



An Equal Opportunity Provider & Employer

101 Main, P.O. Box 230, Scott City, KS 67871
620-872-5885 | www.weci.net

WHEATLAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

NEWS

WHEATLAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Josh Young

Vice President

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Treasurer

Maribeth Benker

Trustee

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John Sullivan

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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

Democratic Member Control

The power of participation

As a member-owned cooperative, Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc. (WEC) exists to serve you — not shareholders or outside interests. That distinction is more than a statement; it is a responsibility we uphold through the cooperative principles that guide everything we do. One of the most important of these is the second cooperative principle: **DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL**.

For the third consecutive year, WEC trustees will be elected through a **MAIL-IN BALLOT**, ensuring every member has a convenient and accessible way to participate in this vital process. This approach reflects the very essence of what it means to be a cooperative. Your vote is your voice, and through trustee elections, members directly influence the leadership, policies, and long-term direction of your cooperative.

At WEC, trustees are elected from among the membership itself. These individuals live and work in the same communities we serve, face the same challenges, and share the same commitment to reliable and competitively priced electricity. This structure ensures that our leadership remains rooted in local perspectives and fully accountable to you, our members.

Democratic Member Control is not limited to elections alone — it thrives when members stay informed and engaged. I encourage you to participate in the **2026 ANNUAL MEETING, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2026**, at the **GREAT BEND EVENTS CENTER IN GREAT BEND, KANSAS**.

For added convenience, members may also attend at one of our **SEVEN REMOTE LOCATIONS** across our service territory. The annual meeting is an important opportunity to hear updates, ask questions, and engage directly with cooperative leadership.

I also invite you to learn more about the trustee election process and the mail-in ballot system, which are detailed on **PAGE 12E OF THIS PUBLICATION**. Understanding how your cooperative operates empowers you to take an active role in shaping its future.

By participating in elections, attending meetings, and staying informed, you help strengthen the foundation of WEC. Guided by our mission of **DELIVERING ENERGY FOR LIFE**, we remain steadfast in our dedication to serving you, our members, and the communities we are proud to call home.

UNTIL NEXT TIME, TAKE CARE.



Bruce W. Mueller

46 Years on the Line

RANDY COLEMAN AND A CAREER BUILT



TOP: Randy Coleman's employee ID card from 1980, issued shortly after he began his career as a warehouseman in Syracuse. More than 45 years later, he still has it today.



RIGHT: A photo of Coleman from a 1994 employee handbook, when he served as a journeyman lineman.

When **RANDY COLEMAN** walked into a Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc. (WEC) warehouse on Feb. 1, 1980, fresh out of high school, he wasn't thinking about a career — let alone one that would span almost half a century.

He was a Syracuse kid looking for a steady paycheck and a sense of direction. What he found instead was a profession, a second family, and a front-row seat to over four and a half decades of change in the electric cooperative world.

"I really didn't know what I was going to do out of high school," he admitted. "But once I started working around the guys in the shop, they all had a real camaraderie and got along great. I wanted to be part of that."

That desire — to belong, to work hard, and to do something meaningful — quietly shaped the next 46 years of his professional life.

FROM THE WAREHOUSE TO THE LINE CREW

On Feb. 2, 2026, Coleman's professional journey will come full circle, as he retires almost 46 years to the day after his journey first began.

His career began humbly. Hired as a warehouseman in Syracuse, he spent his early days insulating buildings and tackling whatever odd jobs needed doing. His entry into the cooperative came through a familiar small-town connection: his aunt, Barbara Coleman, who worked as a consumer service representative at the time.

"Back then, we didn't have a nepotism policy," he said and laughed.

After about a year, warehouse work slowed. What could have been the end instead became a turning point. When Coleman was offered a spot on the line crew, he didn't hesitate.

"That's where I wanted to be anyhow — that's where the money was," he said, warmheartedly.



Randy Coleman, a district manager, is WEC's longest serving employee in its 78-year history, with a record 46 years on the job. He retires on Feb. 2, 2026.

ON WORK ETHIC, SAFETY AND SERVICE

But what he didn't have was experience, training, or even a basic understanding of electricity.

"I knew absolutely nothing," he said. "But I knew it would be a good job."

LEARNING THE TRADE THE HARD WAY

Coleman entered the lineman apprenticeship program on Feb. 1, 1981, exactly a year after he was hired, at a time when the job looked very different than it does today. At the time, there were no bucket trucks stationed in Syracuse — only digger derricks and a single bucket truck based in Finney County, he recalled.

