



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 
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 620-872-5885
 www.weci.net

**WHEATLAND
 ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

NEWS

**Wheatland
 Electric
 Co-op Inc.**

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District Offices

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

FROM THE MANAGER

Why You Should Attend the Annual Meeting

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 22 in Caldwell.

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 some great door prizes to give away and will be announcing the winners of the Wheatland Electric scholarships, Electric Cooperative Youth Tour recipients to Washington, DC., and Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp recipients to Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

This event is not only a chance to visit with other members of the cooperative, but a great opportunity to learn about our accomplishments in the previous year and our plans for 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 run by a democratically elected board of trustees, a board given the privilege to serve because of your vote.

Our trustees are members of your community, concerned with the issues you face every day because they face them too.

If you are interested in running for one of the board of trustees' seats available for re-election, the process is outlined below:

- 1** The first way set forth in Wheatland's bylaws is to be nominated by the nominating committee. Every year, the board of trustees appoints a nomination committee. The committee is comprised of one individual from each district (1-7). You are welcome to contact Wheatland for the name of the member who represents you on the nomination committee. You can then contact him or her at your convenience.

- 2** The bylaws also allow for nomination by a petition of your fellow members. Fifteen members, or more, of Wheatland can nominate any member as a candidate for trustee. These



Bruce W. Mueller

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Member

SPOTLIGHT

Scott County Senior Housing Development

Cooperation among cooperatives is one of the seven principles that guides Wheatland's mission. Cooperation is also a key factor in getting development projects done within our communities.

Director of the Scott County Development Committee, Katie Eisenhour, has spent the past several years facilitating cooperation between private investors, government agencies, and housing developers to turn a community need into a reality through Eastridge Villas.

Eisenhour, who also represents District 1 (Scott County) on Wheatland's board of trustees, was visiting friends in Nebraska when she toured a senior housing complex. "My parents encouraged me to get busy because Scott City had nothing like this and they liked the living space very much," said Eisenhour.

When she started doing her research, Eisenhour noticed several of the housing projects in Nebraska and central Kansas she was hoping to replicate were built by Mesner Development based out of Central City, Nebraska. Although the developers had never overseen a project this far into western Kansas, after a couple of conversations with Eisenhour they were ready to jump on board.

Much of the funding for the housing development was provided through the sale of federal income tax credits. "At the local level, one doesn't become directly involved with the sale of the tax credits," said Eisenhour. "The developer secures an investor/syndicator willing to purchase the tax credits for income-based housing."

In-between identifying a need and cutting the ribbon, there were countless hours of hard work and coordination. Eisenhour was up to the task, "It was no accident that we held out for the Mesner/Midwest Housing Equity Group/Housing Opportunities teams to build this project," said Eisenhour. "They are simply the best! They have partnered together in well over 200 units of income-based housing in central Kansas. However, when a community has not embarked on a government housing project in nearly 40 years, there are many unknowns and much fear — all of which must be 'removed from the table' before making notable progress."

With construction ending in mid-December, the \$3.9 million Eastridge Villas housing development is comprised of 10 duplexes. Each apartment contains 1,120 square feet of single level, efficient, affordable, new construction, perfect for the lifestyle of the



Director of the Scott County Development Committee Katie Eisenhour addressed the crowd prior to the senior housing development open house.



Katie Eisenhour, director of the Scott County Development Committee, cuts the ribbon along with all of the people who came together to make the Eastridge Villas senior housing development a reality.

tenants. Each unit includes a single-car garage, storm shelter and seven brand-new appliances, even washers and dryers.

Currently, all 20 units are occupied and there is a growing waiting list. “Some of the people who took an earlier pass on moving in now have some regrets,” said Eisenhour. “Some felt they weren’t quite ready. Others wish they would have taken advantage of the opportunity after viewing the quality of the neighborhood.” Eisenhour went on to add, “Nine of the 20 tenants are on rental assistance through SWKAAA. This program out of Dodge City allows these people the ability to stay above the poverty line and live comfortably in their later years.”

