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WHEATLAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

NEWS

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FROM THE MANAGER

Transparency, Innovation and Community

As we move into the heart of summer, I want to share several important initiatives underway at Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc. (WEC) and preview conversations we will be having with our members in the months ahead.

WEC and **SUNFLOWER ELECTRIC POWER CORPORATION** will work together to explain what goes into the cost of power in a series of articles. Alongside Steve Epperson, CEO of Sunflower, we will discuss the factors influencing electric rates, the challenges utilities across the country are facing, and how the cooperative business model continues to put members first.

That commitment is reflected in the results of our recent **AMERICAN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION INDEX (ACSI®)** survey. For the fourth consecutive year, WEC has earned a score of 90 or higher, and in 2026, we tied once more for our highest score ever with a 92. That places WEC among the top 3% of electric cooperatives nationwide in the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives network. Most

importantly, it tells us that our members feel heard, supported and valued — and we do not take that trust lightly.

You will also read more about WEC receiving international recognition from **ESRI** (Environmental Systems Research Institute) for our innovative use of geographic information system (GIS) technology, helping us improve efficiency, reliability and service across our territory.

We remain committed to engaging members through programs and events that strengthen our communities. From our **YOUNG ADULT MEMBER ENGAGEMENT** initiatives and Great Bend Chamber After Hours event “Party Like It’s 1776!” to community baseball games with the Garden City Wind and Great Bend Bat Cats, these opportunities help us build relationships and share the cooperative difference.

Thank you for your continued support and engagement.

UNTIL NEXT TIME, TAKE CARE.



Bruce W. Mueller

SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

Regularly inspect equipment and personal protective equipment (PPE): Replace damaged or worn-out protective gear and check machinery before use to ensure safe operation. By consistently applying these practices, you can create a safer environment, reduce the risk of injury, and foster a culture of safety in any setting.

Behind the Cost of Power | Part 1

Understanding the cooperative difference

BY STEVE EPPERSON, CEO, SUNFLOWER ELECTRIC POWER CORPORATION
CO-AUTHORED BY BRUCE W. MUELLER, CEO/GENERAL MANAGER,
WHEATLAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

For many families and businesses, monthly expenses have become harder to manage. Groceries, fuel, insurance, housing, and nearly every other essential service have experienced rising costs. Electricity is no exception.

We know higher electric bills matter. They affect family budgets, farms, businesses, and communities across rural Kansas. That is why Wheatland and its wholesale power supplier, Sunflower Electric Power Corporation, are committed to helping you better understand the factors shaping the cost of electricity and the work happening behind the scenes to manage those pressures responsibly.

This article is the first in a series that explains what goes into the cost of power, the challenges utilities across the country face, and how the cooperative model continues to put members' interests first. With the electric industry evolving rapidly and many factors remaining uncertain, we are not intending to predict future rate changes. We simply want to give you a clearer picture of the pressures affecting electricity costs and the work we do to keep power safe, reliable, and competitively priced.

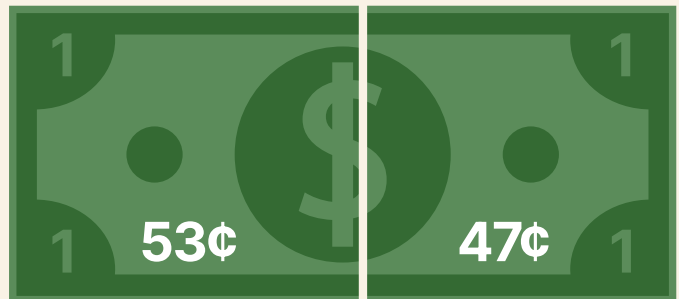
A PARTNERSHIP BUILT TO SERVE YOU

As a Wheatland member, you're likely familiar with the local crews and employees who work every day to keep the lights on across our communities. But there's also an important partnership working behind the scenes to help deliver safe, reliable electricity to homes, farms, schools, hospitals, and businesses throughout southwest and central Kansas. While Wheatland and Sunflower each serve different roles within the electric system, we share the same commitment to serving our members and strengthening the communities we call home.