"We climbed a lot more poles back then," Coleman said. "The work was more physical. We didn't have battery-powered tools — just crescent wrenches and elbow grease."

The apprenticeship, which lasted three years, was demanding, especially the math: voltage drop calculations, a little bit of trigonometry, series and parallel circuits. Math wasn't Coleman's strongest subject, but strong mentors made the difference. He credits instructors like his former line superintendents, Norman Williams, and Roy Largent, for guiding him through.

In 1984, Coleman completed the program and became a journeyman lineman — a milestone that brought more responsibility, more trust, and a welcome raise.

"It meant everything," he said. "You could go on call. You could do all the hot work. You were finally doing what you trained for."

Despite the risks, fear wasn't something he dwelled on.

"You trusted your training. If they thought I was ready, I figured I probably was," he said, jokingly.

STORMS, ICE AND UNFORGETTABLE DAYS

Over the years, Coleman worked through countless outages and storms, but a few moments stand out — especially an extreme blizzard in the mid-1980s.

"The highways were closed. You couldn't see 20 feet in front of you," he recalled. "We were working double-circuit poles in Garden City, and the wind just howled all day. Everybody's face was iced over."

Then, just as the crew prepared to energize the line, something remarkable happened.

"The wind just stopped," Coleman said. "The sun came out right at sundown. We energized the line — but that was probably the coldest I've ever been in my life."

Later storms, including crippling ice at the turn of the calendar year from 2006 to 2007 and Winter Storm Ursa in 2017, brought their own challenges, though by then Coleman was working as an area-wide supervisor, behind the desk.

Continued on page 12D ►

We climbed a lot more poles back then. The work was more physical. We didn't have battery-powered tools — just crescent wrenches and elbow grease.

RANDY COLEMAN

46 Years on the Line

Continued from page 12C ▶

“(Those experiences) weren’t as bad for me, but they were really bad for the guys,” he added, referring to lineworkers.

But those experiences didn’t push him away from the work. Instead, they deepened his respect for the people doing it.

FROM THE LINE TO LEADERSHIP

Coleman was promoted to area wide supervisor in 1997. It wasn’t a move he’d been chasing, but he knew the opportunity might not come again. Still, the transition was difficult.

“Being on the line crew was the happiest I ever was,” he said. “The camaraderie and doing stuff after work together — it’s hard to replace.”

What helped was credibility. Over the decades, Coleman had done the work himself, and the lineworkers across the districts he supervised knew it.

“They knew that I knew,” he said. “That made it easier for us to work together.”

As a leader, he emphasized common sense and compassion — especially during harsh working conditions.

“I’ve always told them, ‘You’ve got to be smart enough to get in the truck and warm up once in a while,’” he said.

Longtime colleague Curtis Peterson, WEC manager of operations, said Coleman’s leadership was built on collaboration and trust formed over decades of working together. The two met in the early 1990s and worked closely across field and leadership roles, relying on one another for perspective and problem-solving.

“It’s always been good to have somebody you can call — a lifeline — to bounce ideas off of,” Peterson said. “We’ve been colleagues and friends for nearly 30 years, and I’m definitely going to miss him.”

A COOPERATIVE, A FAMILY

In 2018, Coleman was promoted to district manager, overseeing multiple counties across WEC’s service territory, including Scott, Greeley, Wichita and Hamilton. In that role, his philosophy remained simple: service comes first.

“Members are always right, no matter what,” he said. “They’re good people, and I helped make sure Wheatland has always taken good care of them.”

Coleman said what sets a cooperative apart is its member-driven mission.

It’s been a really great place to work — they’ve been like my family for over 40 years.

RANDY COLEMAN



This photo from January 2002 captures Randy Coleman (back row, far right) and fellow crew members at the time responding to a winter storm in Butler, Kansas, through a mutual aid agreement — when electric co-ops come together to help restore power during major storms. Also pictured (back row, from left) are Walt Lovins and Matt Riley. Front row: Colton Green, Randy Rogers, Tyson Ryff and Willard Sanders.

“We’re not here for profit — we’re here for our members,” he added.

That model — and the culture it creates — has also defined his career and the relationships he’s built with colleagues over the decades.

“It’s been a really great place to work — they’ve been like my family for over 40 years,” he added.

LEGACY, LESSONS AND WHAT COMES NEXT

When asked what he’s most proud of, Coleman doesn’t point to projects or titles. He talks about people. He recalls a tough foreman early in his career, who taught him work ethic and safety the hard way — and how those lessons stayed with him.

