



**WHEATLAND
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

NEWS

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FROM THE MANAGER

Why You Should Attend Wheatland's Annual Meeting



Bruce W. Mueller

It's that time of year again—annual meeting time. On behalf of Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc., I'd like to personally invite you to join us on April 25,

2018, at the William Carpenter 4-H Building in Scott City.

We look forward to gathering with you—members of Wheatland Electric—to catch up, hear what you have to say and enjoy some good food and fellowship. We will have great door prizes to give away and will be announcing the Wheatland scholarship winners for local seniors, two Youth Tour recipients in Washington D.C., and two Youth Leadership camp recipients in Colorado.

This event is not only a chance to

visit with other members of the cooperative, but a great opportunity to learn about what Wheatland has accomplished in the previous year, and what we are planning in the upcoming year and beyond.

It's also an opportunity for you to exercise one of the greatest benefits of being a member of Wheatland Electric—voting for the upcoming board of trustees.

Wheatland Electric is not owned by far away investors. It's run by a democratically elected board of trustees, a board who is given the privilege to serve because of your vote. Our trustees are members of your community. They are concerned with the issues you face every day because they face them too.

So make it a point to attend Wheatland Electric's annual meeting and exercise your right as a member of the cooperative and vote.

Join Us at Annual Meeting April 25

Wheatland Electric's annual meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 25, 2018, at the William Carpenter 4-H Building, Scott City.

We hope that you will attend the Annual Meeting and take part in the business of the cooperative.

April 2018

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					



PREPARED to Weather a STORM

On Friday, April 28, 2017, the National Weather Service (NWS) in Dodge City predicted parts of Western Kansas would see wintry weather over the weekend. By Saturday morning, all of Wheatland Electric's service territory in western Kansas was in a Winter Storm Warning.

The NWS predicted parts of western Kansas would see significant snow accumulations with tree limb damage and power outages likely. Heavy snow began falling Saturday morning resulting in scattered outages across Wheatland's service territory. Snow continued to fall across much of southwest Kansas. The heaviest snow bands stretched from southwest of Ulysses to Scott City. Wheatland's service territory experienced snowfall rates of 1 to 3 inches per hour. The snow shut down numerous roads Sunday in western Kansas. The National Weather Service in Dodge City said the snow amounts were "unprecedented" for so late in the season—16 to 20 inches fell. Howling winds accompanied the snow, gusting up to 70 mph. The storm dropped visibility to near zero and resulted in snowdrifts as high as 8 feet.

Wheatland suffered major damage to its system with more than 13,000 outages and 1,100 poles damaged. Restoration efforts lasted more than a month. All meters were restored with power on June 7, 2017.

Life in Kansas is beautiful, and living in Kansas is a constant reminder of the awesome power of "Mother Nature." From thunderstorms and lightning, to tornadoes and bliz-

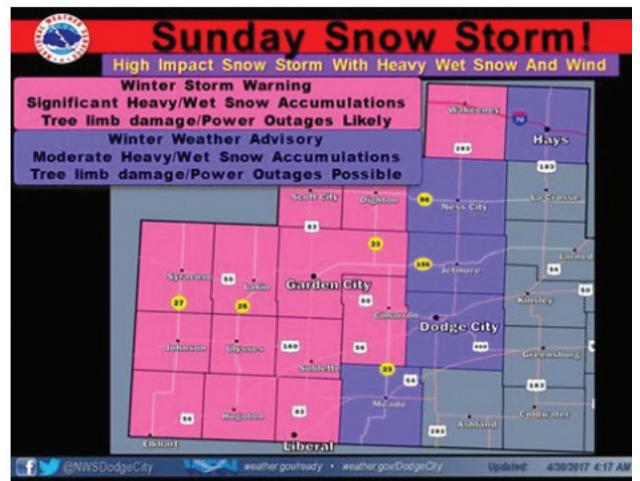
zards, dangerous storms can occur at any time of the year and can be devastating to homes, properties and lives.

These storms can also take down power lines. We want you to be prepared for storms and a possible power outage. It doesn't take a lot of time or money to prepare for a storm, but it does require some planning before the storm hits.



Wheatland Electric shared US National Weather Service Dodge City Kansas's photo.

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US National Weather Service Dodge City Kansas
April 30, 2017 ·



Last April, a powerful snow storm crippled nearly all of western Kansas including much of Wheatland's service territory. The storm resulted in more than 13,000 outages and 1,100 poles broken or damaged in Wheatland's system.

“Being safe around electricity is something you should focus on year-round,” said **QUINTEN WHEELER**, manager of safety and compliance at Wheatland Electric. “The best way to cope with a storm is to be prepared before it strikes.”