Wheatland focuses on serving members directly by maintaining local power lines, restoring service during outages, and providing the dependable support you count on every day. Sunflower's role is different but closely connected. As Wheatland's wholesale power supplier, Sunflower generates and transmits the high-voltage electricity that

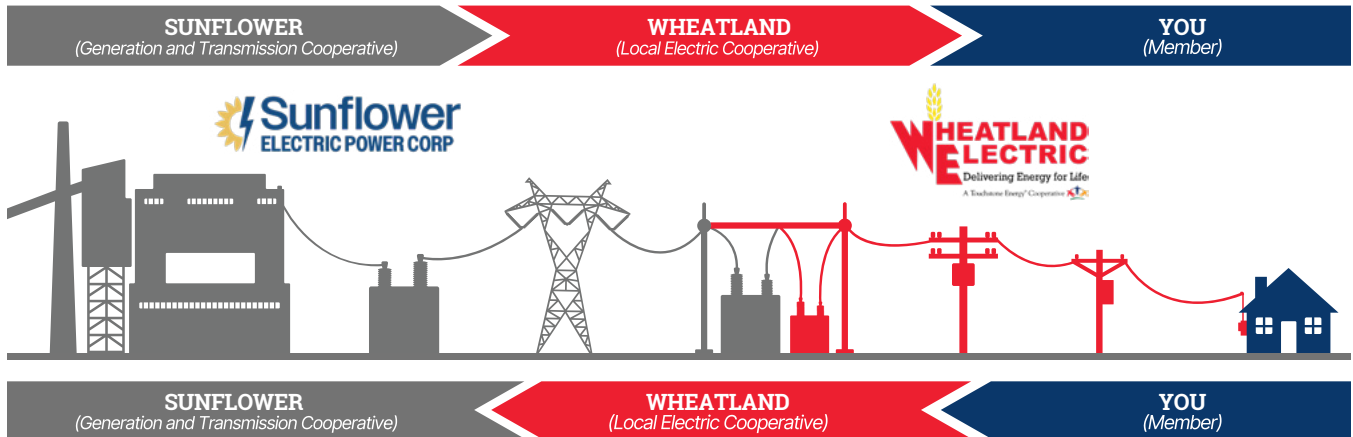
Power Cost *breakdown*

For every dollar you pay toward your electric bill, 53 cents is attributed to the wholesale cost of power from Wheatland's power supplier, Sunflower Electric Power Corporation. It covers the cost of generating electricity, transmitting it to Wheatland, and adjusting for changes in fuel prices and market conditions.



The other 47 cents stays with Wheatland to support cooperative operating, infrastructure, and service costs required to safely deliver electricity to homes and businesses, as well as the collection of other transaction taxes and fees on behalf of local entities.

Flow of Power / Affordability ▶



◀ Cooperative Ownership/Accountability

powers our communities. Sunflower is owned and governed by six member distribution cooperatives — including Wheatland — along with one wholly owned subsidiary. Together, these utilities provide electricity to communities across 58 counties in central and western Kansas.

When making power supply decisions, Sunflower's board of directors is uniquely positioned to understand and respond to your local community needs because it's made up of two representatives from each of its six member cooperatives. These representatives include a trustee from Wheatland who was democratically elected to represent and speak on behalf of the cooperative's membership. The second representative is CEO/General Manager Bruce W. Mueller. This unique, shared governance ensures local voices help guide long-term decisions about power supply, wholesale electric rates, transmission, and reliability at every level of the electric system.

Our partnership matters because local decisions are made with our members and communities in mind. Both Wheatland and Sunflower operate as not-for-profit cooperatives, which means revenues are invested back into the electric system to help maintain reliable service, support future infrastructure needs, and return value to members whenever possible. That cooperative structure keeps the focus where it belongs — on providing safe, reliable, and competitively priced electricity

while looking out for the long-term interests of the people and communities we serve.

UNDERSTANDING THE COST OF ELECTRICITY

One of the most common questions members ask is: "What exactly am I paying for on my electric bill?" While every utility is different, on average, about 53 cents of every dollar on Wheatland's electric bill is tied to wholesale power generation and transmission costs, the portion managed by Sunflower. The remaining portion supports Wheatland's operating, infrastructure, and service costs required to safely deliver electricity to homes and businesses, as well as the collection of other transaction taxes and fees on behalf of local entities.

It's important to remember that delivering electricity takes a large and connected system working around the clock. Power plants, transmission lines, substations, poles, wires, technology, and skilled employees all play a role in making sure electricity is available whenever you flip a switch.

Like utilities across the country, Wheatland and Sunflower are seeing higher costs to build, maintain, and upgrade the electric system. Demand for electricity continues to grow as homes, businesses, and technology use more power than ever before.

Continued on page 12D ▶

Across the country, the cost of building, maintaining, and expanding the electric grid system is increasing.

