

WHEATLAND  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

# NEWS



## Wheatland Electric Co-op Inc.

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### 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**  
N. Hwy. 25, P.O. Box 966  
Leoti, KS 67861  
**Scott City-Main — 620-872-5885**  
101 Main St., P.O. Box 230  
Scott City, KS 67871  
**Syracuse — 620-384-5171**  
206 1/2 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

# New Year. New Look. New Services.



**Bruce W. Mueller**

2022 is already shaping up to be an exciting year for Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc. A new year brings opportunity for reflection on our past and optimism for our future. As we close out 2021, I want to reflect on some highlights from this past year and talk about new and exciting things ahead.

### Cram the Van

For the eighth consecutive year, Wheatland's annual food drive, Cram the Van, once again, broke another record that seemed insurmountable. Thanks to our generous members, sponsors, schools, and communities across our southwest and central Kansas territory, we collected 44,576 pounds of food. This

brings our total pounds of food collected since 2014 to 172,309 pounds!

We delivered this year's cash and can donations just before the Thanksgiving holiday to the 12 local food banks that our communities rely on. As always, all donations were delivered to the communities in which they were collected.

### S&T to Acquire Wheatland Broadband

In December, Wheatland Electric announced an agreement with S&T Telephone Cooperative Association to acquire Wheatland Broadband, a Wheatland Electric subsidiary that provides rural broadband in western Kansas. As a result, effective Jan. 1, 2022, all 3,500 Wheatland Broadband customers are now receiving their telecommunication services from S&T Communications, an S&T Telephone Cooperative Association subsidiary. To

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## ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month

Maximize your heating system's performance by inspecting, cleaning or replacing air filters once a month or as needed to reduce energy costs and prevent potential damage to your system. Make sure radiators, baseboard heaters and warm-air registers aren't blocked so air can flow freely. **SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY**



# YES WE DID!

## 44,576 lbs. of Food!

This year's cash and can donations were delivered to a dozen local food banks across our southwest and central Kansas territory just before the Thanksgiving holiday. And we are so proud and humbled by the generosity shown by our membership! (\$1 donation = 1 pound of food).

- ▶ United Methodist Food Pantry & Caldwell Food Bank, Caldwell – **2,211 LBS.**
- ▶ Conway Springs Mission Mart (Cardinals Care Campaign), Conway Springs – **3,173 LBS.**
- ▶ Emmaus House & Genesis Family Health, Finney County – **2,672 LBS.**
- ▶ Community Food Bank of Barton County, Great Bend – **11,132 LBS.**
- ▶ Harper Mission Mart, Harper – **3,841 LBS.**
- ▶ Horns for Hope c/o USD 363, Holcomb – **4,065 LBS.**
- ▶ Wichita County Food Bank, Leoti – **3,051 LBS.**
- ▶ Ministerial Alliance, Scott City – **6,266 LBS.**
- ▶ Hamilton County Food Pantry, Syracuse – **2,949 LBS.**
- ▶ Greeley County Food Bank, Tribune – **2,648 LBS.**
- ▶ Online donations — **2,568 LBS.**

## 2021 Cram the Van food drive continues record-breaking streak, collecting nearly 45,000 pounds of food

At the beginning of this year's Cram the Van season in September, we were optimistic when we said "Yes, WE Can!" about our annual food drive. Thanks to the generosity of our member communities, local schools, employees, trustees and many volunteers, we can confidently say, "Yes, WE Did!"

That's because our 2021 Cram the Van food drive collected more food for local food banks than we've ever collected before, raising a whopping 44,576 pounds!

This year's collection brings the combined eight-year Cram the Van total to over 86 tons of non-perishable food items, which is a 573% increase since the program's inception in 2014. (That year, we raised 6,615 pounds of food.)

Our electric cooperative held 13 in-person donation events between September and October, where we collected our donations and grilled hamburgers and hot dogs for our members as our way of saying thank you. We also coordinated six school-wide competitions in five area school districts (USD 428, USD 363, USD 466, USD 356 and USD 200), which helped us raise several thousand pounds more.