How to Stay Safe

Wheatland wants you to know how to stay safe until power can be restored. We recommend taking the following safety precautions:

- ▶ Never enter a flooded basement if electrical outlets are submerged. The water could be energized.
- ▶ Do not turn power off if you must stand in water to do so. Call your electric utility, and have them turn off power at the meter.
- ▶ Before entering storm-damaged buildings, make sure electricity and gas are turned off.
- ▶ Do not use water-damaged electronics before properly restoring them. Electric motors in appliances should be cleaned and reconditioned before use. It may be necessary to replace some of your appliances and electronics. Have your water-damaged items inspected and approved by a professional before using them.
- ▶ If you clean-up outdoors after a storm, do not use electronic equipment in wet conditions.

To help you get through, have a storm kit prepared. Keep the kit in a cool, dry place, and make sure all members of the family know where it is.

Be Aware of Downed Powerlines

Storm preparedness also means knowing what to do if you encounter downed power lines. Here are some tips to help you stay safe:

- ▶ Just because power lines don't appear energized does not mean they are dead. Every downed power line is potentially energized and dangerous until utility crews arrive on the scene to ensure power has been cut off. Downed power lines,



Crews work to remove snow and re-open roads in the City of Lakin after last year's spring blizzard.

stray wires, and debris in contact with them all have the potential to deliver a fatal shock. Stay far away and keep others away from downed power lines.

- ▶ If you see a downed power line, move away from the line and anything touching it.
- ▶ The proper way to move away from the line is to shuffle with small steps, keeping your feet together and on the ground at all times. This will minimize the potential for a strong electric shock. Electricity wants to move from a high voltage zone to a low voltage one—and it could do that through your body.
- ▶ Do not drive over downed lines.
- ▶ If you are in a vehicle that is in contact with a downed line, stay in the vehicle. Honk your horn for help and tell others to stay away from your vehicle.
- ▶ If you must leave your vehicle because it's on fire, jump out of the vehicle with both feet together and avoid making contact with the energized vehicle and the ground at the same time. This way you avoid being the path of electricity from the vehicle to the earth.

Being prepared in the event of inclement weather and potential power outages is key in keeping your family safe and comfortable.

Storm Safety Kit Checklist

Clip out this checklist to collect items for your storm kit so you'll be prepared.

- Drinking water and food
- Blankets, pillows and clothing
- Basic first-aid supplies
- Prescriptions
- Basic toiletries
- Flashlights
- Battery-operated radio
- Battery-operated clock
- Extra supplies of batteries
- Phone
- Cash and credit cards
- Emergency numbers
- Important documents (in a waterproof container)
- Toys, books and games
- Baby supplies
- Pet supplies



Stay Clear!

**A downed power line may not be a dead line.
It could cause serious injury or death.**

**If someone is injured by contact with a
power line, call 911 and keep others away
until help arrives.**

If a power line falls across or near your vehicle while you are in it, stay inside until help arrives. If you must exit, jump clear so that no part of your body is touching the car when you land. **KEEP BOTH FEET TOGETHER**, and shuffle or hop at least 30 feet away from the vehicle.

SPRING PLANTING

Sow Seeds of Safety This Season



Remember these safety tips when returning to the fields this spring.

- ▶ Electricity can arc or “jump” from the line to equipment, so keep equipment at least 10 feet from overhead lines.
- ▶ Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting tractors on trailer beds.
- ▶ Designate preplanned routes that avoid hazard areas.
- ▶ Lower extensions like planter arms or cultivators to the lowest setting when moving loads.
- ▶ Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path.
- ▶ Even if using an auto-guidance system, stay focused on equipment location while in the field. Do not simply rely on the GPS system and

be ready to take action if needed.

- ▶ Consider using a spotter to alert you if you come close to making contact. A spotter can see sagging wires that would not be visible on a GPS and provide additional verification that you can pass safely.
- ▶ Before getting out of the cab, look up and double check the area around your machinery to make sure it is not in contact with overhead lines.
- ▶ Know how to stay safe if equipment does make contact with power lines.

Managers should make sure full-time and seasonal workers are educated on these and other electric safety precautions. Learn more about farm safety at SafeElectricity.org.

POWER OUTAGE PANTRY

We do our best to avoid power outages, but unfortunately, Mother Nature occasionally has different plans. Stay ahead of the storm by stocking your pantry with a variety of non-perishable items.

Set these items aside for extended outages only, and your storm prep will be a breeze!

Don't forget to stock up on disposable goods, like paper plates, napkins, plastic cutlery and cups.

