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## WHEATLAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

## WHEATLAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

EATLAND

Delivering Energy for Life

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative K

#### **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Mark Arnold

President

Josh Young

Vice President

Stacey Addison-Howland

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John Kleysteuber

Treasurer

Wes Campbell

Trustee

Lynn Freese

Trustee

**Bob Hiss** 

Trustee

**Dustin Stansbury** 

Trustee

John Sullivan

Trustee

Mike Thon

Trustee

## **DISTRICT OFFICES**

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

Great Bend — 620-793-4223

200 10th St., 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

101 W. F St., P.O. Box 966 Leoti, KS 67861

Scott City-Main — 620-872-5885

101 S. Main St., P.O. Box 230 Scott City, KS 67871

Syracuse — 620-384-5171

206 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

## **Illuminating Connections**

## Join Us for Our Annual Meeting April 24

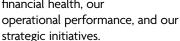
I'd like to cordially invite you to Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc.'s (WEC) 2024 Annual Meeting on April 24, 2024, at the Great Bend Events Center, 3111 10th Street, in Great Bend. Kansas, or at one of our remote meeting locations: Scott City, Leoti, Tribune, Syracuse, Garden City, Harper and Caldwell.

Our annual meeting provides a chance for members like you to **CONNECT** with fellow co-op members, our cooperative staff and leadership, and our board of trustees, not to mention government officials, local business leaders, and other community stakeholders who regularly attend, too.

#### LEARN

This year's annual meeting will provide a unique and enlightening opportunity for our members to stay informed about the **CONNECTIONS** we work to create every day — not just through

the energy we deliver, but through the partnerships we build, projects we help fund, and programs we implement — all to empower the communities we serve. It also allows us to share important updates about our organization's financial health, our



We will share cooperative news and updates, as well as announce and present 14 winners — all children of WEC members — with \$1,000 scholarships.

We will also recognize our four delegates for trips to the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., and the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp held near Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

Continued on page 12H ▶



Bruce W. Mueller

## **SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH**

Mold can build up in cold, dark and damp places around your home. Spring is a smart time to inspect your house. We recommend checking areas where there's less ventilation and areas where moisture accumulates. If you find mold, we suggest calling a professional since there could be additional mold you can't see, and they can help you eliminate the problem.

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The 2024 nominating committee consisted of the following members:

## **DISTRICT 1 - ED CUPP**

1305 Antelope Scott City, KS 67871 620-874-1222

## **DISTRICT 2 – MILAN REIMER**

1294 W. Road P Leoti, KS 67861 620-874-5078

### **DISTRICT 3 - DALE WETZEL**

P.O. Box 331 Tribune, KS 67879 620-376-4792

## **DISTRICT 4 - PAT RILEY**

P.O. Box 925 Svracuse, KS 67878 620-384-4032

## **DISTRICT 5 – JASON DOUGHERTY**

111 Cambridge Court Garden City, KS 67846 620-229-7162 or 620-290-1802

## **DISTRICT 6 – LANE MOORE**

4600 Quail Creek Drive Great Bend, KS 67530 316-209-0322

## **DISTRICT 7 - TROY DIERKING**

P.O. Box 46 Caldwell. KS 67022 620-845-2634 or 620-845-0736

Bylaws Article 4 Section 4 the Nomination committee must meet between Feb. 25 and March 28, 2024. This year's meeting was held March 1, 2024.

# 2024ANNUAL MEETING

## OFFICIAL NOTICE

# **Annual Meeting for Wheatland Members**

The 2024 Annual Meeting of the Members of Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc. will be held Wednesday, April 24, 2024, at the Great Bend Events Center, 3111 10th St. in Great Bend, Kansas, or at any of our remote meeting locations: Scott City, Leoti, Tribune, Syracuse, Garden City, Harper, and Caldwell.

Registration opens at 11 a.m. CDT and lunch will be served at 11:30 a.m. CDT. The business meeting will convene at noon. The following matters will be addressed:

- ▶ Reports of officers, trustees, committees and employees.
- Election results announced.
- Any other business which may come before the meeting.
- Adjournment.

