

WHEATLAND
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



NEWS

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FROM THE MANAGER

October is National Co-op Month



Bruce W. Mueller

Wheatland Electric joins 30,000 cooperatives nationwide in October to celebrate National Co-op Month, which recognizes the

many ways cooperatives are committed to strengthening the local communities they serve.

Under the theme “**BUILD BACK FOR IMPACT;**” this year’s Co-op Month is also a chance to leverage our shared cooperative identity in the face of some of the biggest challenges we face. All cooperatives adhere to the same set of seven principles: 1) voluntary and open membership; 2) democratic member control; 3) member’s economic participation; 4) autonomy and independence; 5) education, training and information; 6) cooperation

among cooperatives; and (7) concern for community.

Today, Wheatland Electric serves more than 25,000 members in 14 Kansas counties and three Colorado counties and maintains over 4,000 miles of distribution power lines across western and south central Kansas and eastern Colorado. Delivering safe, reliable and competitively priced electricity is our top priority.

As a co-op, we are well-suited to meet the needs of the community because we are locally governed. Wheatland employees live here in the communities we serve. Our board members — who help set long-term priorities for the co-op — live on co-op lines. These board members have been elected to the position by neighbors like you.

We know our members have a valuable perspective. That’s why we continually seek your input through community events, social media or

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SAFETY Tip of the Month

Always be sure and test the weight before you lift something up completely. It may be too late if you realize a few seconds later that it’s too heavy or cumbersome for you. An easy way to do this is to nudge it with your foot first. Have an alternative means of transport if you feel like the weight has exceeded your expectation.

Knowledge is POWER

BY SHAJIA DONECKER

Our engineering intern's summer experience at Wheatland Electric



When **NICOLE TARPEIN** first started as an intern at Wheatland Electric, the University of Kansas senior knew she wanted to build a career in power engineering.

What she didn't know was how a distribution cooperative like ours works day to day, across multiple departments, and the many engineering challenges that exist to deliver energy for life to our members.

"I knew there had to be someone telling the lineworkers where they needed to be, but I didn't know there would be a dispatcher," she said. "And then there's the mapping department, operations, communications ... and I learned, 'Oh, this is how it's done — this is how the whole cooperative works!'"

In fact, one of the most surprising things Tarpein learned after arriving for her summer internship in May was how many individuals comprised the engineering department — just one, our Manager of

Kyle Strickert, substation maintenance foreman (far right), visits with Nicole Tarpein, engineering intern (center), and Brandon Barrett, manager of engineering, at the Irsik and Doll substation in Finney County.



Above: Kyle Strickert, substation maintenance foreman (left), explains control room operations inside at the Irsik and Doll substation in Finney County. Also pictured are Nicole Tarpein, engineering intern (center), and Brandon Barrett, manager of engineering (right).



Right: Nicole Tarpein, an engineering student from the University of Kansas, spent this summer at Wheatland Electric to work on various project and further her career in power engineering.

Engineering Brandon Barrett.

“I come from a college where I’m being recruited by engineering firms in and around Kansas City — and there, you’re on a team of multiple engineers. When I got here, it was like, oh, it’s just me and one other guy,” she lightheartedly laughed.

The Sublette native who is finishing her last semester at the University of Kansas’ School of Engineering this fall completed her summer gig for Wheatland at the end of August and worked on multiple projects under the guidance of Barrett during her time here.

Barrett, a professional engineer who has been with Wheatland for nearly a decade and also started at the cooperative in 2009 as a college intern, said having another analytical mind around was enormously valuable to him and to the department’s goals and objectives.

The manager of engineering said our summer intern assisted with multiple projects during her short stint including but not limited to the following areas: researching 2018 Arc Flash revisions and designing an Arc Flash calculator in Microsoft Excel; updating the Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure plan; learning to use engineering analysis software to complete a voltage drop study; completing a line loss study for all of Wheatland’s substations; and studying residential load profiles for time-of-use rates for at-home electrical vehicle charging, just to name a few.

Many of the projects Tarpein completed were related to system planning, safety, compliance, and more, all which improves operations, helps keep our employees safe, and increases Wheatland’s financial position, too, according to Barrett.

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“... Nicole was able to complete multiple projects that needed attention and point out improvements along the way.” **BRANDON BARRETT, MANAGER OF ENGINEERING**

Knowledge is Power Continued from page 16C ▶

“I honestly didn’t expect much from an intern with little experience in the power industry, but Nicole was able to complete multiple projects that needed attention and point out improvements along the way,” Barrett said. “She probably would have gotten more done if I didn’t keep running out of projects!”