- ▶ BEANS
- ▶ CANNED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES
- ▶ CANNED TUNA
- ▶ CEREAL
- ▶ DRIED FRUITS
- ▶ DRIED MEATS/JERKY
- ▶ GRAHAM CRACKERS
- ▶ PASTA
- ▶ RICE
- ▶ SPAM
- ▶ OATMEAL



Daylight Saving Time Reminders

On March 11, remember to **spring your clocks forward** one hour. This is also a great time to check fire, smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, and change out batteries. Make sure smoke detectors work properly by using the alarm test option. Use a vacuum to make sure there are no cobwebs, spiders or other little insects taking up residence that would hinder the effects of the smoke alarm.

Detectors play a larger role in survival than one might think. Experts determined that inoperable smoke alarms caused two-thirds of fire-related deaths due to damage, defects and missing batteries. It is recommended writing the date on the new battery in the detector so there will be no question as to when it was last replaced.

Daylight saving time is also a great time to review with family members home safety including escape routes and checking all electrical outlets. Practice home safety and test procedures on getting out safely in an emergency situation. Look through the house for any hazards, such as overloaded or improperly placed extension cords. It is recommended to make sure areas around the furnace, water heater and stove are clear of debris that can cause fire.



Cold Weather Accommodation Ends March 15

Spring is just around the corner and with it warmer weather. Wheatland offers its members a friendly reminder that Cold Weather Accommodation for residential members ends March 15. For more information about Wheatland's Cold Weather Accommodation policy please visit our website at www.weci.net or contact your local office.



On Facebook, search for "Wheatland Electric" and like our page for energy efficiency tips, cooperative news and outage updates.

SAFETY Tip of the Month

This time of year we can experience extremely cold temperatures. When the wind chill is significant, cover as much exposed skin as possible. Your body's extremities, such as the ears, nose, fingers and toes lose heat the fastest. Always wear warm and waterproof footwear whenever dealing with these conditions.

Lineman Appreciation Day April 9

Linemen work through every condition imaginable to keep the lights on and keep us safe and warm. Monday, April 9, is Lineman Appreciation Day, and we'll be dedicating space in next month's magazine to thank all of our linemen here at Wheatland Electric for everything they do. Mark your calendars for April 9 and remember to #ThankALineman!



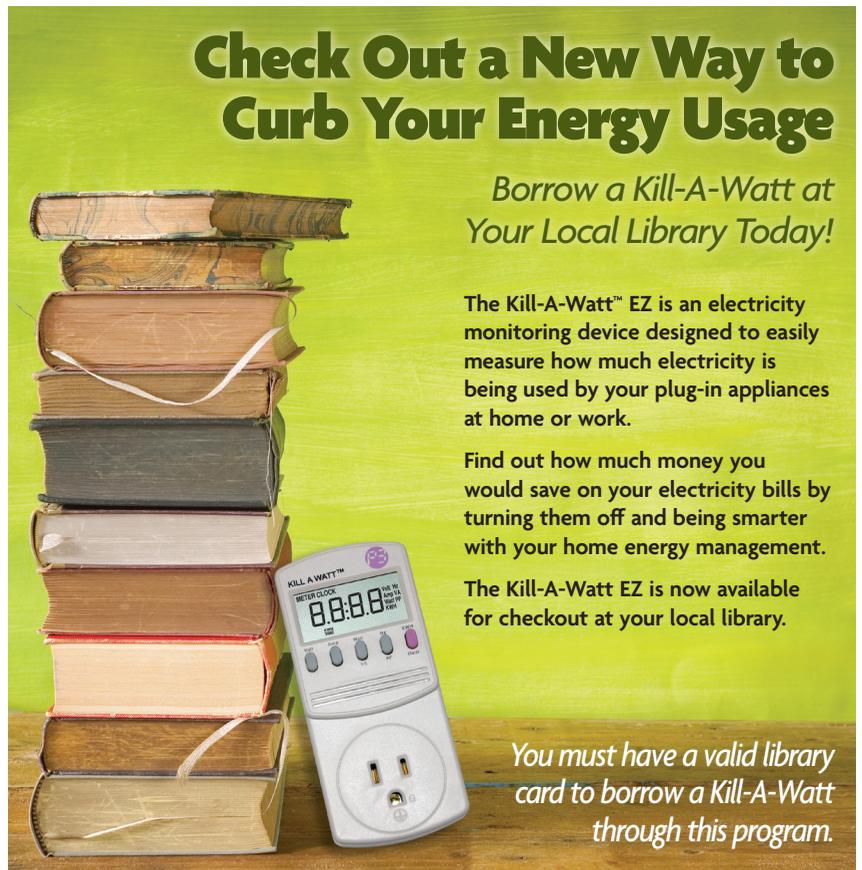
Check Out a New Way to Curb Your Energy Usage

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 on your electricity bills by turning them off and being smarter with 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.