The following trustees have been nominated by the nominating committee for the position of trustee:

## DISTRICT 3

- ► JOHN NIEHUES 612 Haskell St. Tribune, KS 67879
- KEVIN WHITE 1682 Road O Tribune, KS 67879

#### DISTRICT 6

JOHN L. SULLIVAN 5906 16th Street Terrace Great Bend, KS 67530

#### **DISTRICT 7**

MARK ARNOLD 203 S. Market St. Caldwell, KS 67022

STACEY ADDISON-HOWLAND, SECRETARY



## FINANCIAL REPORT

# OPERATING STATEMENT AS OF DEC. 31, 2023 (AUDITED) REVENUES Electric Operating Revenue 86,637,745

Electric Operating Revenue	86,637,745			
ELECTRIC EXPENSES				
Cost of Power	47,697,428			
Operations & Maintenance	7,730,941			
Administrative & General	7,698,647			
Depreciation	11,324,864			
Interest	8,109,954			
Taxes	3,884,649			
Other	102,916			
TOTAL ELECTRIC EXPENSES	86,549,399			
OPERATING MARGINS	88,346			
OPERATING MARGINS NON-OPERATING ITEMS	88,346			
	<b>88,346</b> 321,327			
NON-OPERATING ITEMS				
NON-OPERATING ITEMS Interest Income	321,327			
NON-OPERATING ITEMS Interest Income Gain/(Loss) from Subsidiaries (1)	321,327 (101,646)			
NON-OPERATING ITEMS Interest Income Gain/(Loss) from Subsidiaries (1) Other Capital Credits Margins Without Sunflower/	321,327 (101,646) 388,247			

(I) WATER OPERATIONS. (2) WHEATLAND'S SHARE OF 2023 EARNINGS AND 2022 ALLOCATION TRUE UP OF SUNFLOWER ELECTRIC POWER CORPORATION. THIS ALLOCATION IS NOT IN CASH AND WILL BE AVALLABLE TO WHEATLAND'S MEMBERS AT SUCH TIME AS IT IS PAID OUT BY SUNFLOWER.

BALANCE SHEET AS OF DEC. 31, 2023 (AUDITED)						
ASSETS						
Electric Plant	356,680,137					
Non-Electric Assets	49,775,581					
Less: Depreciation	(122,603,503)					
Net Plant	283,852,215					
Investments	95,717,521					
Cash & Short-Term Investments	748,907					
Receivables	8,167,527					
Materials & Supplies	6,145,701					
Prepayments & Other	622,944					
Other Current Assets & Deferred	440,601					
TOTAL ASSETS	395,695,416					
LIABILITIES						
Long-Term Debt	191,324,343					
Payables	43,220,551					
Other Liabilities	12,133,515					
Total Liabilities	246,678,409					
EQUITIES						
Patronage Capital	148,726,125					
Other Capital	290,882					
Total Equities	149,017,007					
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	395,695,416					

## OPERATING STATISTICS (ELECTRIC)

or Experience (EEEe rikite)								
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023		
Operating Revenue (Electric) (x 1,000)	\$97,823	\$90,617	\$87,945	\$118,226	\$103,879	\$86,638		
Energy Sales (kWh) (x 1,000)	817,355	789,928	794,698	788,260	824,421	782,457		
Average Revenue (\$/kWh)	\$0.1197	\$0.1147	\$0.1107	\$0.1500	\$0.1260	\$0.1107		
Cost of Power (x 1,000)	\$58,249	\$51,049	\$49,493	\$69,462	\$62,808	\$47,697		
Total Purchases (kWh) (x 1,000)	854,876	827,035	832,992	827,135	864,007	820,431		
Average Cost of Power (\$/kWh)	\$0.0681	\$0.0617	\$0.0594	\$0.0840	\$0.0727	\$0.0581		
Other Operations & Maintenance (x 1,000)	\$17,526	\$17,222	\$14,639	\$17,378	\$19,045	\$15,533		
Total Operations & Maintenance (x 1,000)	\$75,775	\$68,271	\$64,132	\$86,840	\$81,853	\$63,230		
Gross Operating Margin (x 1,000)	\$22,048	\$22,346	\$23,813	\$31,386	\$22,026	\$23,408		
Gross Operating Margin (\$/kWh)	\$0.0270	\$0.0283	\$0.0300	\$0.0398	\$0.0267	\$0.0299		
Depreciation Expense (x 1,000)	\$8,987	\$9,759	\$9,923	\$10,657	\$10,640	\$11,325		
Property Taxes (x 1,000)	\$3,416	\$3,767	\$3,819	\$3,451	\$2,895	\$2,802		
Other Taxes (x 1,000)	\$943	\$959	\$974	\$1,023	\$1,047	\$1,080		
Interest Expense (x 1,000)	\$7,315	\$7,752	\$6,828	\$6,988	\$7,033	\$8,110		
Operating Margin (x 1,000)	\$1,387	\$109	\$2,269	\$9,267	\$411	\$88		

