. Outside of watching NFL games, I like to read, binge Netflix or sit on the porch.

WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE TEAM?

Kansas City Chiefs

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE BOOK OR MOVIE AND WHY?

The complete collection of Sherlock Holmes short stories and novels, and if, at a later date, you would like to be bored out of your mind for 30 minutes to whenever you walk away, I can certainly expound upon why.

IF YOU COULD HAVE ANY SUPER POWER, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

Telekinesis, because I would never have to get off the couch to go to the fridge again.

IF YOU COULD BE ANY ANIMAL, WHAT WOULD YOU BE AND WHY?

I would be a squirrel, because I have always wanted to fight one, but I am not quick nor good enough at climbing to manage it as a human.

A DAY *in the* LIFE

BY SHAWN POWELSON



Left: **Beth Nelson**, 5 years
Right: **Mary Ann Davis**, 42 years
Senior Billing Specialists in Scott City

How do you transfer more than 42 years of experience from one person to another in relatively short amount of time? Flash drive? Cloud storage? Cryogenics? At Wheatland, we opted for a more traditional approach: succession planning.

After 42 years, retirement for **MARY ANN DAVIS**, senior billing specialist and resident capital credits guru at Wheatland, was coming sooner than later. Knowing that filling this position and transferring her database of knowledge to a new person was something that would take months and not weeks, the decision was made to hire her successor well in advance of her departure.

Enter **BETH NELSON**. In April 2016, Beth transferred from the accounting department to her new position as senior billing specialist. Prior to her transfer, Beth worked as Wheatland's senior accounting specialist for four years. In her new position, Beth was charged with learning as much as possible from Mary Ann as quickly as possible. (Think Yoda and Luke Skywalker.)

As I spent my day with Mary Ann and Beth, I quickly learned there's a lot more to the billing department than meets the eye. For starters, I asked Yoda and Luke...err...I mean Mary Ann and Beth, to explain a typical billing cycle.

Mary Ann explained, at the first of every month, they pull meter readings. After pulling the initial readings, they run somewhere close to 20 different reports (Beth initially described it as running a bazillion reports) to verify that the readings are accurate and there are no large unexplainable

variances. Then by the 12th of the month, they begin to calculate individual bills by feeding in all the different pieces of data that can make up a total bill including usage (meter readings), taxes, energy cost adjustments, demand charges and more. Immediately after the bill calculations are done, that data is sent securely to our bill printing service provider. Members typically begin receiving their bills in the mail (for the previous month's usage) by the 16th or 17th of the month.

I can assure you, I made that sound much simpler than it actually is. The time from when readings are pulled to when a member receives his/her bill is filled with checks, double-checks and triple-checks occur to ensure all the numbers are correct. And even then, as Mary Ann explained, "We still miss a few." Between internal checks and balances, reports and conversations with members, any discrepancies or variances are sorted out and corrected for the next billing cycle.

Aside from their regular duties as it pertains to the billing cycle, Mary Ann and Beth are also responsible for processing changes in rate classes, paying capital credits to decedent accounts, running backups of the entire billing system and a number of other duties.

As I wrapped up my day with the ladies over lunch, I gained an appreciation for the teamwork and camaraderie they had developed in just a few short months. Beth truly was the eager pupil, a la Luke Skywalker, and Mary Ann was the wise Jedi Master Yoda imparting her knowledge with just the right amount of wit and wisdom. While Mary Ann and her vast knowledge and experience will be impossible to replace, we can rest easy knowing that the fate of the Jedi are safe in the capable hands of Beth Skywalker.

SHAWN POWELSON, Manager of Member Services and Corporate Communications