In addition, our fellow electric cooperatives, vendors, sponsors, and other supporters from across Kansas also attended our third annual Co-ops Care Charity Golf Tournament in

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Harper Fall Fest



Holcomb Longhorn Festival



Harper Mission Mart



Syracuse High School



Holcomb Longhorn Festival



Ministerial Alliance — Hope's Closet



Scott City Middle School

## Learn more about Cram the Van 2021!

Head over to our YouTube channel (search Wheatland Electric at [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)) to listen to our latest podcast, "Who's on the Line?" In our latest episode, we discuss all the behind the scenes action it takes to make a successful Cram the Van season! Hear directly from our member services team who travels across our service territory in our large, red van to deliver cash and cans to the hardworking volunteers at 12 food pantries across south-west and central Kansas! Happy listening!



## New Year. New Look. ...

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read more about this recent acquisition see page 12F-G.

### New in 2022

- ▶ **ELECTRIC VEHICLES** Late last year, Wheatland purchased its first 100% electric vehicle — a 2021 Hyundai Kona Electric. We are ready to be your first point of contact for EV news and information, including public and at-home EV infrastructure.
- ▶ **EV CHARGERS** In addition to offering public EV charging in Great Bend and Garden City, Wheatland is now offering at-home charging infrastructure and installation for interested members. Financing will also be available for members who meet certain criteria. Contact us today for more information.
- ▶ **GENERAC** Wheatland also invested in an automatic standby generator program to keep your home powered in the event of severe weather or an extended outage. Our new partnership with Generac will provide our members with the No. 1 name in home backup generation and financing options are available.
- ▶ **ELECTRICIAN SERVICES** Wheatland can now assist our members with the cost of other electrician services from a trusted electrician. Facilitated by Wheatland Electric, our local electrician partners will be available for your needs, whether it's installing an EV charger, a Generac generator, or other large-scale or small-scale electrical job for your home. Some financing options will also be available. Contact us today to learn more.

**UNTIL NEXT TIME, TAKE CARE.**

## Yes We Did!

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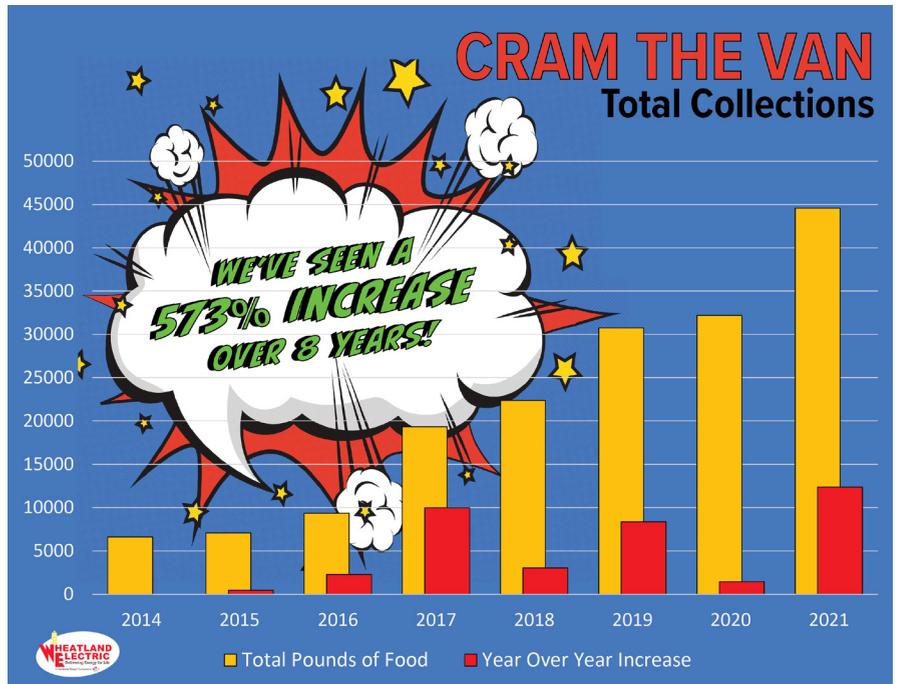
September to help us raise monetary donations. Thanks to the generosity of more than 120 golfers and our own cooperative employees and volunteers, we raised more than \$11,000 for our local food banks during the tournament.

We also held an online Cram the Van donation campaign for the second year in a row, which helped us raise an additional \$2,600 in cash donations.

Thank you to our communities and local schools for showing us “Yes, WE Can!” Cram the Van and helping us generate another record-breaking year!



Caldwell Food Bank



## SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

It's always a good idea to periodically check how your wiring looks. Circuit breakers, sockets, and switches are well-worn. Any problem in the electrical panels could hamper the flow of electricity and cause a short circuit. Get them checked by a qualified electrician and take their advice to repair or replace them if they are outdated. You get your oil changed every 3,000 miles, and you need this same type of preventive maintenance for your electrical system.