“When I first started — Jerry Valentine — he was very hard to work for, very particular, and not a joy, trust me,” Coleman recalled. “But he taught me work ethic, safety and many many things, which I appreciate. I like to think I’ve passed some of that on to the younger guys.”

For the last eight years, he’s helped train apprentices at WEC, emphasizing responsibility and safety above all else.

“Always wear your rubber gloves. Follow your five safety rules,” he said. “Everybody I’ve seen get hurt didn’t do one of those things.”

As retirement approaches, Coleman looks forward to spending more time with family and grandkids, and traveling — something that was difficult while being on call around the clock. Still, leaving won’t be easy.

“It’s been a great career,” he said quietly. “I’ve got a lot of very, very good friends here.”

In an industry defined by infrastructure and equipment, Coleman’s career reminds us that it is people — working together, looking out for one another — who truly keep the lights on. While the power lines he helped build will continue to deliver electricity, the work ethic, leadership and care he passed on to others will endure just as long.

Trustee Elections Will Be Held by Mail This March

4 board seats open for election

Members of Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc., will receive trustee election ballots by mail in late March.

Ballots will be mailed by **MARCH 25** and must be returned by **APRIL 17**, which is at least five days prior to this year's annual meeting, according to WEC's bylaws. WEC's 2026 annual meeting will be held on **APRIL 22, 2026**, in Great Bend, Kansas.

The primary meeting in **GREAT BEND** will be livestreamed to seven additional remote meeting locations: Scott City, Leoti, Tribune, Syracuse, Garden City, Harper and Caldwell.

Members across our service territory are encouraged to attend any of these meeting locations to hear cooperative news and updates, enjoy a meal, ask questions and enter for door prizes. For more information on this year's annual meeting, see Page 12H.

For the third year in a row, WEC's mail-in voting will be conducted and managed by Survey and Ballot Systems, a national data solutions company and trusted third-party provider, based in Eden Prairie, Minnesota.

Members with questions about our mail-in voting process are encouraged to call their local WEC office or email us at **MEMBERSERVICES@WECI.NET**. WEC is governed by a **10-MEMBER BOARD OF TRUSTEES** elected by the cooperative's membership.

One board seat in each of the following districts is up for election this year:

WEC'S BYLAWS ALLOW FOR 2 METHODS FOR TRUSTEE NOMINATIONS

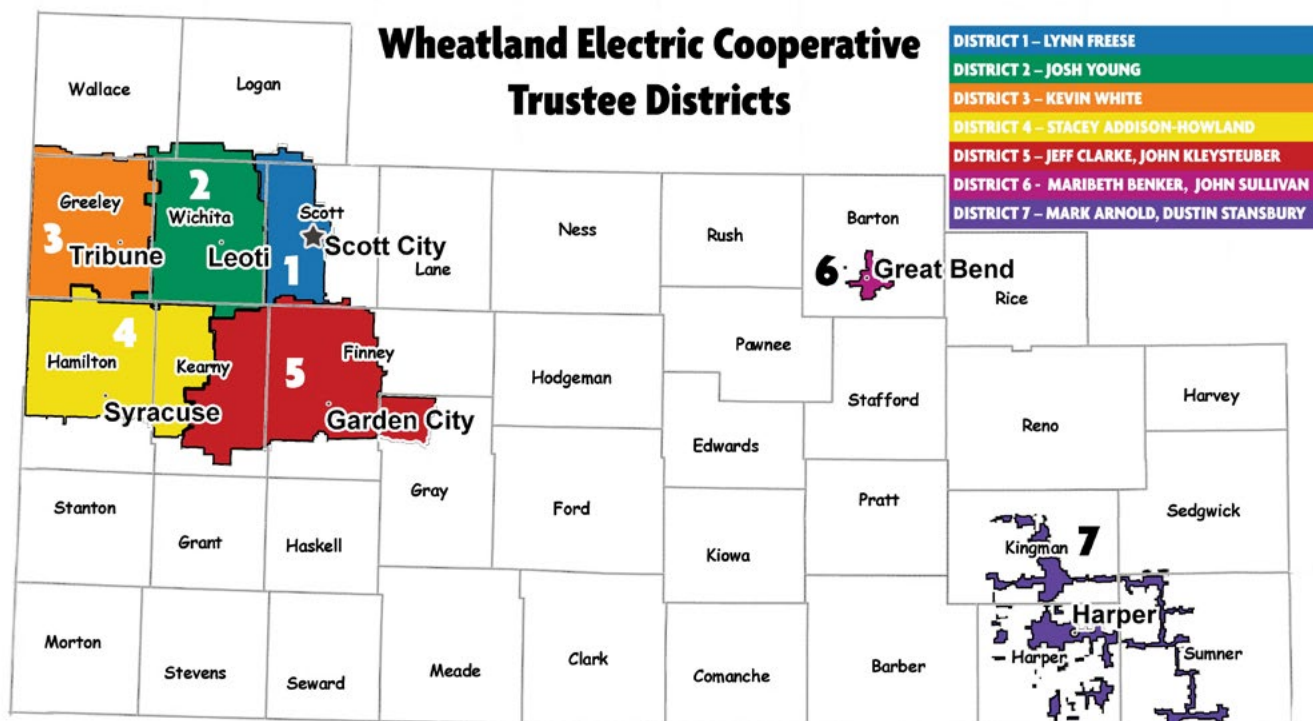
NOMINATION BY THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The board of trustees appoints a nominating committee made up of one member from each of our seven districts. Members should contact WEC to get the contact information for their fellow member who represents their district on the nominating committee or contact Jim McVay, WEC's general counsel, at 620-793-4223 or jmcvay@weci.net, **BY FEB. 24** if they are interested in being nominated.