With the completion of the of the Eastridge Villas senior housing development, Scott City has invested in the future of their community. Two new subdivisions were opened for development in 2013. Even with 88 new units of housing built primarily

by the private sector since 2012, Scott City housing stock remains extremely tight. Occupancy rates are 97% of nearly 4,000 available locations. “There are about a dozen lots available for new construction intended for moderate income families that come with special incentives,” said Eisenhour. “Other than that, Scott City will need to strategize where the next housing subdivision should be located. Without sufficient quality housing a community cannot attract people, nor companies and economic development is squelched.”

With the success of this senior housing project, Eisenhour is ready to do it again. “We have 20 potential tenants currently on our waiting list,” said Eisenhour. “We have proven the need and are excited to start negotiating with the same development, investment and management team for an expansion to Eastridge Villas. If that doesn’t transpire, we’ll seek out other partners until the need is met.”

You Have a Voice at YOUR
CO-OP
 — attend annual meeting to use it.

JOIN US WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22
 Registration 10:30 a.m. central | Lunch 11:30 a.m. | Meeting 12:30 p.m.
 Caldwell Community Building, 119 E. First, Caldwell, KS 67022
 View LIVE at your local Wheatland Electric Office



CONNECT
 ENGAGE
 ELECT

Annual Meeting

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nominations by petition must be sent to Wheatland at least 40 days before the annual meeting. However, if your petition doesn't make it in time, that petitioned nominee will be presented as a candidate at the annual meeting and considered a nomination from the floor. That candidate would then be a "write-in candidate" at the meeting.

3 Any member can make a nomination from the floor at the annual meeting to present a different member as a candidate.

Please contact Jim McVay, Wheatland's general counsel, if you're interested or have any questions.

As we did last year, we will be having **CONCURRENT ANNUAL** meetings at all other WEC office locations: Scott City (Broadband Office), Leoti, Tribune, Syracuse, Finney County (Fulton St. office), Great Bend and Harper. Members in attendance at these satellite locations will be able to:

- ▶ Attend
- ▶ Nominate
- ▶ Vote
- ▶ Win a door prize (if selected)

Lunch will be provided at each location.

Make it a point to attend the Wheatland Electric annual meeting at any of the locations listed above and exercise your right as a member of the co-op and vote.

Until next time, take care.

Wheeler Becomes a Certified Loss Control Professional

QUINTEN WHEELER, manager of safety and compliance at Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc. has completed an intensive program in electric utility safety and loss control. The Certified Loss Control Professional (CLCP) credential is awarded to individuals who complete the requirements of the Loss Control Internship (LCI). The LCI program gives attendees the preparation and skills needed to successfully manage challenging safety and loss control issues. From environmental issues, to disaster recovery, emergency procedures and workplace violence, they become prepared to take preventative measures and corrective action.

The LCI program consists of a series of four, one-week seminars held at the world-class Fluno Center for Executive Education in Madison, Wisconsin. Wheeler gained invaluable information on areas crucial to loss control operations including:

- ▶ Regulations affecting electric power generation, transmission and distribution.
- ▶ "Best practices" for ensuring safety performance.
- ▶ Practical communication techniques for influencing others to manage the associated hazards.
- ▶ Collaborative exercises and small, group projects on contemporary issues and topics.



Quinten Wheeler, manager of safety and compliance, receives his Certified Loss Control Professional (CLCP) certificate from Bruce Mueller, general manager.

- ▶ Networking opportunities and the sharing of resources with other safety professionals.
- ▶ Information and the voice of experience from industry experts.

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, nearly 4 million injuries occur annually in the workplace. One of the goals of a CLCP is to help ensure a safe work environment for utility workers and the public in general. Avoiding workplace accidents avoids downtime and can ultimately lead to lower utility rates.

Wheeler is one of only a few electric utility professionals in the country that will receive this certification this year.

"Wheatland Electric is fortunate to have someone like Quinten leading our safety effort," said Bruce Mueller, general manager.

SAFETY

Tip of the Month

Electricity will pass through the human body, sometimes with fatal results, trying to get to ground. If an appliance or tool is faulty or has a shorted wire, for example, the electric current may try to find another path to ground. That's why electrical systems should always be grounded. A safe path to ground for electricity is away from your body and confined within whatever piece of electrical equipment you're using.

