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WHEATLAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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FROM THE MANAGER

Powering What Matters

Reliable electricity depends on much more than the poles and wires we see throughout our communities. It requires careful planning, strong partnerships, and responsible management of the resources needed to deliver power whenever our members need it.

In this issue, you'll find Part 2 of our **BEHIND THE COST OF POWER** series. In the first article, we introduced the partnership between Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc. (WEC) and Sunflower Electric Power Corporation. We also explained how the cooperative business model keeps decisions local and focused on the members we serve.

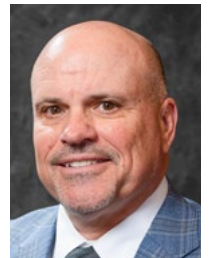
This month, we take a closer look at the **TRANSMISSION SYSTEM** — the essential network that moves electricity from where it is generated to WEC's local **DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM**. You'll learn about the foundation of reliable power, how transmission costs and rates differ, and how WEC and Sunflower work together to manage resources responsibly. While the electric industry continues to change, our priority remains the same: providing reliable service while making thoughtful decisions that protect the long-term interests of our members.

September also marks the beginning of the 13th season of **POWER THE PANTRY**. Concern

for Community isn't simply our Seventh Cooperative Principle — it's a commitment we put into action each year. Through Power the Pantry, our members, employees, and community partners come together to support local food banks and families throughout WEC's service territory. We hope you'll join us again this year as we work to make an even greater impact.

We're also celebrating **NATIONAL DRIVE ELECTRIC MONTH**. In 2025, WEC received Plug In America's National Drive Electric Utility Award, recognizing our leadership in expanding EV education, charging access and hands-on experiences across rural Kansas. Whether you already drive electric, are considering an EV for your next vehicle or simply want to learn more about the technology, we invite you to stop by one of this year's events. See Page 12F for dates, locations and additional details.

At WEC, we provide more than electricity. We invest in our communities, explore emerging technologies and responsibly plan for the energy needs of tomorrow. Through it all, we remain focused on our mission of **DELIVERING ENERGY FOR LIFE**.



Bruce W. Mueller

UNTIL NEXT TIME, TAKE CARE.

SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

Always be aware of your surroundings and take preventive measures to avoid accidents, whether at home, at work, or in public spaces. Staying alert to potential hazards, eliminating distractions, and thinking ahead can help reduce risks and prevent injuries. A moment of awareness can make the difference between a close call and a serious incident, protecting not only yourself but also those around you. Safety starts with paying attention and making conscious decisions every day.

BEHIND THE COST OF POWER | PART 2

Planning Today's Transmission Infrastructure for Tomorrow's Power

BY STEVE EPPERSON, CEO, SUNFLOWER ELECTRIC POWER CORPORATION

CO-AUTHORED BY BRUCE W. MUELLER, CEO/GENERAL MANAGER, WHEATLAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

When something works as expected, we often take it for granted. Most of us don't think about the roads, water systems, or electrical infrastructure powering our homes, farms, schools, hospitals, and businesses. Like all critical infrastructure, these systems require ongoing maintenance and strategic investment to continue serving our communities safely and reliably.

In the first article of this series, we introduced the partnership between Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc. (WEC) and Sunflower Electric Power Corporation and explained how the cooperative business model keeps decisions local and focused on serving our members. In Part 2, we take a closer look at the transmission system, an essential part of delivering reliable electricity, and at how we manage those costs responsibly. That's because just over half of every dollar paid by WEC members represents wholesale power costs from Sunflower.

THE FOUNDATION OF RELIABLE POWER

The high-voltage transmission network plays a critical role in the electric grid. Transmission lines move electricity from power plants to local substations, where local cooperatives like WEC deliver it to homes and businesses.

Today, WEC's wholesale power supplier, Sunflower, maintains nearly 2,347 miles of transmission line across central and western Kansas, along with the substations and equipment

needed to provide reliable electric service. Just as homeowners replace a roof or upgrade plumbing before problems occur, utilities evaluate every asset to determine whether maintenance, upgrades, or replacement will provide the greatest long-term value. Planning ahead helps minimize outages, reduce costly repairs, and maintain reliability.

At the same time, the current infrastructure is aging nationwide. The North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) says "electricity demand is increasing at a pace not seen in decades" as communities grow, and new businesses and industries expand. To meet tomorrow's energy needs, utilities must maintain today's system while strategically expanding the grid for the future.

