




A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 
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**WHEATLAND
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

NEWS

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FROM THE MANAGER

Ushering in a New Year With a Celebration of 2022



Bruce W. Mueller

Exactly one year ago, I shared with you that 2022 was shaping up to be an exciting year for Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc. At that time, we had just completed another record-breaking Cram the Van food drive, distributed \$1 million in capital credits to our membership, introduced new member initiatives such as our generator purchasing program and electrician services, and sold our broadband division to enhance our mission to **DELIVER ENERGY FOR LIFE** and position our organization for future financial success.

And that was just at the start of the year!

As we look back on 2022, I'm excited to tell our story by the numbers: 2022 was a year filled with new ideas, new opportunities, new initiatives and renewed sense of commitment to the membership we serve.

I encourage you to take a look at our year in review starting on Page 12F. I'm proud to share that these numbers — both large and small — powered us through the year and paint a comprehensive picture of the many things we've been able to accomplish in a single year. They're also proof positive that we have a lot to celebrate at WEC!

Cram the Van

Speaking of things to celebrate, for the ninth year in a row, we've once again smashed every record we've ever set with our annual Cram the Van food drive campaign.

Continued on page 12E ▶

SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

Accept responsibility for your actions and their consequences to offer solutions to prevent incidents. Follow the rules — they are there to keep you safe. Take responsibility and ownership for safety in the environments in which you live and work. Take the time to think about the positive and negative consequences of your actions and those around you.

2022 Cram the Van Smashes Records, Collecting

54,599

Pounds of Food

WE

Think BIG

2022

CRAM THE VAN

**WHEATLAND
ELECTRIC**
Delivering Energy for Life

Wheatland Electric's Cram the Van food drive once again smashed previous collection records, collecting a total of 54,599 pounds for a dozen local food banks in 2022.

Last fall, we sought to "Think BIG" and make our 2022 Cram the Van season our biggest, brightest and best year yet. We're excited to share that the collection total — just over 27 tons — was an 22% increase over our 2021 collection of 44,576 pounds.

This brings our combined nine-year food drive total to 226,908 pounds or just over 113 tons of food! In 2014, our inaugural year, our food drive collected 6,615 pounds of food.

Our 2022 "WE Think BIG!" campaign comprised 10 in-person donation events across our service territory between September and November, where we brought our big energy and big ideas to the forefront of our food drive.

During this time, we traveled hundreds of miles in our big red van to collect both cash and can donations at local events, where our cooperative employees and other volunteers grilled hamburgers and hot dogs for our co-op members as our way of

Continued on page 12E ▶



Representatives of Hope's Closet in Scott City accept a check for \$2,919 from our 2022 Cram the Van campaign.



WEC Trustee Josh Young delivers food items to the Wichita County Food Bank.



Garrett Wilson (right), lineman apprentice, assists Todd Nemechek (center), line foreman, with unloading food donations at the Greeley County Food Pantry. Also pictured is Riley Waggoner, journeyman lineman.



Kathleen Dowling from the Greeley County Food Bank (third from right) accepts a check for \$3,474 in cash donations from WEC. Pictured from left are: Alli Conine, director of member services and corporate communications; Garrett Wilson, lineman apprentice; Mike Thon, WEC trustee; Riley Waggoner, journeyman lineman; and Todd Nemechek, line foreman.



Far left: Families pose during the Cram the Van Fall Finale in Scott City on Oct. 29, 2022. The fun event is complete with food, games, pumpkin decorating, Young Eagle Rides and other exciting activities. Left: Jessica Preisner (left) and Andrea Tucker, WEC consumer services representatives, register attendees for prizes during the Fall Finale.

2022 Cram the Van Community Totals

Thanks to our co-op members, sponsors, schools, communities, volunteers and other partners, we were able to donate non-perishable food items and cash to the following food banks just ahead of the Thanksgiving holiday (\$1 donation = 1 pound of food):

- ▶ **COMMUNITY FOOD BANK OF BARTON COUNTY**
Great Bend – 19,267 lbs.
- ▶ **HORNS FOR HOPE C/O USD 343**
Holcomb – 6,753 lbs.
- ▶ **MINISTERIAL ALLIANCE**
Scott City – 4,645 lbs.
- ▶ **GREELEY COUNTY FOOD BANK**
Tribune – 4,315 lbs.
- ▶ **WICHITA COUNTY FOOD BANK**
Leoti – 3,833 lbs.
- ▶ **EMMAUS HOUSE AND GENESIS FAMILY HEALTH**
Finney County – 3,577 lbs.
- ▶ **CONWAY SPRINGS MISSION MART (CARDINALS CARE)**
Conway Springs – 3,489 lbs.
- ▶ **HAMILTON COUNTY FOOD PANTRY**
Syracuse – 3,354 lbs.
- ▶ **UNITED METHODIST FOOD PANTRY AND CALDWELL FOOD BANK**
Caldwell – 2,775 lbs.
- ▶ **HARPER MISSION MART**
Harper – 2,591 lbs.

Top left: This year's Fall Finale at the Spencer Flight and Education Center featured an ice cream bar and fresh homemade ice cream from the Scott County Shrine Club.



Top right: "WE Think Big!" was our 2022 Cram the Van theme and our biggest, brightest and best annual food drive to date. Pictured from left are Karly Shull, consumer services representative; Stacey Addison-Howland, WEC trustee; and Heather Rufenacht, member services coordinator; volunteering at the Syracuse High School football game.

Bottom left: Fifth graders at Scott City Middle School won the school-wide Cram the Van food drive competition. The class won \$500 from WEC for their efforts to stock Hope's Closet, a local food pantry.



