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WHEATLAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

NEWS

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FROM THE MANAGER

Powered by Our Members

As I reflect on the many ways Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc. (WEC) serves our members, I'm reminded that our mission — **DELIVERING ENERGY FOR LIFE** — extends far beyond providing electricity. As a cooperative, every decision we make begins with a simple question: How does this better serve our members?

This month, I'm proud to share that WEC earned an **AMERICAN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION INDEX (ACSI®) SCORE OF 92 OUT OF 100 FOR 2026**. While we're honored by this achievement, member satisfaction isn't something that's created by a single program or initiative. It's the result of consistently putting our members first, listening to your feedback, and making decisions that strengthen our cooperative for generations to come. I encourage you to read more on Pages 12B-D to learn how your voice continues to shape WEC's future.

We're also excited to share that WEC recently secured **\$1.35 MILLION IN GRANT FUNDING** to strengthen the reliability of our electric system.

These investments will improve critical infrastructure while allowing us to be responsible stewards of the cooperative's resources. By making smart investments today, we're helping ensure dependable, reliable service for years to come.

Looking ahead, September marks the beginning of our **13TH SEASON OF POWER THE PANTRY**. Thanks to the incredible generosity of our members and communities, last year's campaign raised a record-breaking **\$130,203** in cash and food donations to support 12 local food pantries. That effort also earned WEC the **EDGAR F. CHESNUTT AWARD**, the highest honor presented in the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's 2026 Spotlight on Excellence Awards. We have even bigger goals for 2026, and we hope you'll once again join us by supporting your local pantry through a monetary donation as we work together to reach more families, strengthen our communities, and ensure no one has to face hunger alone.

UNTIL NEXT TIME, TAKE CARE.



Bruce W. Mueller

SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

In an office setting, electrical safety is just as important as in utility work environments. While you may not be working on live power lines, the same basic principles apply: avoid overloading outlets, use surge protectors, and keep cords organized and clear of traffic. By following these simple steps, you reduce the risk of electrical accidents in your office, just as utility workers do in high-risk environments.

92
OUT OF
100

A Score That Reflects More Than Satisfaction

When Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc. (WEC) members gave their cooperative an **AMERICAN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION INDEX (ACSI®) SCORE OF 92 OUT OF 100** this year, our highest to date, they weren't simply rating an electric utility. They were recognizing years of investment in people.

Why four consecutive years of outstanding member satisfaction starts with serving our communities.

The score marks the **FOURTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR** WEC has earned an ACSI® score of 90 or higher — a level of consistency achieved by only the **TOP 3%** of electric cooperatives nationwide. While we're incredibly proud of that recognition, the number itself isn't what matters most. What matters is what it represents.

At WEC, we believe member satisfaction isn't built through a single interaction or one successful program. It's earned overtime by showing up, listening, and finding meaningful ways to improve the lives of the members and communities we serve.

That's the **COOPERATIVE DIFFERENCE**.

MORE THAN ELECTRICITY

Every electric utility delivers power. As a cooperative, our mission — **DELIVERING ENERGY FOR LIFE** — extends much further. Because we're

owned by the members we serve, every decision begins with a simple question: how does this better serve our members?

That mindset, coupled with the Seventh Cooperative Principle **CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY** shapes everything we do — from investing in reliable electric service to supporting local food pantries, creating opportunities for the next generation of leaders, helping communities grow, and finding new ways to connect with families across our service territory.

Our ACSI® score reflects the impact of all those efforts working together.

"Member satisfaction isn't something you can create with one program or one initiative. It's the result of consistently putting our members first," said **BRUCE W. MUELLER, CEO/GENERAL MANAGER**. "Whether we're restoring power after a storm, supporting local food pantries, investing in students, or strengthening our communities, every effort reflects our commitment to serving the members who own this cooperative."

FIGHTING HUNGER CLOSE TO HOME

One of the best examples of how WEC powers our communities beyond the meter is **POWER THE PANTRY**, our long-standing community-wide food drive.

In 2025, coupled with **WEC'S \$50,000** kickoff donation to the campaign, we raised a record-breaking **\$130,203** (\$1=1 pound of food) **FOR A DOZEN LOCAL FOOD PANTRIES**, making a tremendous impact in the fight against hunger throughout southwest and central Kansas.

What started more than a decade ago as a simple effort to collect food has grown into one of our signature service projects, supporting



pantries across our service territory prior to each holiday season.

Every donation, every volunteer, and every participating co-op member demonstrates something bigger than food collection — it demonstrates neighbors helping neighbors.

That's what being a cooperative is all about.

INVESTING IN TOMORROW'S LEADERS

Serving our communities also means investing in the people who will lead them tomorrow.

Each year, WEC awards

14 ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS worth \$1,000 each to graduating seniors pursuing college, technical education, or trade schools. We also sponsor four local students for leadership learning experiences through the **ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE YOUTH TOUR** in Washington, D.C., and **COOPERATIVE YOUTH LEADERSHIP CAMP** in Colorado.