Tarpein, who chose to participate in Wheatland’s summer internship program due to its proximity to her hometown of Sublette and her interest in power engineering, was hired by the cooperative in a competitive selection process.

Her interest in this specific field began early in her undergraduate studies, thanks in part to a power generation course she took a few years ago, she said.

“In engineering, they try to teach you a broad scope of everything. Well, we got to the power stuff in my Circuits II course, and I thought this is fun! I can do this,” she said. “In my power generation course, in lieu of a final exam, we had to write a paper. I did mine about renewable energy sources in Europe and the progress they were making. I submitted that, and I got a response back that I was doing excellent work. And I was like, ‘Good, this isn’t just in my head! I’m actually good at this!’”

At KU, the engineering student belongs to an academic sorority, Alpha Sigma Kappa, Women in Technical Studies, which brings together like-minded female students in the sciences, technology, engineering and math and is dedicated to encouraging and supporting women in these generally male-dominated fields of study.

Tarpein said the moral support and camaraderie from her fellow sorority sisters has been invaluable during her time in college and has helped other female students like herself take on challenges — both academic and professional.

“I remember specifically, during my junior year, I was talking to one of my friends about a tough class, and I was just like can you help me?” Tarpein said. “And she said, ‘Of course, I’m not just going to help you — we’re going to get all the girls to graduation!’”



Brandon Barrett, manager of engineering (left), discusses details of the Irsik and Doll substation with Kyle Strickert, substation maintenance foreman (far right) and Nicole Tarpein, engineering intern (center).

With her own graduation on the horizon, Tarpein is considering whether she wants to continue with higher education and attend graduate school or attempt to join the engineering workforce, somewhere in the Midwest preferably.

Tarpein said her internship at Wheatland has helped solidify her interest in power engineering and opened her eyes to how cooperatives like ours not only serve our members but how they compare to larger utilities and how we fit within the larger electric industry, too.

“This entire experience has been really insightful because constantly during meetings and webinars I attended, there were a lot of big utilities talking about things big utilities do. And we had to ask ourselves, ‘How is this going to affect us? Because we’re not the big utility,’” she said. “There’s so many co-ops around the country and they didn’t grow into a big conglomerate. They need to know this info just as much as anybody else, and they need to be prepared for their members. And that insight was eye-opening to me — what about the little guy? The little guy affects me and my family, so let’s bring them to the table.”

There’s so many co-ops around the country ... and they need to be prepared for their members. And that insight was eye-opening to me — what about the little guy? The little guy affects me and my family, so let’s bring them to the table. NICOLE TARPEIN



GRAND OPENING!

**200
10TH ST
GREAT
BEND, KS**

4:30 PM
to 7:00 PM

**MONDAY
OCTOBER
25
2021**



You're Invited!

Come see our new Great Bend facility

PLUS



Test-drive Wheatland's first
100% electric vehicle

AND



Look for the Big Red Van and
donate to your
local food bank

Ribbon Cutting Open House Dinner

Giving Goodness

A CHARITY CHALLENGE
ON FACEBOOK!

**FOLLOW
US ON
FACEBOOK TO
PARTICIPATE!**



How to Play

Starting Oct. 25, nominate a local non-profit for the chance to win a \$1,000 Sharing Success grant!

How to Win

One of our "FINAL FOUR" will win this tournament of charities by rallying their Facebook fans!

October is National Co-op Month Continued from page 16A ▶

the annual meeting. We want to hear from you.

Our close connection to the community ensures we get a firsthand perspective on local priorities, enabling us to make more informed decisions on long-term investments, such as technology upgrades and equipment.

In addition to providing the vital power co-op members depend on, Wheatland Electric plays a vital role in the communities we serve with our **CRAM THE VAN** food drive. Since 2014, we've helped collect more than 63 tons (127,733 lbs.) of food donations, which have all been delivered to the local food banks in the communities in which they were donated.

We Cram the Van because we care. And every year, our members show us why the travel and time is worth all the toil and sweat. We know there are thousands of families, children and seniors within our communities who struggle with hunger. Providing some relief to our local food banks to help with these needs are why we Cram the Van every year.

At Wheatland, we're hopeful for what's ahead on our road! We're excited to make **CRAM THE VAN 2021** our best

year yet and assist our local food pantries with some of the supplies they need to power through the holiday season and steer themselves into the new year.