NOMINATION BY A PETITION OF MEMBER

Twenty-five or more members of WEC can nominate any member as a trustee candidate. Nominations by petition must be sent to WEC **BY MARCH 8**. Members interested in running should contact Jim McVay, WEC's general counsel, at 620-793-4223 or jmcvay@weci.net, **BY FEB. 24**.

- ▶ **DISTRICT 1** — Scott and Logan counties, Kansas
- ▶ **DISTRICT 2** — Wichita and Wallace counties, Kansas
- ▶ **DISTRICT 4** — Hamilton and western half of Kearny counties, Kansas; and Prowers County, Colorado
- ▶ **DISTRICT 5** — Finney, eastern half of Kearny, and Gray counties, Kansas



SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

Overhead power lines carry thousands of volts of electricity. Accidental contact with one of these wires may result in serious injury or death. Most of these accidents can be avoided with greater awareness of the location of power lines and other electrical equipment in the near vicinity. If a power line comes in contact with your vehicle, stay inside and warn others not to touch or approach the vehicle or the downed power line. Call 911 and don't exit the vehicle until told by a utility professional that it is safe to do so.

Why You Should Consider a Home Standby Generator

Power outages can happen at any time due to weather, equipment repairs, or unexpected system issues.

With proper planning, a standby generator can provide peace of mind and help keep your household running when the power goes out.

Before purchasing a generator, it's important to understand your backup power needs. Start by making a list of essential appliances and devices you want powered during an outage — such as refrigerators, medical equipment, heating or cooling systems, and internet — and total the required wattage to determine the right generator size.

For co-op members who want seamless protection, a **HOME STANDBY GENERATOR** may be the best option. Unlike portable generators, home standby units are permanently installed and designed to automatically restore power during an outage.

BENEFITS OF A HOME STANDBY GENERATOR INCLUDE:

1 Automatically starts when power is lost — no manual setup required.

2 Can power nearly all home appliances and electronics at the same time.

3 Runs on natural gas or propane, allowing for extended or indefinite operation.

4 Provides added comfort, safety and peace of mind during extended outages.

Whether it's keeping food fresh, maintaining comfort during extreme temperatures, or ensuring critical medical devices stay powered, a home standby generator helps protect what matters most when the lights go out.

By planning ahead and choosing the right solution for your home, you can turn an unexpected outage into a minor inconvenience instead of a major disruption.

As always, we're here to help you stay informed, prepared and powered — no matter what comes your way! That's why we've partnered Generac® to help you survey, install and finance a new backup home generator — and make life without power a thing of the past!

Contact us today to learn more about your purchasing, financing and installation options!



HOW CAN **WE** DELIVER EVEN MORE ENERGY TO YOUR LIFE?

LOW MONTHLY PAYMENTS

PROFESSIONAL INSTALL FREE QUOTE!

SPECIAL FINANCING FOR CO-OP MEMBERS

LET US HELP YOU SURVEY, INSTALL, & FINANCE A NEW BACKUP HOME GENERATOR AND MAKE LIFE WITHOUT POWER A THING OF THE PAST.