Behind the Cost of Power | Part 1 Continued from page 12C

At the same time, utilities are replacing aging equipment and investing in new infrastructure to keep service reliable for the future. Critical electric grid equipment, including transformers, breakers, switchgear, and other specialized materials, is becoming more expensive and increasingly difficult to obtain in a timely manner due to nationwide supply chain constraints and growing demand. These are challenges utilities across the country are working through as they continue providing safe and reliable electricity to the communities they serve.

AFFORDABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY GO HAND IN HAND

As we discuss the cost of electricity, it is important to recognize something else: accountability. At Sunflower, we often describe the electric system as a partnership where electricity flows in one direction from generation facilities through the transmission system to Wheatland and ultimately to your home, while cooperative membership and accountability flow in reverse. The cooperative structure creates a chain of ownership from you to Wheatland and from Wheatland to Sunflower.

As a member and owner, that means the people making decisions about your power supply are accountable to you. It also means affordability remains a priority as decisions are made across the entire electric system with the long-term interests of members and communities in mind.

We know rising costs create concern, and we share many of those same concerns. Providing reliable and affordable electricity in a responsible and sustainable way is not something we take lightly. That is why our focus is not simply on reacting to industry changes but actively planning for them. Every day, Sunflower and its member

[We] are committed to helping you better understand the factors shaping the cost of electricity and the work happening behind the scenes to manage those pressures responsibly.

utilities work together to operate efficiently, plan responsibly, advocate for fair policies, and pursue strategies that help manage long-term cost pressures while continuing to provide reliable service.

LOOKING AHEAD

The electric industry is changing rapidly, and many of the forces shaping electricity costs are complex. In the coming months, we will take a deeper dive into the major factors influencing the cost of electricity and the opportunities and challenges ahead. Future articles will discuss topics such as growing energy demand, regional transmission expansion, supply chain challenges, infrastructure investment, economic growth, and the steps Sunflower and its members are taking to help manage costs and maintain reliability for the long term.

Through it all, one thing remains unchanged: the cooperative mission to serve members, strengthen communities, and provide reliable electricity as responsibly and efficiently as possible. That commitment is shared by Sunflower and Wheatland, and for Wheatland, it is reflected in our mission of **DELIVERING ENERGY FOR LIFE**. Together, those principles continue to guide every decision we make on your behalf.

4TH OF JULY
HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY

OUR OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED FRIDAY, JULY 3.

POWER PLAY

JULY 7, 2026

FIRST 50 FANS GET IN FREE!
FREE HAMBURGERS & HOT DOGS TO THE FIRST 200 PEOPLE!

SERVING AT **6 P.M. CT** GAME START **6:30 P.M. CT**

CLINT LIGHTNER FIELD

WHEATLAND ELECTRIC
 Delivering Energy for Life
 POWER PLAY

POWER PLAY

JULY 15, 2026

GIVEAWAYS! PRIZES!
FREE HAMBURGERS & HOT DOGS TO THE FIRST 200 PEOPLE!

SERVING AT **6:30 P.M. CT** GAME START **7 P.M. CT**

AL BURNS MEMORIAL FIELD

WHEATLAND ELECTRIC
 Delivering Energy for Life
 POWER PLAY

Wheatland Receives International Recognition for Mapping Technology

Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc.'s (WEC) commitment to innovation and service has earned international recognition from **ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS RESEARCH INSTITUTE, OR ESRI**, a global leader in **GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM (GIS)** technology.



Jeanine Biera (right), dispatcher, and Mark Dinkel, GIS/OMS manager, monitor real-time outage and system data using the GIS department's mapping and dashboard technology. The tools help Wheatland track field conditions, coordinate operations and respond more efficiently to outages.

WEC will receive ESRI's prestigious **SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT IN GIS (SAG) AWARD** at an annual user conference in San Diego, California, later this month. The award recognizes organizations across multiple industries that are pioneering innovative ways to use mapping and geographic technology to solve real-world challenges.

Selected from hundreds of thousands of clients worldwide, WEC was one of less than 200 organizations honored for transforming the way it conducts field inspections and manages critical infrastructure data across our service territory, according to Michael Godwin, an ESRI account manager. Godwin said WEC stood out not only for its innovation, but also for the way it has benefited the utility industry as a whole.

"WEC's GIS initiatives have fostered connections within the utility industry and encouraged collaboration amongst industry peers," Godwin said. "The work Wheatland has done with ESRI technology has been beneficial to the utility industry as a whole, not just at WEC."

