



An Equal Opportunity Provider & Employer

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WHEATLAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

NEWS

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Tribune, KS 67879

FROM THE MANAGER

10 Things You Might Not Know About Power Restoration

As the CEO and General Manager of Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc., I want to take a moment to share some insights into a crucial part of our operations that often goes unseen but is vitally important: power restoration. While most members are familiar with the basics of our services, there are many aspects of power restoration behind the scenes that might surprise you. Here are 10 things you might not know about the process:

1 SAFETY PROTOCOLS. Safety is our top priority. Before beginning any restoration work, our crews follow strict safety protocols to ensure their safety and the safety of our members. This might include turning off power in certain areas, which can temporarily extend outage times but is crucial for safe operations.

2 PRIORITIZATION OF RESTORATION EFFORTS. When an outage occurs, we prioritize restoring power based on a strategic plan. This starts with substations followed

by feeders/circuits and finally individual services. Critical infrastructure like hospitals and emergency services receive priority, followed by areas with the largest number of affected members.

3 WEATHER CHALLENGES. Severe weather conditions not only cause outages but also significantly hinder restoration efforts. Crews work through rain, snow and even in extreme heat to ensure power is restored as quickly as possible.

4 ADVANCED MONITORING SYSTEMS. We use state-of-the-art monitoring systems to detect outages and pinpoint their locations. This technology allows us to respond faster and more accurately to restore your power.

5 ROUND-THE-CLOCK READINESS. Our teams are on standby 24/7. Power outages can happen at any time,



Bruce W. Mueller

Continued on page 12G ►

SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

Install fire extinguishers close to an exit and keep your back to a clear exit when you use the device so you can make an easy escape if the fire cannot be controlled. If the room fills with smoke, leave immediately. Know when to go.

WHEATLAND ELECTRIC ANNOUNCES RENEWAL OF

Sharing Success

With \$10,000 Matching Contribution

Grant applications are now being accepted



WEC Member Services and Key Accounts Manager Samantha Garcia (right) presents a \$1,000 grant to Larry Alexander (left), church pastor, and Dallie Lankford (second from left), preschool director.



Since 2012, our Sharing Success fund has distributed over **\$145,000** to deserving community-based organizations across southwest and central Kansas!

The program was created through a partnership with one of Wheatland Electric Cooperative's financial partners, CoBank, and funds are managed by the Scott Community Foundation.

Each year, WEC makes a **\$10,000** contribution to the fund, matched in full by CoBank. Non-profit and other organizations located in our co-op service territory can apply for one of 20 **\$1,000** grants per annual grant cycle.

Selection of grant recipients is made by cooperative staff, with an emphasis on distributing funds evenly across WEC's service territory.

The Sharing Success program continues to be one of our most valuable tools for giving back to the communities we serve. Applications are now being accepted for our 2024 grant cycle.

Apply online at www.weci.net/sharing-success-program or scan our QR code using your smartphone camera. Questions should be referred to Alli Conine, director of member services and corporate communications, at 620-874-4563 or aconine@weci.net.

Member Services and Key Accounts Manager Mary Hoisington (left) presents a \$1,000 grant to Charell Owens, executive director for the United Way of Central Kansas. The grant will be used to help fund the Auto Care Access Program.

SCAN TO APPLY



Questions?
Call 620-874-4563 or
email aconine@weci.net.



WEC presented a \$1,000 grant to the Kansas Children's Service League (KCSL) committee facilitating the Community Baby Shower for Safe Sleep. Pictured from left are: Mary Dutton and Starla Bieberle, KCSL employees; WEC Member Services and Key Accounts Manager Mary Hoisington; Jillian Doyle and Connie Cale, KCSL employees; Beverly Frizell, Barton County Health Department; and Vicki Richardson, KCSL employee.



APPLY NOW!

Our Sharing Success Fund is available for new grant applications starting June 1! Non-profit and other community-based organizations are encouraged to apply for a \$1,000 grant. Apply online! www.weci.net/sharing-success-program



WE'RE READY FOR STORM SEASON... *are You?*

While summer brings a lot of fun in the sun, it can also bring severe weather. Summer storms have the potential to produce tornadoes — which can happen anytime, anywhere, and can bring winds over 200 miles per hour.

Severe weather struck Great Bend on July 16, 2023, causing widespread damage to electrical equipment across the community. Line crews from other districts collaborated with Great Bend crews to help restore power as quickly and safely as possible.