These programs give students opportunities to develop leadership skills, build lifelong friendships, and learn firsthand how cooperatives strengthen rural America.

Many return home inspired to become leaders in their own communities after building friendships, gaining confidence, and creating memories that last a lifetime.



Chris Oliver, line foreman, helps deliver food collected during the Great Bend Schools Competition for Power the Pantry on Nov. 7, 2025.



Bruce W. Mueller, WEC CEO/general manager, presents Zachary Welch (left) of Chaparral Jr./Sr. High School with a \$1,000 academic scholarship at the 2026 annual meeting on April 22.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS THAT LAST

Today's co-op members expect more than reliable, competitively priced electricity.

They want to know the organizations they support are active, engaged and invested in the communities we — members, employees and trustees — call home together.

That's why WEC continues to create opportunities for members to connect with us — and each other — outside the office.

Whether it's **CHAMBER AFTER**



Isabelle Shipley of Norwich High School traveled to Washington, D.C., in June as WEC's Electric Cooperative Youth Tour delegate.

Continued on page 12D ►

Thanks to your feedback, we've once again achieved a member satisfaction score of **92 out of 100** from the American Customer Satisfaction Index®!

Thank you
for consistently helping us earn one of the highest scores in the nation — ranking in the top 3%!



72
Electric
Investor-Owned
Utilities

74
Municipal
Utilities

77
Co-ops



A Score That Reflects More Than Satisfaction

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HOURS, community baseball nights with the **GREAT BEND BAT CATS** or **GARDEN CITY WIND**, or conversations on social media, we're committed to meeting members where they are and building relationships that extend beyond the electric meter.

Those conversations help us better understand what matters most to our members while ensuring the next generation remains connected to our cooperative, too.

STRENGTHENING RURAL KANSAS

Thriving communities need more than reliable electricity.

They need businesses, childcare, recreation opportunities, housing, and economic growth.

Through partnerships with **SUNFLOWER ELECTRIC POWER CORPORATION**, **USDA'S RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LOANS & GRANTS (REDLG)** program, and **WEC'S SHARING SUCCESS FUND** — made possible through matching funds from **COBANK** — we're helping local projects become a reality.

CONGRATS TO OUR MEMBER

SCOTT O. SEE

**SCOTT CITY, KS
WINNER OF
A \$250
PREPAID CARD!**

YOUR FEEDBACK POWERS CHANGE.

ACSI®
American Customer Satisfaction Index

Thank you to all our members who shared your experience in person or online during our survey feedback campaign!



Families enjoy an evening of patriotic fun during Wheatland Electric's "Party Like It's 1776!" Chamber After Hours event at Dry Lake Brewing in Great Bend on June 3, 2026.

Whether supporting childcare centers, recreation facilities, or other community initiatives, these investments strengthen the places our members live and work.

Because when our communities succeed, our cooperative succeeds.

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

While honoring our cooperative roots, we're also preparing members for what's next.

From **COMMUNITY SOLAR** to **BENEFICIAL ELECTRIFICATION REBATES**, **PUBLIC EV CHARGING STATIONS**, **RIDE+DRIVE EVENTS**, and purchase, installation and financing of **LEVEL 2 CHARGERS** and **STANDBY GENERATORS**, we're committed to exploring innovative ways to help members save energy, reduce costs, and prepare for the changing energy landscape.

Innovation doesn't mean losing sight of our values. It means finding better ways to serve.

A REFLECTION OF OUR MEMBERS

Receiving an ACSI® score of 92 is certainly an achievement worth celebrating.

But perhaps even more meaningful is what the score says about the relationship between WEC and the members we serve.

Trust isn't built overnight. Neither is member satisfaction.

It's built through thousands of interactions, reliable and cost-effective service during every season, investments in local communities, opportunities for young people, support for our neighbors in need, and a commitment to always put members first.

For four consecutive years, our members have told us we're delivering on that promise.

For that, we're incredibly grateful.

As we look ahead, our goal isn't simply to maintain a high satisfaction score — it's to continue earning it.

Because at WEC, **DELIVERING ENERGY FOR LIFE** has always meant delivering so much more than electricity.

It's about strengthening communities, enriching lives, and earning the trust of the people who own this cooperative — today, tomorrow and for generations to come.

WE Power the Pantry

CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY isn't just one of our Seven Cooperative Principles — it's a commitment we put into action every year through **POWER THE PANTRY**.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of our members and communities, last year's campaign raised a **RECORD-BREAKING \$130,203** in cash and food donations (\$1=1 pound of food) to benefit **12 LOCAL FOOD PANTRIES** across our southwest and central Kansas service territory.

We're proud to kick off this year's campaign with another **\$50,000 DONATION** from WEC and, for the fourth consecutive year, a goal of **DOUBLING** that investment through community support.