The recognition reflects WEC's commitment to continuously improving how the cooperative serves its members, according to **BRUCE W. MUELLER, CEO/GENERAL MANAGER**.

"By embracing innovative technology and empowering our employees with better tools, we're able to make smarter decisions, operate more efficiently, and strengthen the reliability of the electric system our members depend on every day," Mueller said.

While the award recognizes WEC's GIS program specifically, **MARK DINKEL, GIS/OMS MANAGER**,

emphasized that the achievement reflects a cooperative-wide effort.

“It wouldn’t be possible to receive this type of recognition without the help of multiple departments at WEC,” Dinkel said. “Our IT department provided excellent support with servers and security, our operations staff helped define the goals we wanted to achieve, and our lineworkers spent countless hours testing the system and providing feedback on what worked well and what needed improvement.”

According to Dinkel, who has been with WEC for 21 years, pole inspection information was collected manually using paper forms and spreadsheets prior to introducing ESRI’s mapping technology. That process was time-consuming and difficult to analyze efficiently.

With the help of ESRI, WEC’s mapping department modernized that workflow by implementing **ARCGIS FIELD MAPS** and **ARCGIS DASHBOARDS**, creating a streamlined digital inspection system that provided real-time visibility into infrastructure conditions and repair progress.

Dinkel compares the technology to a familiar tool many members use every day.

“It’s similar to using Google Maps on an iPad, but with our entire electric system layered on top,” he said. “Our crews can navigate directly to inspection locations, document issues in the field, and submit that information immediately.”

Once that information is collected, ArcGIS Dashboards provides office personnel with a real-time view of system conditions and maintenance needs.

“Managers can see what defects have been identified but not yet repaired,” Dinkel said. “If a crew is already scheduled to work in that area, we can assign those repairs at the same time, making our operations more efficient.”

WEC first began moving away from paper-based inspection processes nearly a decade ago, but the recent transition to ESRI’s Field Maps and Dashboards has significantly expanded the cooperative’s capabilities.

The technology has improved visibility into field conditions, equipment status, and ongoing work activities throughout WEC’s service territory, according to **BRANDON BARRETT, WEC’S DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS**.

“The system has been instrumental in helping us carry out our Inspection and Maintenance Plan by improving documentation, tracking and accountability,” Barrett said. “Over time, the data we’re collecting will become an important



FROM LEFT: Mark Dinkel, GIS/OMS manager; Jeanine Biera, dispatcher; and Mario Diaz, GIS coordinator, are part of WEC’s GIS team, which has been recognized with ESRI’s Special Achievement in GIS Award for its innovative use of mapping technology.

benchmark for measuring improvements in system reliability and overall operational performance.”

Looking ahead, WEC plans to expand its use of this technology during major storm events. Crews will be able to enter storm damage information directly into Field Maps while patrolling power lines, allowing office personnel to view conditions within minutes.

“That real-time information will help us determine where to send crews first and whether we can perform switching operations to restore power to members more quickly,” Dinkel added.

In addition to improving internal operations, WEC has shared its successes and lessons learned with other utilities through industry presentations and collaboration efforts, helping encourage innovation across the electric cooperative industry.

Since 1998, the SAG award has honored organizations using GIS technology to address complex challenges and improve decision-making through mapping, analytics, and location-based insights. This year, a total of 187 organizations from the commercial industry, defense, transportation, nonprofit work, telecommunications, and government sectors are being honored at the user conference.

For WEC, the recognition reflects an ongoing commitment to innovation, reliability and better service for cooperative members.

“At the end of the day, this isn’t really about maps or software,” Dinkel said. “It’s about giving our employees better tools so we can maintain our system more effectively, respond more efficiently, and continue providing reliable service to the members we serve.”

Fore a great cause! ★



★ CELEBRATING ★
America's
— 250TH —
SEMIQUIN-
CENTENNIAL



ONLINE REGISTRATION OPENS AUG. 1!



FORE GOOD

All proceeds power our local food pantries!



FOOD & FUN

Food, fun & freebies! Golf games, too!



PRIZES

Cash prizes for winners & 50+ door prizes for all players!



FRIDAY
9/25/2026



SOUTHWIND GOLF CLUB
77 GRANDVIEW DRIVE
GARDEN CITY, KS 67846



SHOTGUN START
9 A.M. CT

★ www.weci.net/coops-care ★
Questions? aconine@weci.net or 620-874-4563