Mother Nature's damage to power lines is typically the major cause of most power outages. To avoid falling trees and branches, we work throughout the year — through right-of-way clearing — to ensure power lines across our service territory stand little risk of damage.

When severe weather strikes — including heavy winds, hail, lightning and dust storms — extensive damage to power poles, substations, transmissions lines and other electrical equipment is unavoidable. Widespread damage often means extended power outages are more likely to occur.

That's why it's important for all of us — our co-op and members like you — to be prepared.

ON STANDBY

When the power goes out, how do our crews know where to begin restoration? And how do members know if outages have been reported? It all starts with a safe, efficient plan for power restoration.

When the lights go out and it's safe for our crews to begin the restoration process, they start by patrolling the power lines to assess damage and causes.

Our lineworkers use an advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) system and an updated mapping system to restore power quickly and safely. This process begins with repairs to the main distribution lines serving the largest number of homes and businesses. We still rely on our members to call in information about sparking power lines, broken poles and down wires.

After those repairs are made, crews work on tap lines, which deliver power to transformers, either mounted on utility poles (for above-ground service) or placed on pads (for underground service).

Finally, individual service lines between the transformer and members' homes and businesses are repaired.

BE PREPARED

We can't control the weather, but we can prepare for it. WEC keeps a supply of extra utility poles, transformers and other equipment on hand in each community we serve so we can quickly get to work in the event of an outage. When widespread outages occur, multiple crews work simultaneously to repair damage in multiple locations.

Adults understand the importance of storm safety, but younger children and teens may not realize the dangers storms pose. That's why it's so important to talk to your family and have a storm plan in place. Here are some tips you can share with your loved ones.

BEFORE THE STORM

► TALK TO YOUR FAMILY ABOUT WHAT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF A SEVERE STORM OR TORNADO.

Point out the safest location to shelter, like a small, interior, windowless room on the lowest level of your home. Discuss the dangers of severe thunderstorms; lightning can strike 10 miles outside of a storm. Remember: when you hear thunder roar, head indoors.

► **MAKE A STORM KIT.** It doesn't have to be elaborate — having a few items on hand is better than nothing at all. Include items like water, non-perishable foods, a manual can



Damage to multiple power poles in northern Finney County following summer storms across the region in July 2023.

HOW TO REPORT AN OUTAGE

If you experience a power outage, don't assume a neighbor reported it. It's best to report the outage yourself.

During business hours, call your local WEC office or use our outage reporting hotline after hours, on holidays and weekends:

**1-800-ON-AGAIN
(1-800-662-4246).**

View our live outage map at www.weci.net/view-or-report-outage for updates.

Updates are also posted to our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/WheatlandElectric).

Do not report outages on Facebook. You must call to report your outage. After reporting, follow us on Facebook or check our website to stay up to date!

opener, a first-aid kit, flashlights and extra batteries, prescriptions, baby supplies and pet supplies. Keep all the items in one place for easy access if the power goes out.

DURING THE STORM

- ▶ **PAY ATTENTION TO LOCAL WEATHER ALERTS** — either on the TV, your smartphone or weather radio — and understand the types of alerts. A thunderstorm or tornado watch means these events are possible and you should be prepared; a warning means a thunderstorm or tornado has been spotted in your area and it's time to take action.
- ▶ **IF YOU ARE IN THE PATH OF A TORNADO, HEAD TO YOUR SAFE PLACE TO SHELTER.** Protect yourself by covering your head with your arms or materials like blankets and pillows.
- ▶ **IF YOU'RE DRIVING DURING A SEVERE STORM OR TORNADO, DO NOT TRY TO OUTFRAN IT.** Pull over and if possible cover your body with a coat or blanket.

AFTER THE STORM

- ▶ **IF THE POWER IS OUT, CONSERVE YOUR PHONE BATTERY.** Limit calls and texts to let others know you are safe or for emergencies only.
 - ▶ **STAY OFF THE ROADS IF TREES, POWER LINES OR UTILITY POLES ARE DOWN.** Lines and equipment could still be energized, posing life-threatening risks to anyone who gets too close.
 - ▶ **WEAR APPROPRIATE GEAR WHEN CLEANING UP STORM DEBRIS.** Thick-soled shoes, long pants and work gloves will help protect you from sharp or dangerous debris left behind.
- Summer is a time for many fun-filled activities, but the season also brings severe, dangerous weather, so talk to your loved ones about storm safety so that everyone is prepared.
- Though Mother Nature can be unpredictable, as a member of WEC, be assured that we're standing by, ready to restore power as quickly and safely as possible!