HOW COSTS AND RATES DIFFER

We know rising costs are top of mind for families and businesses, and we are feeling those pressures, too. Like many industries, electric utilities continue to experience higher costs for materials, construction, labor, and financing.

It's important to understand, however, that costs and electric rates are not the same thing. WEC carefully manages the costs within our control while working with Sunflower to keep wholesale power costs as stable as possible.

While operating costs may increase, Sunflower uses several strategies to help stabilize electric rates. These include operating power plants efficiently, planning and investing carefully in



**SCAN TO READ
BEHIND THE COST
OF POWER | PART 1**



transmission infrastructure, participating in Southwest Power Pool's energy market, managing finances responsibly, and growing the system thoughtfully.

MANAGING RESOURCES RESPONSIBLY

As not-for-profit cooperatives, Sunflower and WEC provide reliable electric service while making responsible decisions on behalf of members like you. That means focusing on the costs we can control.

Because wholesale power is WEC's largest expense, how Sunflower manages its system directly affects the costs our members ultimately pay.

Instead of waiting for equipment to fail, Sunflower uses inspection data and planning tools to focus maintenance where it will make the biggest difference. This helps balance risk and reliability and make informed decisions about maintaining and modernizing our system.

Sunflower crews also use advanced technologies, including aerial and infrared inspections, to detect changing line clearances, vegetation concerns, structural wear, and overheating equipment that routine inspections may miss. When small issues are addressed early, we help prevent larger repairs and support reliability.

Likewise, transmission structures receive regular inspections above and below ground. When inspectors identify minor deterioration, treatments such as preservative pole wraps can often extend the life of a wood

pole and delay replacement while maintaining safety and reliability. In many cases, aerial inspections also allow Sunflower to replace an individual crossarm rather than an entire transmission structure, which reduces costs and extends asset life.

Sometimes, managing members' dollars responsibly means investing a little more today to save significantly more tomorrow. For example, Sunflower strategically installs ductile iron poles in locations near highway, railroad, creek, and distribution line crossings. Although they cost 5–8% more upfront than wood poles, which have an average service life of about 75 years, steel poles are designed to last 100+ years. Their longer service life, combined with better resistance to severe weather and vehicle impacts, reduces replacement needs and lowers long-term ownership costs.

These examples reflect an important principle: The lowest upfront cost does not always create the best long-term value if it leads to more repairs, a shorter service life, or higher long-term expenses. At both Sunflower and WEC, using members' dollars wisely is more than a promise; it is our responsibility.

LOOKING AHEAD

As electricity demand grows, transmission infrastructure is just one piece of a much larger story. In future articles, we will explore the factors influencing the wholesale cost of electricity, including power generation, regional energy market dynamics, supply chain challenges, and the steps

cooperatives take to help provide long-term rate stability.

Through every challenge and opportunity, one thing remains unchanged: the partnership between Sunflower and WEC. Together, we remain committed to planning carefully, investing wisely, and managing every dollar responsibly so we can provide reliable electric service for our members and communities.



BEYOND THE NUMBERS

The Real Impact of



Concern for Community isn't just our Seventh Cooperative Principle — it's a commitment we put into action every year through **POWER THE PANTRY.**

When you hear that last year's campaign raised a record-breaking **\$130,203** in cash and food donations — the equivalent of more than **65 TONS OF FOOD** — it's easy to focus on the numbers. They're certainly worth celebrating.

But the true impact of **POWER THE PANTRY** can't be measured in dollars or pounds alone.

- ▶ It's measured in meals shared around the dinner table.
- ▶ It's measured in children who head to school with a full stomach.
- ▶ It's measured in seniors who don't have to choose between groceries and medication.
- ▶ It's measured in neighbors who find hope during a difficult season.

Every donation made through our fall campaign stays local, supporting one of **12 FOOD PANTRIES**

throughout WEC's southwest and central Kansas service territory. Whether you give **\$20 OR \$200.** every dollar goes directly to the pantry you choose — helping local pantries respond to local needs.

"Power the Pantry is one of the clearest examples of what it means to be a cooperative," said Alli Conine, WEC's director of member services and corporate communications. "When our members come together, they're not just donating food or dollars — they're taking care of their neighbors. That's the cooperative difference, and it's something we're incredibly proud to be part of every year."

That spirit of generosity has even earned national recognition. Earlier this year, WEC received the **NATIONAL RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION'S EDGAR F. CHESNUTT AWARD.** the highest honor in NRECA's 2026 Spotlight on Excellence Awards, recognizing Power the Pantry as the nation's **TOP STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGN** among all rural electric cooperatives.