## ILLUMINATING CONNECTIONS

## WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24, 2024

GREAT BEND EVENTS CENTER 3111 10TH ST., GREAT BEND

10 A.M. MT / 11 A.M. CDT REGISTRATION

10:30 A.M. MT / 11:30 A.M. CDT LUNCHEON

> 11 A.M. MT / NOON COT BUSINESS MEETING

AT ALL LOCATIONS

OR AT ONE OF OUR REMOTE LOCATIONS:

## **DISTRICT 1 – SCOTT CITY**

Western Kansas Child Advocacy Center 212 E. Fifth St.

## **DISTRICT 2 – LEOTI**

Wheatland Electric Warehouse, 103 West F

## **DISTRICT 3 – TRIBUNE**

Wheatland Electric Warehouse 310 Broadway Ave.

## **DISTRICT 4 - SYRACUSE**

VFW Building, 609 N. Main St.

## **DISTRICT 5 - GARDEN CITY**

Wheatland Electric Office 2005 W. Fulton

#### **DISTRICT 7 - HARPER**

Westview Lodge & Apartments 1300 N. Westview

## **DISTRICT 7 - CALDWELL**

Caldwell Community Building 119 E. First St.



APRIL 2024 KANSAS COUNTRY LIVING

## MAIL-IN BALLOTS MUST BE RECEIVED

## BY APRIL

For the first time in co-op history, trustee elections are by mail-in ballot. Members are encouraged to return their ballots as soon as possible. Ballots were mailed March 29 and must be received NO LATER THAN APRIL 19 using the postage-paid envelope provided.

BALLOTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AT WEC OFFICES.

# MEET YOUR TRUSTEE

DISTRICT 3

GREELEY COUNTY IN KANSAS; KIOWA AND CHEYENNE COUNTIES IN COLORADO



John Niehues

JOHN NIEHUES has lived in the WEC service territory for three years and has worked in the area for eight years. His wife, Chricket, is a physical therapist at Goodland Regional Medical Center. They do not have kids, but have a beloved dog named Roux. Niehues originally grew up in northeast Kansas and has been connected to the energy sector his whole life. His mom works at Jeffrey Energy Center, a coal-fired power plant

that is now a part of Evergy, formerly Westar Energy. His brother also works at the plant as an operator.

He has always been interested in learning more and finding ways to serve his community. Currently, he serves as the superintendent and elementary principal of USD 200 Greeley County Schools in Tribune, Kansas. During his eight years in the district, he has served as a teacher and high school principal, in addition to his current position. He and his wife enjoy spending time with their dog, skiing, traveling to national parks, fishing and scuba diving. He also enjoys attending any events his students are taking part in, wherever it may be. After graduating from Onaga High School, he attended and received a bachelor's degree in education with an emphasis in business from Kansas State University. Over the last eight years, he has also received his master's degree and additional certificates for school leadership from Fort Hays State University. He has been exploring opportunities to pursue a doctorate in the future, he said.