Winning Benefits of Prepay Power

It's been 15 months since Wheatland Electric rolled out our new program — Prepay Power — and we couldn't be more pleased by our members' response to the program.

Boasting no deposit, no late fees, no due date, and no monthly statements, Prepay Power simplifies your electric utility billing. As the name alludes, Wheatland's program puts the "power" of electricity consumption and energy efficiency fully in the hands of our members, as those on Prepay Power choose when and how much electricity to purchase. Members manage their own account.

Nearly 650 members have signed up for Prepay Power since it was rolled out on Dec. 1, 2018. A newer user to the program, Travis Watkins, said that he finds the program to be "helpful, handy, and convenient." He also commented that "It's now much easier to monitor my usage on a daily basis and cut back if I need to, instead of ending up with a big bill at the end of the month."

Getting started with the program is easy. Members, whether new or existing, must complete a Prepay Power agreement available at your local Wheatland Electric office. The member then purchases electricity before they use it and can make payments anytime — online, by phone or in-person at the local Wheatland office.

When a member's account runs low, they will receive a notice by text or email if the funds in the account run out, the electrical service will be automatically terminated and the member will be notified by text or email. They can recharge their account at any time, day or night, online or by phone

I love Prepay. By tracking my family's energy usage through the SmartHub app and educating my family, our bill has gone down drastically.

JENNY OLSON, WHEATLAND MEMBER

and service will be automatically restored.

When asked about her experience with Prepay Power, member Jenny Olson said "I love Prepay. By tracking my family's energy usage through the SmartHub app and educating my family, our bill has gone down drastically. I can also add any amount of money I want at any time, which makes it more convenient."

All residential accounts* with an advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) meter are eligible to participate in Prepay Power.** Access to SmartHub is required to participate in Prepay Power. The member is responsible for updating their SmartHub account with a valid email address and text number to guarantee receipt of Prepay Power notifications. The member must provide and maintain a valid email and phone number to receive low balance notifications. Failure to receive the notifications will not avoid termination of power.

Flexibility, convenience, user-friendly, informative — all words that our members have used to describe the program. If you're interested in learning more about Prepay Power, please do not hesitate to stop by your local Wheatland Electric office or visit www.weci.net/convenience-prepay-power.

***MEDICAL NECESSITY OR RESIDENTIAL HEAT AND COOL ACCOUNTS WITH TWO METERS DO NOT QUALIFY FOR THIS PROGRAM. **Additional qualifications and terms can be found in the Wheatland Prepay Power program agreement located on our website at www.weci.net.**



PREPAY COULDN'T BE EASIER

SIGN UP  **FILL UP**  **USE UP**  **FILL UP**

20 Years of Innovation



Staying up-to-date with industry technology trends is vital for the future of Wheatland Electric Cooperative. Knowing where to invest in the future of the cooperative is not only beneficial for our current membership, but also in gaining insight into national trends that are valuable for attracting new businesses and members to our communities.



During the conference, attendees had the opportunity to get a better understanding of how electric vehicles work.

The New and Emerging Technology Conference (NET) is Touchstone Energy's signature business-to-business conference that brings together national, regional and local energy managers with co-op key account and energy services professionals from around the country. Celebrating 20 years of programming, the NET has become an incubator for showcasing innovation, providing a national perspective on important industry issues, and demonstrating how businesses and co-ops are embracing the future.

During this year's event, attendees were exposed to a variety of topics shaping the future of the electric industry. Some of the main topics were artificial intelligence, innovation and technology disruption.

More in-depth sessions allowed attendees to tailor the curriculum to fit the needs of their members and cooperative. These sessions included electric vehicles (EVs), smart buildings, microgrids, solar and smart agriculture.

Being exposed to new technologies early is the best way to stay ahead of the trends. It is our responsibility to our members to find out which way the industry is moving and to be ready when it gets here.

Wheatland Manager of Member Services and Corporate Communications

ALLI CONINE had the opportunity to attend the conference, “This conference provides Wheatland a chance to better serve our members by knowing what the trends are and what we need to do to prepare,” she said.