While the recognition is an incredible honor, the true measure of the campaign's success isn't a trophy — it's the families who have food on the table because neighbors chose to help neighbors.

This year, WEC is once again investing **\$50,000** to launch this year's campaign, challenging our co-op members, employees, business partners, and communities to **DOUBLE** that investment through generous giving.

Since 2014, together we've helped provide the equivalent of more than **279 TONS (558,183 POUNDS)** of food to neighbors across our service territory.

That's an incredible milestone — but hunger isn't measured by annual totals. It's measured one meal at a time.



WEC linemen package donations, which were collected during the Great Bend Schools Competition in 2025.



GOAL
\$100,000

That's why our local food pantries value monetary donations so highly. Cash allows them to purchase food at wholesale prices, stretch every dollar further, and stock the items families need most — from fresh produce and dairy to meat and other pantry staples.

Your support also allows pantries to respond quickly when unexpected hardships arise: a lost job, a medical emergency, an unexpected expense, and rising grocery prices. Whatever the challenge, local food pantries stand ready to help — and Power the Pantry helps ensure they're able to do just that.

Throughout the campaign, our communities will come together through the eighth annual **CO-OPS CARE CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT**, employee giving, the **GREAT BEND SCHOOLS COMPETITION**, the **CONWAY SPRINGS CARDINALS CARE CHALLENGE**, online donations, business partnerships, and countless individual acts of generosity.

Every gift tells a story, a story of neighbors helping neighbors, a story of communities choosing compassion, and a story of the cooperative difference.

As a **MEMBER-OWNED COOPERATIVE**, we believe electricity isn't the only thing that powers a community.

Generosity does, too.

For every **\$20** donated through **POWER THE PANTRY**, you'll also receive an entry to win our **AMERICANA BACKYARD BUNDLE**, but the greatest reward is knowing your gift will help ensure someone in your own community has food on the table when they need it most.

"The most meaningful part of this campaign isn't the dollars we raise — it's the reminder that no one has to face hardship alone," Conine added. "That's the kind of community we're proud to serve and proud to be part of."

Together, we can once again **POWER THE PANTRY** — and continue proving that when communities come together, there's no limit to what we can accomplish.



FOR
EVERY
\$20 YOU
DONATE TO
YOUR LOCAL
FOOD
BANK,
YOU'LL BE
ENTERED
TO WIN THE
ULTIMATE
AMERICANA
BACKYARD
BUNDLE, VALUED
AT OVER \$700!

LEARN MORE
AND DONATE
BY NOV. 5 AT
[WWW.WECI.NET/
POWER-THE-PANTRY](http://WWW.WECI.NET/POWER-THE-PANTRY)
TODAY!



Let's Taco 'Bout Electric Vehicles!

Wheatland Electric will celebrate National Drive Electric Month with community events in Great Bend on Sept. 21 and Scott City on Oct. 12

Electric vehicles, better known as EVs, are giving drivers plenty to taco 'bout — and this fall, Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc. (WEC) is serving up tacos, firsthand experiences, and practical information during **NATIONAL DRIVE ELECTRIC MONTH (NDEM)**.

Held Sept. 11-Oct. 12, 2026, NDEM is a nationwide celebration designed to raise awareness of the benefits of all-electric and plug-in hybrid cars, trucks, motorcycles and more.

WEC WILL CELEBRATE LOCALLY WITH TWO "LET'S TACO 'BOUT IT" EVENTS FROM 4:30 TO 6:30 P.M. CT DURING THE FRESHMAN AND JUNIOR-VARSITY FOOTBALL GAMES IN:

- ▶ **GREAT BEND** — Monday, Sept. 21
(vs. Garden City)
- ▶ **SCOTT CITY** — Monday, Oct. 12
(vs. Holcomb)

We invite co-op members to join us at either event to enjoy complimentary tacos while getting an up-close look at our two all-electric vehicles — **A HYUNDAI KONA ELECTRIC AND FORD F-150 LIGHTNING**.

The casual, come-and-go events are designed to make conversations about EVs as approachable as possible. Attendees will have the opportunity to explore the vehicles, learn how charging works, and ask questions about range, costs, maintenance and everyday EV ownership — all without a sales pitch or pressure to purchase.

Because when it comes to EVs, WEC believes there is plenty worth discussing!

MEETING MEMBERS WHERE THEY ARE

Our EV outreach begins with a simple philosophy: meet people where they are.

For some members, that means helping them understand how an EV could fit into a daily commute. For others, it may mean discussing towing, long-distance travel, battery life or the availability of public charging stations. Some attendees may already own an EV, while others may be sitting inside one for the very first time.