"I have served on the Greeley County Community Development Board for over four years and have served as the board chair for the last two years," Niehues said. "Having been around the energy sector my whole life through family, the opening to serve on the local cooperative felt like an extraordinary opportunity to deepen my knowledge while also serving my community. While not running with a specific agenda, I expect to continually learn about the industry at every chance. Using that knowledge to promote responsible stewardship of WEC resources and investing to ensure continued success. I think my experience with the industry and my current job managing the day-to-day operations and policies of a school district could be both my biggest contribution as well as the skills I bring, making me a great fit and benefit for the board."



**Kevin White** 

As a 1984 graduate of Greeley County High School, **KEVIN WHITE** has resided in Greeley County for 20 years. He has been married to his high school sweetheart, Lori, for 35 years. The couple has one daughter, a son-in-law, and three grandchildren, all residing in Greeley County. Horseback riding, golf and following his grandchildren's sporting events are his favorite hobbies.

White is currently farming 1,500 acres of crop ground and has had a cow/calf operation in the past. In May 2010, he went to work for Foley Equipment as a Petroleum Engine Product Support Representative where he is currently employed.

He started his career with Sunflower Electric Gas Division in Greeley County. When the plant was shutdown, he transferred to the Sunflower Electric coal-fired plant in Holcomb, Kansas, for a short time. While in Garden City, he was a member of Garden City Fire and Rescue for three years. He moved over to be a reserve deputy with the Finney County Sheriff's reserves, later being voted to captain of the reserves by his peers. While a deputy, he received an award for 500 hours of volunteer service.

He joined the Kansas Army National Guard in 1986 for eight years and was the gun chief on an 8-inch howitzer. At that time, he worked for Northern Natural Gas located in Holcomb, Kansas, for six years, which was purchased by Enron. When Enron failed, he went to work for Exline Inc. in Salina, Kansas, to perform sales duties. Later, he was promoted to division manager over the ignition and automation division for 10 years. As one of the seven managers, he was responsible for the day-to-day operations along with the strategic planning for the long-term successes of the 125-year-old company. While in Salina, he was a member and commander of the Saline County Sheriff's Mounted Patrol and Rescue Squad.

When he was nominated for the WEC's Board of Trustees, he thought it would be interesting to learn the inner workings of an electric cooperative.

If elected, he hopes to be a liaison for the members and employees in

"I think my biggest contribution to the board will be my wellrounded experience in management and operations of many different businesses," he said.

WEC is governed by a 10-member board of trustees, who play a significant role in setting the policies and strategic direction for the co-op, as well as making financial decisions.

WEC's mail-in voting will be managed by Survey and Ballot Systems, a national data solutions company. Election results will be announced at this year's 2024 annual meeting. Find more details on Pages 12B and 12C. Learn more at www.weci.net/trustee-ballots-will-be-mailed-march-29, scan the QR code at right, call your local office or email memberservices@weci.net.

SCAN TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MAIL-IN VOTING



# NOMINEES

DISTRICT 6

**GREAT BEND, KANSAS** 



John L. Sullivan

JOHN SULLIVAN was appointed to the WEC Board in 2021 to fill a vacated seat by an outgoing trustee. He has served for the past two years as a trustee representing District 6 in WEC's service territory, which encompasses the city of Great Bend. The past two years have been enjoyable for Sullivan, learning more about the electric industry but also challenging with all the director development classes he has taken. He

has worked in the grain cooperative business for the past 28 years, and the focus remains the same between cooperatives: service to its members and the communities they serve.

Sullivan, a native of Logan, Kansas, is the chief financial officer of the Great Bend Cooperative Association and has lived in Great Bend for 26 years. Prior to that he was a certified public accountant for Lindburg Vogel, where he audited local grain cooperatives. A graduate of Western Illinois University, where he also played college football, he received his bachelor's degree in business finance. He also holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from Wichita State University.

He has served as an ambassador for the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce for 13 years, is currently a member of the Great Bend Optimist Club and past president, has served as treasurer for a local Boy Scouts troop for 12 years, and has also served as a PTA president for a local school.