READY TO START?
SCAN THE QR CODE OR
CALL US AT 620-874-4505

WHEATLAND ELECTRIC
Delivering Energy for Life
A Wheatland Rural Cooperative

GENERAC

www.weci.net/standby-generators

COMMUNITY SOLAR

Clean Energy That Could Save You Money

What if supporting clean energy could also help lower your electric bill without installing a single solar panel on your home? With Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc.'s (WEC) **COMMUNITY SOLAR** program, you can.

Members who participate are seeing real, measurable savings.

In 2025, a residential household subscribing to **EIGHT SHARES SAVED \$77.04**. That's money staying in their pockets while supporting renewable energy!

Community Solar offers a simple, affordable way for members to take advantage of solar power without the hassle. Designed for both **RESIDENTIAL** homeowners and renters, the program allows you to benefit from solar energy produced right here in Kansas and potentially reduce your energy cost — all with no upfront equipment costs, maintenance responsibilities, or long-term commitments.

Community Solar works like a subscription. Members sign up for shares of solar energy produced at the Johnson Corner Solar facility near Johnson City, Kansas. Each share represents two solar panels' worth of energy, or roughly 125 kilowatt-hours per month, and costs **\$4 PER SHARE**. The number of shares you are eligible for is based on your household's 12-month average electric use — ensuring the solar energy

you subscribe to aligns with your typical annual consumption.

The energy produced by your shares is credited directly to your monthly electric bill, helping offset energy costs with clean, renewable power. And since there's no equipment to install or own, members avoid the risks and long-term commitments that can come with traditional solar. **IT'S SOLAR MADE EASY!**

WEC's Community Solar program is designed with flexibility in mind. If your energy needs change, you can adjust your number of shares annually. If you move within WEC's service area, your subscription can move with you. It's **SOLAR THAT FITS YOUR LIFE** — not the other way around.

Participation is limited, and shares are available on a first-come, first-served basis. If you've been curious about solar but wanted a low-risk, cost-effective way to get started, Community Solar is a great option.

To learn more or sign up, visit **WWW.WECI.NET/COMMUNITY-SOLAR** or contact any local WEC office for details on participation eligibility and discover whether Community Solar is right for you.



SCAN TO
LEARN MORE

COMMUNITY SOLAR

JOIN NOW!

For just **\$4/share** you can make the most of your membership!

- **\$9.63/SHARE SAVINGS IN '25!**
- **NO INSTALL REQUIRED!**
- **EASY TO SUBSCRIBE!**

Account Number:
Rate: 103-Residential Rural

Meter No.	Location	Services From	To	Days	Previous Readings	Present	Meter Multiplier	kWh Usage
835003	537012	11/01/25	12/01/25	30	18723	19393	1	670

See your solar adjustment on your bill!

LARGEST SAVINGS TO DATE!

\$57.38
CREDIT for
8 SHARES!
(FOR NOV. 2025)

Service Description:	
Service Availability Charge	7 kWhs @ 2.00
Demand Charge	670 kWhs @ 0.105950
Energy Charge	670 kWhs @ -0.0107118
Power Cost Adjustment (PCA)	670 kWhs @ -0.00062042
Property Tax Surcharge	8 Shares @ 4.000000
Community Solar Shares (JC)	8 Shares @ -7.1724611
Community Solar Adjustment (JC)	
County Tax	1.13
Total Current Charges	\$88.21

www.weci.net/community-solar

Join us
April 22
GREAT BEND EVENTS CENTER
3111 10TH STREET, GREAT BEND

2026
ANNUAL MEETING

REGISTRATION 11 A.M. CT

LUNCHEON 11:30 A.M. CT

BUSINESS MEETING NOON CT

This is **Wheatland** A DEFINING YEAR, A TRUSTED COOPERATIVE

This is Wheatland.

A defining year made up of many pieces
— reliability, trust, service, community
and democracy — each one essential,
each one connected.

Join us at the annual meeting in
Great Bend (or at a remote location
near you) as we reflect on the year
behind us and look forward to the
cooperative we're building together.

REMOTE LOCATIONS

DISTRICT 2

Leoti

Wheatland Electric
Warehouse
103 West

DISTRICT 5

Garden City

Wheatland
Electric Office
2005 W. Fulton

DISTRICT 3

Tribune

Wheatland Electric
Warehouse
310 Broadway Ave.

DISTRICT 7

Caldwell

Caldwell Community
Building
119 E. First St.

DISTRICT 1

Scott City

Western Kansas
Child Advocacy Center,
212 E. Fifth St.

DISTRICT 4

Syracuse

Hamilton
County Library
102 W. Ave. C

DISTRICT 7

Harper

Westview Lodge
& Apartments
1300 N. Westview