DO YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO AROUND DOWNED POWER LINES?

Protect yourself and your loved ones by watching our one-minute animation! Use your smartphone camera to visit our link (www.weci.net/safety-tips) using our QR code!



WEC line crews from Finney County work to repair storm damage after storms caused extensive damage to power poles and lines across the region in July 2023.





UPDATED

**PAY-BY-PHONE
NUMBER**

855-940-4025

Effective June 21, our pay-by-phone number will be updated. Our former number (844-262-2417) will no longer be accessible. All other pay-by-phone services will remain the same!



Treat Bend! Join us for a

POWER PLAY

Thursday, July 11

**FREE HAMBURGERS + HOTDOGS
FIRST 200 PEOPLE
GIVEAWAYS! PRIZES!**



serving at 6 p.m.

**AL BURNS MEMORIAL FIELD
GATES OPEN AT 6:30 P.M. CDT**

10 Things You Might Not Know About Power Restoration

Continued from page 12A ►

and our dedicated crews are always ready to respond, whether it's the middle of the night, a holiday, or severe weather.

6 COMPLEXITY OF REPAIRS. Restoring power isn't as simple as flipping a switch. The first actions are to do an assessment of the damages and then formulate a restoration plan. This sometimes takes several hours to complete. The damage might involve downed power lines, damaged transformers, or substations, each requiring specific expertise and equipment to repair.

7 MUTUAL AID AGREEMENTS. WEC is part of a network of cooperatives that assist each other during widespread outages. This mutual aid system allows us to call on additional resources and manpower to expedite restoration.

8 IMPORTANCE OF MEMBER COMMUNICATION. Keeping our members informed is vital. We provide regular updates through social media to ensure our members know the status of restoration efforts. When severe weather hits and extended outages occur, we also provide updates to the membership through local radio and television, upon request by our media partners. You can learn more about how to stay up to date on the latest outage information on page 12E.

9 INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT. Ongoing investment in infrastructure is key to minimizing outages and improving restoration times. This includes upgrading old equipment, implementing smart grid technologies, and reinforcing our network against extreme weather conditions.

10 MEMBER COOPERATION. Your cooperation is essential. Reporting outages promptly, staying clear of downed power lines, and following our safety instructions help us restore power more efficiently and safely. Learn how to report an outage on Page 12E and use our QR (quick response) code to view a short video on what you should do in the event of downed power lines.

At WEC, our commitment is to provide safe and reliable electricity. Understanding the complexities of power restoration can help you appreciate the efforts and dedication of our team. We are constantly working to improve our processes and infrastructure to serve you better. We exist to **DELIVER ENERGY FOR LIFE**. Thank you for being a valued member of our cooperative.

UNTIL NEXT TIME, TAKE CARE.

COMMON CAUSES OF POWER OUTAGES

There is never a good time for a power outage, but if it happens on a sunny day you may wonder why. Here are the most common causes of a power outage.

WEATHER

High winds, snow and ice can cause tree limbs to fall on power lines. Other weather effects, like wildfires and lightning strikes, can cause major damage to equipment.

CRITTERS

Squirrels, birds, snakes and other animals can inadvertently contact power lines, causing short circuits and disruptions to electrical supply.

ACCIDENTS

Vehicles can crash into utility poles, bringing down power lines. Construction and excavation work can also result in disruptions to underground lines.

SCHEDULED MAINTENANCE

Occasionally, we plan outages to perform upgrades or repairs to parts of the local grid.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month

Electricity used to operate major appliances accounts for a significant portion of your home energy use. To save energy when using your clothes dryer, add a clean, dry towel to damp clothing before starting the cycle. The towel will absorb excess water, reducing drying time. Remove the towel after 15 minutes. If your dryer lacks an autosense drying feature, reduce the timer to about half a normal cycle.

SOURCE: WWW.HOMESANDGARDENS.COM

HAPPY

4TH OF JULY

INDEPENDENCE DAY



Our office will be closed on July 4 for the holiday.

6th Annual CO-OPS CARE Charity Golf Tournament

Hosted by



Save the date!
SEPT. 6, 2024

*Golf Club at Southwind
Garden City*

8 A.M. REGISTRATION

9 A.M. SHOTGUN START

**SCAN OUR QR CODE FOR
SPONSORSHIP & REGISTRATION INFO!**



**WWW.WECI.NET/COOPS-CARE
QUESTIONS?**

620-847-4563

ACONINE@WECI.NET



**ALL PROCEEDS POWER OUR
LOCAL FOOD PANTRIES!**