I tell you about all of these efforts not to boast about Wheatland, but to explain how much we care about the communities we serve.

We view our role as a catalyst for good and making our spots on the map a better place. This sums up the Seventh Cooperative Principle, **CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY**, which our cooperative routinely celebrates. To me, this principle is the essential DNA of Wheatland Electric, and it sets us apart from other electric utilities.

In 1948, Wheatland Electric was built by the community to serve the community and that's what we'll continue to do — **BUILD BACK FOR IMPACT!** National Co-op Month is the perfect time to reflect on these principles that have stood the test of time but also provide a framework for the future and for Wheatland's mission: **DELIVERING ENERGY FOR LIFE.**

UNTIL NEXT TIME, TAKE CARE.

YES WE CAN!



CASH OR CAN DONATION
grab a meal + be entered
to win a TV!

COMING SOON TO A LOCATION NEAR YOU!

OCT. 1 CALDWELL 5:30 PM
Caldwell High School football game,
31 N Osage St.

OCT. 14 SCOTT CITY 4:30 PM
Scott City Middle School football game,
809 W 9th

OCT. 16 HARPER 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM
Fall Fest, Harper Fair Barn, 821 Central St.

OCT. 22 CONWAY SPRINGS 5:30 PM
Conway Springs High School football game,
607 St Louis St.

OCT. 25 GREAT BEND 4:30 PM - 7:00 PM
New Wheatland Electric Office, 200 10th St.

OCT. 28 SCOTT CITY 5:30 PM - 8:00 PM
Boo Bash, Scott City Middle School,
809 W. 9th St.

OCT. 30 SCOTT CITY 11:00 AM - 3:00 PM
FALL FINALE!
Spencer Flight + Education Center,
300 S Mesquite Rd

2021

OR MAKE A CASH
DONATION TO YOUR
LOCAL FOOD BANK AT
WWW.WECI.NET



YES WE CAN

Heather Rufenacht, member services coordinator (far left), and Tara Watson, staking technician, serve students at the Greeley County High School football game.

Even in our own communities, children and adults facing **POVERTY** are struggling with hunger.

In 2014, our cooperative set out to find a new way to expand our involvement in the seventh cooperative principle, "**CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY**." We established this program to collect non-perishable food items for the local food banks in our service territory.

Every year, **WE CRAM THE VAN BECAUSE WE CARE** about providing relief to these families. And every year, our members show us why the travel and time is worth all the work.

THANK YOU for your donation and support, to help **Cram the Van** for your local food bank!

Thank you, Wheatland Electric members, for helping us Cram the Van in 2021! In September, we made stops in Leoti, Tribune, Holcomb, Syracuse and Great Bend to cram our big, red van. But, we still have many more scheduled events through the end of October, and we hope to see you at one of these locations!

Check out when we'll be stopping in your town (schedule on page 16F). When you come see us, you can make a cash or can donation that we'll take directly to your local food bank. As our thank you, you'll receive a hamburger or hot dog meal on us, and you can even enter to win a big screen TV!

Every year, we Cram the Van because we care. And every year, members like you show us why the sweat and toil are worth all the effort. Yes WE Can, Cram the Van!

If you can't make it to one of our events, you can still help us **CRAM THE VAN** for YOUR local food bank. Now through the end of October, drop off your cash or can donation at your local Wheatland office or make an online donation at www.weci.net/cram-van-food-drive. For every \$10 you donate online, we'll enter you to



Above: Riley Waggoner, lineman apprentice (front), and Ross Rufenacht, volunteer, grill hamburgers at the Greeley County High School football game on Sept. 10, 2021, in Tribune.



Left: Greeley County High School football game attendees enter to win a big screen TV. Any member who makes a can or cash donation at one of our Cram the Van events can enter to win!



Bottom Left: Pam Brungardt, director of consumer services, serves hot dogs to members at the Longhorn Festival at Holcomb High School on Sept. 14, 2021.

**OCT
30**

SPENCER FLIGHT & EDUCATION CENTER
300 S. Mesquite Rd, Scott City, KS 67871



FALL FINALE



YES WE CAN!



11:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.
**FACE PAINTING + PUMPKIN
DECORATING + HAYRACK RIDES
+ CANDY DROP @ 3PM**



**DONATE CASH OR CANS IN EXCHANGE
FOR LUNCH + ENTER TO WIN A TV!**