# Wheatland Trustees Appoint Sullivan in Great Bend

There is a new face on the Wheatland Electric Board of Trustees. **JOHN SULLIVAN**, a Great Bend resident for 24 years, has been appointed to replace a vacated seat by outgoing trustee **DAN BONINE**.

Bonine, who served on the board since Wheatland's acquisition of the City of Great Bend from Aquila in 2007, has been a member of the Great Bend community since 1976 and retired from a long-standing banking career prior to joining Wheatland's board.

In addition to nearly 15 years of service to Wheatland, Bonine served on the Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. (KEC) Board for several years, recently retiring from that position in 2020. He also simultaneously served as an alternate board member with Sunflower Electric for eight years, offering valuable knowledge and experience between our cooperative and our power supplier. We wish him the best in his future endeavors.

Sullivan was appointed to fill the vacated seat. He is a native of Logan, and is the chief financial officer of the Great Bend Cooperative Association. Prior to that, he was a certified public accountant for Lindburg Vogel, where he audited local grain cooperatives.

He is a graduate of Western Illinois University where he also played college football. Sullivan received his bachelor's

degree in business finance. He also holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from Wichita State University.

Sullivan has served as an ambassador for the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce for 13 years, is currently a member of the Great Bend Optimist Club and past president, has served as treasurer for a local Boy Scouts troop for 12 years, and has also served as a PTA president for a local Great Bend school.

He is married to his wife, Annie, of 33 years, and they have two children. In his spare time, Sullivan enjoys spending time with his family, hiking in the mountains, and biking around Barton County to enjoy the countryside.

The Wheatland Board of Trustees is comprised of 10 individuals representing the cooperative's seven districts. Members may contact any of the board of trustees by calling the main office at 800-762-0436 or 620-872-5885.



Dan Bonine



John Sullivan

# Wheatland Fulfills Christmas Wish Lists for Kids in Need

Wheatland Electric is once again proud to play a major role in fulfilling Christmas wishes for several kids in need through Saint Francis Ministries' Christmas for Kids program.

The nonprofit organization exists to provide healing and hope to children and families. Wheatland Electric had the pleasure of delivering a \$1,000 Sharing Success grant to assist the faith-based organization with their Christmas mission, and 44 of our Wheatland employees and several of our trustees sponsored 99 children this year with hand-picked and wrapped Christmas gifts.

Along with family preservation services, foster care, and adoption assistance, the multi-state regional organization also offers several residential programs that serve those with mental health and behavioral issues, adults with intellectual and development disabilities, and even survivors of human trafficking.

This is the fifth consecutive year (since 2017) that we've



Saint Francis Ministries accepts a \$1,000 Sharing Success grant and receives wrapped Christmas gifts for 99 children sponsored by Wheatland Electric trustees and employees.

opened our hearts to fulfill the wish lists of children across our southwest and central Kansas service territory.

The folks who work in our local Saint Francis offices also have a big heart for the communities they serve and play a role in providing food donations for our annual Cram the Van food drive each fall, for which our cooperative is grateful.

**2022**

Wheatland Broadband transitions services to S&T Communications on Jan. 1, 2022.

**2021**

Wheatland Electric announces the acquisition of Wheatland Broadband by S&T Communications on Dec. 3, 2021.

**2020**

Wheatland begins building our backbone fiber-optic network in Scott City, completing the backbone fiber installation in summer 2020.

**2019**

Opportunities arise for expanded service potential from third-party companies.

**2018  
to  
2015**

Wheatland Broadband upgrades provide customers with: a fixed LTE network similar to that of cell carriers; data speeds comparable to 4G cell service; the FCC standard for broadband access speeds of 25 MB download and 3 MB upload.

**2015**

Wheatland recognizes the need for increased infrastructure to accommodate explosive growth and stay competitive.

**2002**

Wheatland Electric establishes Wheatland Broadband by building a fixed-based, wireless network to serve as the backbone of our communications systems and, at the same time, offer internet service to rural Western Kansas.

**BUILDING  
A BETTER  
FUTURE**

**BROADBAND**

# S&T Communications Acquires Wheatland Broadband

## Continuity of service to continue during transition

Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc. announced in early December an agreement with S&T Telephone Cooperative Association to acquire Wheatland Broadband, a Wheatland Electric subsidiary that provides rural broadband in western Kansas.