By creating relaxed, community-centered events, WEC aims to give people the opportunity to form their own opinions based on firsthand experience and reliable information.

"The best conversations happen when there's no pressure," said Alli Conine, WEC's director of member services and corporate communications. "We're here to answer questions, share information and let members explore whether an EV fits their lifestyle."

WEC has hosted **RIDE+DRIVE EVENTS** throughout its service territory for several years, bringing our EVs to community celebrations, civic gatherings, school events, golf tournaments and more.

Our EV outreach begins with a simple philosophy: meet people where they are.

DRIVING AWARD-WINNING INNOVATION

WEC's grassroots approach to EV education recently earned national recognition.

In 2025, WEC received **PLUG IN AMERICA'S**

NATIONAL DRIVE ELECTRIC UTILITY AWARD, honoring the cooperative's leadership in expanding EV education, charging access and hands-on experiences in rural Kansas.

WEC was selected from utilities across the country and was one of only four national finalists. The recognition highlighted WEC's work to bring practical EV programming to communities often separated from large dealerships, fast-charging infrastructure, and other electrification resources by long distances.

"Innovation doesn't mean waiting for change to arrive — it means helping lead the conversation," Conine added. "We want our rural members to have the same opportunities as people in larger communities to learn about EVs."

Since 2021, WEC has installed public **CHARGEPOINT LEVEL 2 CHARGING STATIONS** in



Come hungry & curious!

Join us for Monday night football during

**NATIONAL
DRIVE ELECTRIC
MONTH**

FREE TACOS. REAL CONVERSATIONS. ELECTRIC POSSIBILITIES!

Sept. 21 – Great Bend

Memorial Stadium | 2027 Morton St.



Oct. 12 – Scott City

O.L. Darner Field | 900 Myrtle St



Driving Energy for Life



**NATIONAL
Drive Electric
MONTH**

Garden City, Great Bend and Harper. Those stations have supported nearly 2,000 charging sessions by over 830 unique drivers as of August 2026, helping provide important charging access across WEC's expansive service territory.

WEC has also incorporated EVs into its own fleet. Wheatland added the Kona Electric in 2021 and the Lightning in 2023. Both vehicles serve as mobile educational tools during public events, while the Lightning pickup truck is also used in day-to-day operations, primarily in Great Bend.

MORE THAN ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Although EVs can reduce tailpipe emissions, WEC's outreach also focuses heavily on the practical benefits that matter to rural drivers.

EVs generally require fewer routine maintenance services because they do not need oil changes and contain fewer moving parts than traditional gasoline-powered vehicles. Home charging can also allow drivers to begin each day with a charged vehicle without making a separate stop at a gas station.

At the same time, EVs are not a one-size-fits-all solution.

Vehicle cost, access to charging, driving distance, climate, towing needs and lifestyle all play a role in determining whether an EV is a good fit.

That is why WEC's goal is not to tell members what they should drive. Instead, we provide the tools, experiences and trustworthy information members need to make informed decisions.

Members can also explore our free ChooseEV digital toolkit, available at WWW.WECI.NET/ELECTRIC-VEHICLE, which provides information about available vehicles, charging options, operating costs, incentives and estimated environmental benefits.

**Come for
the tacos.
Stay for
the convo!**

COME HUNGRY — AND CURIOUS

Whether you already drive electric, are considering an EV for your next vehicle or simply want to see what the technology is all about, WEC invites you to stop by one of this year's NDEM events.

Come for the tacos. Stay for the conversation. You may discover that EVs offer more to taco 'bout than you expected!

HAPPY LABOR DAY

In observance of the holiday,
our office will be closed on
Monday, Sept. 7.



POWER the PANTRY 50K in 2026

Fore a great cause!

8th Annual CO-OPS CARE
Charity Golf Tournament
Hosted by WHEATLAND ELECTRIC

FRIDAY
9/25/2026

SOUTHWIND GOLF CLUB
77 GRANDVIEW DRIVE
GARDEN CITY, KS 67846

SHOTGUN START
9 A.M. CT

VISIT WECL.NET/COOPS-CARE TO SPONSOR!

All tournament proceeds power one dozen food pantries!

LINEMAN OF THE WEEK

#LINEMEN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

CELEBRATING TALENT, TEAMWORK + COMMUNITY!



FOLLOW US THIS HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL SEASON AS WE SPOTLIGHT OUR LOCAL POWER PLAYERS!

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