Together, we'll raise funds through our annual **CO-OPS CARE CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT**, the **GREAT BEND SCHOOLS COMPETITION**, online donations, generous business partners, and contributions from members like you.

Since launching this effort in 2014 (formerly Cram the Van), **POWER THE PANTRY** has helped provide more than **279 TONS (558,183 POUNDS)** of food to help fight hunger in our local communities.

While the campaign has grown over the years, our mission remains unchanged: helping neighbors in need.



This year, every **\$20 DONATION** earns you an entry to win our Americana Backyard Bundle (see below) while making a meaningful difference for families facing food insecurity.

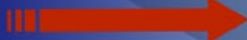
Together, we can **POWER THE PANTRY** and help ensure our neighbors have the support they need in 2026.

WIN THE ULTIMATE

AMERICANA backyard BUNDLE

FOR EVERY \$20 YOU
DONATE TO YOUR LOCAL
FOOD PANTRY, YOU'LL BE
ENTERED TO WIN!

Scan me



Scan the QR code or
visit [www.weci.net/
power-the-pantry](http://www.weci.net/power-the-pantry)
WINNER WILL BE
ANNOUNCED NOV. 6.







Wheatland Secures **\$1.35 MILLION**

Infrastructure projects will strengthen reliability and



When severe weather rolls across southwest Kansas, Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc., (WEC) crews are ready to respond. But thanks to nearly **\$1.35 MILLION** in awarded state and federal funds, WEC is investing in projects designed to help prevent outages before they happen.

WEC has been awarded \$1,348,911 through the U.S. Department of Energy's **GRID RESILIENCE AND INNOVATION PARTNERSHIPS (GRIP) PROGRAM**, with matching support from the **KANSAS INFRASTRUCTURE HUB'S BUILD KANSAS FUND**.

The project includes \$909,378 in federal funding, \$417,556 through the state, and a \$21,977 contribution from WEC. The funding is part of a statewide initiative announced by Gov. Laura Kelly that awarded more than \$13.7 million to 18 Kansas communities for energy grid resilience and airport infrastructure projects.

"Every dollar we can secure through competitive grants is a dollar that doesn't have to come directly from our members," said **BRUCE W. MUELLER, CEO/GENERAL MANAGER**. "This investment allows us to strengthen some of the most critical parts of our electric system while continuing to be responsible stewards of the cooperative's resources. It's about making smart investments today that will provide more reliable service for years to come."

For WEC, the investment will strengthen critical electric infrastructure serving **GARDEN CITY, HOLCOMB AND LAKIN** across southwest Kansas.

WEC crews perform regular maintenance on a distribution power line in Finney County to help ensure safe, reliable electric service.

in Grants to Strengthen Grid Reliability

reduce future outages across southwest Kansas

The **ROOTED IN RESILIENCE** initiative focuses on strengthening key feeder lines that have experienced repeated outages during high winds, ice storms and other severe weather events. Planned improvements include undergrounding vulnerable sections of power line, upgrading electrical conductors and replacing existing wooden poles with stronger ductile iron poles that are better equipped to withstand Kansas weather.

Because the grant was designed with specific eligibility requirements, WEC focused on infrastructure improvements that would provide the greatest reliability benefits within its eligible communities.

Although portions of the infrastructure are only a few decades old, these feeder lines have experienced a disproportionate number of weather-related outages because they serve large portions of the cooperative's system, according to **BRANDON BARRETT, WEC'S DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS**.

"These improvements are designed to strengthen the backbone of our electric system so we can deliver more reliable service to our members when they need it most," Barrett said, adding that the project also provides WEC an opportunity to evaluate ductile iron poles as a long-term solution for strengthening the cooperative's electric system.

Since 2016, the four targeted feeder lines have experienced **20 SIGNIFICANT OUTAGES**, resulting in interrupted electric service. Once complete, the projects are expected to reduce both the frequency and duration of future outages while improving reliability for approximately **1,700 COOPERATIVE MEMBERS** and an additional



A WEC lineman works from an aerial bucket while another crew member assists from the ground during infrastructure improvements in Finney County.

2,200 RESIDENTS served through the City of Lakin's municipal electric system.

Beyond improving reliability, the grant funding helps reduce the financial burden on members by allowing the cooperative to complete critical infrastructure improvements while maximizing the value of every member dollar. Construction is expected to be completed over the next two years.

"Our members count on us every day, whether they're flipping on the lights at home, opening a business, or running a farm," Mueller said. "These investments help ensure we're ready to deliver the reliable power they depend on, no matter what the Kansas weather brings."

This investment allows us to strengthen some of the most critical parts of our electric system while continuing to be responsible stewards of the cooperative's resources. It's about making smart investments today that will provide more reliable service for years to come.

BRUCE W. MUELLER, CEO/GENERAL MANAGER

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 ★
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