He is married to his wife, Annie, of 35 years, and together they have two children: Erin and Blake. He is a big advocate for Sully's Foundation, which promotes epilepsy education and sudden unexpected death in epilepsy (SUDEP) awareness. The foundation was started in honor of his late son Blake. In his spare time, Sullivan enjoys spending time with his family hiking in the mountains and biking around Barton County, enjoying the countryside. He has a passion for his family heritage and can be found caring for his grandfather's homestead near his hometown during his time off.

## DISTRICT 7

HARPER, KINGMAN, SUMNER AND **SEDGWICK COUNTIES IN KANSAS** 



Mark Arnold

MARK ARNOLD and wife, Leslie, have lived in Caldwell, Kansas, since 2004. They have two daughters and two grandchildren. They enjoy traveling, especially seeing their family.

Arnold graduated from Oklahoma State University in December 1987. After working for the Wichita Eagle for two years, he began his banking career in April 1990 in Braman, Oklahoma. He currently serves as the CEO of Stock Exchange Bank in Caldwell where he has worked since 1997.

His community involvement in Caldwell includes serving as the town's mayor from 2005-2018, serving as an assistant middle school football and basketball coach for four years, volunteering as a little league sports coach, serving as golf course treasurer, and serving as associate chairman for a 2023 school bond issue (passed), among others. His family attends the First United Methodist Church of Caldwell.

Currently, he serves as the president of the WEC Board of Trustees. He has 12 years of experience, seven at WEC and five at Kay Electric Cooperative in Blackwell, Oklahoma. This past year, he earned his Director Gold Credential, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) highest level of director education. He is the WEC representative on the Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. state association board.

The inspiration for serving on the board comes from growing up on a farm served by co-op lines and seeing the commitment that went in to "keeping the lights on."

"While initially I didn't realize what all was involved in that process, as cooperative members, my family had a great appreciation for the employees of the cooperative and their work ethic," Arnold said.

During his time on the board, he has discovered that the cooperative is a catalyst in the communities it serves. "In addition to providing electrical service, Wheatland awards scholarships and grants, they pay substantial real estate taxes on infrastructure, and most of all their employment base produces a significant economic impact. The employees of the cooperative are the shoppers who spend dollars at the local stores, they are the parents who send kids to local schools, and they are volunteers who provide bodies that support local activities."

His goal is for WEC to continue to provide opportunities to the members and communities that parallel the opportunities provided in more metropolitan settings. To accomplish this, he will strive to maintain a balance between providing safe, affordable and reliable energy with forward-thinking strategic planning, according to Arnold.



# GEARS

Mark Kircher, WEC's staking technician, poses with a 2023 Ford F-150 Lightning, the newest addition to the fleet of operations vehicles in Great Bend.

WEC Employee
Pioneers Electric
Transition with
Ford F-150
Lightning

When MARK KIRCHER, a staking technician at Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc., found out he would be assigned an all-electric truck at work, he admits he was a bit skeptical.

The rumors he had heard about electric vehicles — they're slow, inconvenient and unreliable — colored his expectations about using an electric pickup at work every day. However, those expectations quickly shifted after he first jumped into his new 2023 Ford F-150 Lightning, the latest addition to the fleet of operations vehicles in Great Bend.

"It really surprised me," Kircher said. "It rides really, really nice, and it's very, very fast. I just could not believe how much torque these vehicles have — it will set you back in your seat!"

The Ford F-150 Lightning, a highly anticipated all-electric incarnation of America's best-selling pickup, was first introduced to consumers nationwide in early 2022

and represents about 3% (25,000) of all F-150 vehicle sales annually (750,000), according to the automaker.

In an effort to lower operational costs, reduce emissions, and utilize the performance features that EVs offer, WEC now has two EVs in our fleet. WEC's first EV purchase was a 2021 Hyundai Kona Electric, which is used by WEC employees, for public education ride-and-drive events across our service territory, and during safety demonstrations with first responders.

The new Ford Lightning, with its midsize battery capable of accepting a 50amp charge, retains 230 range miles on a full charge and takes about 10 hours to fully charge on a Level 2 EV charger, according to Kircher.