As a result, effective Jan. 1, 2022, all 3,500 Wheatland Broadband customers now receive their telecommunication services from S&T Communications, an S&T Telephone Cooperative Association subsidiary. All current Wheatland Broadband customers will receive all relevant information in the mail regarding the transition, and no interruption in services or account billing is expected.

The acquisition supports our cooperatives' shared missions to deliver reliable, high-speed internet service to customers in western Kansas. In 2002, our broadband division built a fixed-based, wireless network that served as the backbone of our communications system and at the same time, offered internet service to rural western Kansas.

In 2019, we began conversations with S&T in an attempt to ensure that our region continued to have a reliable high-speed internet network to grow our communities, businesses, and educational opportunities. S&T, founded in 1952, remains one of the last locally-owned broadband providers. Their internal team of technology experts has been the key to their successful fiber-optic and next-gen cable networks, currently serving over 6,000 customers.

From the inception of Wheatland Broadband more than two decades ago, our mission has always been to provide reliable internet service to residents of western Kansas, and we accomplished that with a fixed-base wireless network, according to Wheatland Electric CEO/General Manager Bruce W. Mueller.

"The future is a full fiber build-out to our broadband members, where applicable, and upgrades to fixed wireless radio transmitters," Mueller said. "All these upgrades will take a substantial capital investment. The Wheatland Electric Board of Trustees feels it is time to hand the reins over to a company that specializes in 100% broadband and communications services. We know that S&T has the expertise and resources to expand the fiber-optic network in western Kansas."



The S&T Cooperative was born from the needs of the local community, and it continues to serve that mission today, according to S&T CEO Zack Odell.

"Over the last 20 years, we have witnessed the rapid development of new broadband technologies, coinciding with the dramatic increase in broadband speed requirements for everyday life," Odell said. "Once considered a luxury, high-speed broadband has become as necessary as electricity and indoor plumbing. We strive to develop a team of experts who can continue to bring next-generation technologies to our rural communities."

Currently, S&T fiber customers have access to gigabyte speeds, rivaling those found in large urban population centers like Denver and Kansas City. In addition, their Smart Home Wi-Fi technology provides a better in-home experience with improved Wi-Fi coverage, security and parental controls. Many Wheatland Broadband customers can expect to see improvements in speed in early 2022.

"Upgrades to existing fixed-wireless radio transmitters will be a noticeable improvement for many rural customers. We had wished to begin these upgrades immediately; unfortunately, the availability of supplies is delaying progress. Like many local businesses, we are subject to the modern supply chain," Odell added.

Members can follow us on Wheatland Broadband and Wheatland Electric Facebook pages for additional updates, as they become available.

"We are grateful for the opportunity to entrust our broadband customers to another local cooperative," Mueller said. "We believe S&T Communications will continue our mission to care for communications needs and expectations of our rural communities and are excited for the future of western Kansas."

# New In 2022



We're creating a one-stop power shop for our members!

## ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

## ELECTRICIAN SERVICES

## GENERAC GENERATORS

Wheatland Electric is a trusted resource for all your electrical needs. With these new programs, we're your one-stop shop for answers, advice, and service!



### Driving Energy for Life: Electric Vehicle Charging

The national trend toward all-electric vehicles is rapidly moving forward and Wheatland is prepared to equip our members for this emerging market. We are ready to be your first point of contact for EV news and information, including public and at-home EV infrastructure. We've reached agreements with local electricians across our service territory to facilitate the purchase and installation of the best at-home chargers on the market. Wheatland Electric will also finance your purchase, if needed.



### GENERAC Standby Generator Program

We know how disruptive unplanned power outages can be to our membership. That's why Wheatland is investing in our automatic standby generator program, to keep your home powered in the event of severe weather. Our new partnership with Generac Power Systems will provide our members with the #1 name in home backup generation in an affordable way. Members will be able to purchase and install an at-home generator through Wheatland Electric and finance the purchase, if needed.



Electrician Services

By partnering with local electricians in our service territory to bring these new programs to our members, we have the opportunity to provide our members with any additional electrician services you may need. Our local electrician partners will be available to our members when facilitated by Wheatland Electric, whether it's installing an EV charger, a Generac generator, or other large- or small-scale electrical job. Wheatland will even finance projects costing our members more than \$1,000!



Interested in purchasing or financing an EV charger or backup generator for your home?  
Need electrical services and don't know who to trust?

**Call your local Wheatland office today!**