One of the hottest topics discussed was the emphasis placed on EVs and the charging infrastructure.

“There has been a massive amount of focus placed on EVs nationally,” said Conine. “It’s not just the tech companies like Tesla pushing this movement forward, traditional car manufacturers and oil companies, like Ford and Shell, are making large investments into the space. Figuring out what role the cooperative will play is something we are interested in gauging our members about.”

In addition to EVs, solar generation was another hot topic.

“We have had several members ask about solar in recent years, and our operations team has been great



Tesla’s SUV model X was on display and available for test drives.

about giving those members accurate information and not the pitch they get from a salesperson,” said Conine. “Sunflower (Wheatland’s power supplier) is in the process of building the 20-megawatt Johnson Corner Solar Project, but community solar or home solar options are becoming more feasible and cost-effective.”

Whether the future is EVs, solar or any other emerging electric technologies, Wheatland is dedicated to serving our members.

“Being exposed to new technologies early is the best way to stay ahead of the trends,” Conine said. “It is our responsibility to our members to find out which way the industry is moving and to be ready when it gets here.”

Wheatland’s Member Services Efforts Showcased at Conference

During Touchstone Energy’s recent NET Conference, Wheatland Electric had the opportunity to present and sit-in on a paneled discussion. **ALLI CONINE**, manager of member services and corporate communications, spoke to a crowded room.

This session focused on key accounts and the proven ways to serve them better. Along with Conine, the panel featured Patty Durand, CEO of Smart Energy Consumer Collaborative, and Michal Shepard, director of energy and engineering for Harris Teeter grocery stores.

During her presentation, Conine focused on how Wheatland brings an added level of service to their key accounts, and how to creatively serve communities outside of delivering low-priced, reliable electricity.

“I spoke about Wheatland’s Cram the Van food drive, efficiency programs, and our economic development efforts with Sunflower Electric,” Conine said.

“This was a great experience for Wheatland to demonstrate how we serve our members outside of traditional methods,” said Conine. “We have found creative ways to add value to our members, because we have the resources and the existing infrastructure in place to do so. Many times commercial members or communities will come to us for help, and it is very rewarding when we can play a part in finding solutions.”

For more information about Wheatland’s member services visit weci.net or contact Alli Conine at aconine@weci.net.



Alli Conine, manager of member services and corporate communications, spoke to a crowded room during the breakout session “Bread and Butter: Serving Essential Loads.”



Energy managers from Agropur, McDonald’s and Harris Teeter discussed the importance of building relationships with their electric co-ops.



youth tour starts **HERE**

Meet Wheatland's Youth Tour Winners



LEAH BOWLBY
South Haven High School
Washington, D.C. Winner

"Having the chance to interview and be selected for this trip are amazing opportunities. I will build memories that I will treasure forever. I'm super excited to meet new people and visit the Capital this summer!"



SADIE SCHMANKE
Conway Springs High School
Washington, D.C., Winner

"It is such an honor to be chosen for this trip, it means so much to me. I really think that it will help me discover more about myself and my country."



ZOE JERKE
Great Bend High School
Steamboat Springs,
Colorado, Winner

"I am very excited about being selected for the Colorado leadership camp! Going to the camp will be a great opportunity to enhance my leadership skills."



RYAN THOMPSON
Syracuse High School
Steamboat Springs,
Colorado, Winner

"I am very proud and humbled to be selected for the Steamboat Springs leadership camp! I am excited that through this experience my leadership skills will be tested and amplified."

Cold Weather Accommodation Ends March 15

Spring is just around the corner and with it, warmer weather. Wheatland issues a friendly reminder that the **COLD WEATHER ACCOMMODATION FOR RESIDENTIAL MEMBERS ENDS MARCH 15**. For more information about Wheatland's cold weather accommodation policy, please visit our website. If your service is disconnected for non-pay, please review Wheatland's rules and regulations.

Wheatland's rules and regulations can be found on our website, www.weci.net, under the My Cooperative tab.



The Cold Weather Accommodation for residential members ends March 15.