The range miles do not always fully represent how far the vehicle can travel on a full charge since factors like weather, temperature and load play a role in battery life and vehicle performance.

## In an effort to lower operational costs, reduce emissions, and utilize the performance features that EVs offer, WEC now has two EVs in our fleet.

As a staking technician, Kircher meets with cooperative members to discuss electrical needs, design both overhead and underground infrastructure, and make sure members get all their questions answered before, during and after a project. For his purposes driving in and around Great Bend's 4-mile radius, the Lightning more than serves his needs and even offers additional advantages that he hadn't expected.

"The Lightning is a good fit for District 6 (Great Bend) because of our urban area," Kircher said. "With the location of the battery being in the frame, it balances the truck really well, too, and I have no trouble in the snow and ice because the weight is so well distributed."

Level 2 chargers typically add about 32 miles of driving range per hour of charge, which is why most individuals who own electric vehicles charge them at home during the evening or overnight, when electricity is cheapest to produce and demand on the electric grid is lowest.

WEC now owns three ChargePoint Level 2 EV charging stations, which are publicly available at our offices in Garden City, Great Bend and Harper. Each charging station features two individual charging ports to charge two vehicles simultaneously and are accessible 24/7 through the ChargePoint app on a smartphone or other internet-connected device.

WEC's charging stations represent three of about 500 public EV charging stations across Kansas

(with about 1,100 individual charging ports), according to the Alternative Fuels Data Center of the U.S. Department of Energy. Our charging stations connect WEC's southwest and central Kansas service territory to a much larger national EV charging network of about 62,000 stations (Level 2 or faster) across the country.

Kircher admits getting used to driving the Ford Lightning has required a few changes in his workday, including making sure the truck is plugged in to be charged at least once weekly and checking weather stats like wind speed and temperature before making longer trips, like those to WEC's Garden City office about 125 miles away.

These changes are minor, however, when compared to the high efficiency cost benefits offered by EVs like the Lightning, including high fuel economy, lower operating costs, reduced vehicle maintenance and performance features that make the driving experience both smoother and safer.

"I really must watch myself, because it makes almost no noise and on a couple of occasions I accidentally left it on," Kircher said, and laughed, adding that it's been fun to drive a pick-up truck that can accelerate like a sports car.

"Everyone's got this misconception that EVs are slow, that they're like a go-kart, and boy they're not — they've got a heck of a lot of torque!"





Members of the **Great Bend Fire** Department explore WEC's electric vehicles during an on-site vehicle safety demonstration on Feb. 29, 2024.

## **Illuminating Connections** Continued from page 12A ▶

Cooperative governance is based on the principle of **DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL**, which means that members like you have a say in how the cooperative is run. Participate in the democratic process by **VOICING** your concerns at our annual meeting.

In addition, your vote is also your voice. Cooperative members will be voting for trustee representation by mail for the first time in cooperative history. Ballots were mailed March 29 and MUST BE RETURNED BY APRIL 19. at least five days prior to this year's annual meeting on April 24, 2024. This year's election results will be announced at the 2024 annual meeting.

#### CONNECT

In addition to our primary meeting location in Great Bend, for the sixth consecutive year we'll host **CONCURRENT ANNUAL MEETINGS** at the following WEC area offices or service locations: Scott City, Leoti, Tribune, Syracuse, Garden City, Harper and Caldwell. A full list of meeting address locations is available on Page 12C of this month's magazine and our website. As always, members are encouraged to contact their local WEC office with any questions.

Lunch will be provided at each location, including locations where the annual meeting will be streamed, and co-op members like you can LEARN, VOICE, CONNECT and WIN door prizes (if selected), including our GRAND-PRIZE GIVEAWAY!

The 2024 annual meeting is a celebration of the connections that bind communities together. By illuminating these connections, the cooperative aims to empower its members, foster collaboration, and build a brighter future for the communities it serves and fulfill our mission of **DELIVERING ENERGY FOR LIFE.** I hope you are able to attend our annual meeting in Great Bend or any of the remote locations.

UNTIL NEXT TIME. TAKE CARE.