Wheatland's 70th Annual Meeting is April 25



Join us and take part in the business of the co-op.

Wheatland Electric Cooperative's 2018 Annual Meeting

Wednesday, April 25

Registration at 10:30 a.m.

Lunch at 11:30 a.m.

Meeting at 12:30 p.m.

At the William
Carpenter 4-H Building
608 Fairground Rd, Scott City

CO-OP CONNECTIONS SPOTLIGHT

Find Co-op Connections Card Savings at The Taylor House

THE TAYLOR HOUSE got its name because the owners had a goal of creating a warm and welcoming environment, where you can count on quality drinks and service and that's exactly what you will get.

Lynn and Adam invite you to their house—The Taylor House—



to sit down with a yummy drink and a friend, and enjoy 15 percent off flavored espresso drinks from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., Monday through Friday using your Co-op Connections Card.

Visit The Taylor House on Facebook and check out their new custom wood signs

and custom leather crafts! <https://www.facebook.com/taylorhousecoffee/>

Use your

Connections Card at these other local businesses for more great savings! For a complete list of deals visit <http://www.connections.coop/weci>.

- ▶ **Playa Azul**, Great Bend
- ▶ **D'Mario's Pizza**, Harper
- ▶ **Great Bend Coffee**, Great Bend

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

Co-op Connections® Card





Left: **Pam Murphy**, 16 years
Right: **Rhei Thurman**, 3 years
Executive Assistants in Scott City

A DAY *in the* LIFE

BY SHAWN POWELSON

I met **PAM MURPHY** and **RHEI THURMAN** at their office in Scott City. Pam recently announced her retirement will be in July, and Rhei was hired in December to be her replacement. For three

years prior, Rhei served as a consumer services representative at the Leoti District office. Pam has served as the administrative assistant/executive assistant in the Scott City office for 14 years.

The executive assistant's primary role is to assist the general manager and board of trustees. One of their essential duties is to help plan and prepare for the co-op's monthly board meetings. Each month, they plan and coordinate the lunch for those attending the board meeting, prepare materials and distribute them to Wheatland's 10-member board of trustees, as well as the co-op's executive team. In addition to coordinating the monthly board meetings, they also assist with conference registrations, coordinate travel arrangements and help plan cooperative functions and meetings. They are also a go-to source of information for the board and general manager. As Pam put it, "The board relies on us for information. If they have a question about anything related to the co-op, we're usually their first call."

When not planning board meetings or acting as a human information super-highway, normal daily tasks include retrieving and processing the office mail, ensuring office equipment is maintained and functioning properly, keeping a myriad of office supplies stocked, being the keeper of official documents for the cooperative and assisting cooperative staff with anything they possibly can. It's not uncommon to hear either one of them say in all sincerity, "Let me know what I can do to help."

As part of the transition process, the co-op has been evaluating Pam's current duties. As a tenured employee,

you accumulate a number of tasks by default or by others recognizing things you're good at, so Pam and Rhei have focused on deciding which duties should be transitioned to Rhei or be moved elsewhere. One such task is the handling of the cooperative's motor vehicle registrations. Currently, Pam handles the tagging and registration of more than 150 cooperative vehicles and trailers. "I worked for the County Treasurer in my past life," Pam said. "Unfortunately, it was a good fit." Of course, "unfortunately" is in jest and a testament to the magnitude of the job. With seven district offices and their associated counties to account for, coordinating all that paperwork can be a real challenge. Soon, Pam will be training a member of the operations team to take over those duties.

As we finished our time together, I asked Rhei what surprised her most about the job so far. "The variety, the difference in the day-to-day work, that surprised me," she said. "No two days are alike and you don't always know what the day will bring." And the biggest challenge? "There's a lot of things to remember. A lot of details to keep track of."

What is Pam most looking forward to in retirement? "We're planning a big trip," she told me. "And after that I'm looking forward to going all the places I always wanted to go!"

Finally, I asked them both what their favorite part about the job was. Rhei smiled and said, "Working with Pam of course. Working with the rest of the employees and the board too. I like working with all the people. And I've enjoyed the challenges. It's definitely stretched me."

Pam added, "I love that each day is different and the challenges that come with it. I like using problem solving to help figure out how to make something work, how to help people get what they need. And of course, I love working with all the people."

Thank you both for sharing your day with me, and enjoy your retirement, Pam—you've earned it!

SHAWN POWELSON, Director of Member Services and Corporate Communications