Gifting Forward Sponsors 2022 Great Bend School Competition



Jefferson Elementary School won first place in Wheatland's Cram the Van School Competition in Great Bend gathering 17.21 pounds of food per student and won a \$600 cash prize from Gifting Forward.

The Great Bend School Competition, sponsored by Gifting Forward, partnered with Wheatland Electric's annual Cram the Van food drive to collect nearly 6 tons of food during our 2022 campaign.

Students from 10 area schools in Great Bend participated in a friendly food drive competition, once again collecting more cash and can donations than in previous years, for a total of 15,280 pounds.

Gifting Forward gave \$1,500 in cash prizes to the top four schools that raised the most pounds of food per student. The winning schools include:

- **FIRST PLACE**
JEFFERSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – 17.21 lbs./student
- **SECOND PLACE**
CENTRAL KANSAS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY – 16.67 lbs./student
- **THIRD PLACE**
GOLDEN BELT HOME EDUCATORS – 14.62 lbs./student
- **FOURTH PLACE**
LINCOLN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – 13.24 lbs./student



WEC employees volunteer during our Cram the Van season to collect, sort and deliver food donations to our local food banks. Pictured from left are Julie Stoss, consumer services supervisor; Brandon Ritchie, journeyman lineman; and Drew Burger, lineman apprentice.



2022 Cram the Van

Continued from page 12B ▶

saying “thank you” for their donations.

Our cooperative also coordinated multiple friendly school competitions in four area school districts (USD 428, USD 363, USD 466, USD 356), which helped us collect several thousand more pounds of food across the communities we serve.

Winners from these school competitions received cash prizes from both Wheatland Electric and the Gifting Forward Foundation in Great Bend for their big efforts.

In addition to our in-person events, school competitions, and an online donation campaign, we also raised additional dollars through our fourth annual Co-ops Care Charity Golf Tournament held last September.

Thanks to the generosity of our full tournament of golfers, vendors, sponsors and other supporters (including our own cooperative employees and volunteers) we were able to raise more than \$20,000 in proceeds from our annual charity event, which serves as our kick-off to Cram the Van every fall.

Every year, we Cram the Van because we care. And every year, our members show us why the travel and time are worth all the toil and sweat. We cannot thank our communities, schools, and volunteers enough for helping us THINK BIG! this year to help stock our local food banks and generate another record-breaking collection total!

Ushering in a New Year with a Celebration of 2022

Continued from page 12A ▶

Thanks to our generous members, sponsors, schools and other community partners across our southwest and central Kansas territory, we were able to collect a record-breaking 54,599 pounds of food for a dozen local food banks.

That total — just over 27 tons — was an 22% increase over our 2021 collection of 44,576 pounds, and it brings our combined nine-year total to 226,908 pounds of food, just over 113 tons!

“WE Think BIG!” was our latest rallying cry, and members like you helped us deliver on that premise. I encourage you to check out how we brought our big energy to life last fall starting on Page 12B and join us in thanking the community players who helped us make our vision a reality.

This year’s cash and can deliveries were completed right around Thanksgiving to the 12 local food banks that our communities rely on, and, as always, all donations were delivered to the communities in which they were collected.

As we head into our 10th year for Cram the Van, we know we’ve set the bar incredibly high for this year’s upcoming collection.

But as the leader of this incredible organization, I’m very proud of our efforts and exceedingly optimistic about what we can accomplish when we put our heads and our hearts together.

Celebrating Milestones

This year — 2023 — is going to be a special year for WEC, not only because it will mark a decade of our food drive but also 75 years since our inception.

In 1948, nine visionary western Kansas residents took matters into their own hands and formed an electric cooperative because they were tired of being left behind by big for-profit power companies who didn’t want to spend the dollars it would take to connect rural America to the national electric grid.

In 1950, after learning about the electric utility business, taking out loans, setting up offices, and laying hundreds of miles of lines, they welcomed an additional 2,246 cooperative members to WEC.

That grit and determination in our earliest years has lived on through three-quarters of a century and made us the organization that we are today.

As the leader of WEC, I often take a holistic view of what we do and why we do what we do. And as we ring in 2023, I feel energized about carrying out our mission and empowering the communities we serve.

Thank you for allowing us to serve you, our members, and let’s make this year one for the history books — our boldest and brightest year yet.

UNTIL NEXT TIME, TAKE CARE.

2023

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Our offices will be closed for the holiday on **JAN. 2, 2023**. Have a safe and happy new year!

54,599

POUNDS OF FOOD

Thanks to YOU, we collected 54,599 pounds of food for a dozen food banks during our 2022 Cram the Van season!



\$9.4 Million

TO PROTECT OUR CO-OP SERVICE TERRITORY

In 2022, we secured \$9.4 million in funds following a yearslong legal battle to protect our co-op service territory.



CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR

105 Kids

43 WEC employees and trustees sponsored a record number of 105 kids for Saint Francis Ministries' Christmas for Kids. WEC also awarded a \$1,000 Sharing Success grant to fulfill additional wish lists for foster kids in need.

POWERFUL

NUMBERS

FROM 2022

1 NRECA SPOTLIGHT ON

EXCELLENCE GOLD AWARD

Our member services team received national recognition, receiving the 2022 NRECA Spotlight on Excellence Gold Award for Best Total Communications Program for our 2021 Cram the Van "Yes, WE Can!" food drive campaign.

8 RIDE & DRIVE

EVENTS

We hosted eight public ride and drive events so members could get behind the wheel of our electric Hyundai Kona and discover the power of driving electric.

254 EV

CHARGING SESSIONS

WEC put southwest and central Kansas on the national EV map by installing two ChargePoint public charging stations at our Garden City and Great Bend office locations. In 2022, our inaugural year, we've had at least 254 individual charging sessions by 164 unique drivers!



150 VISITORS

In 2022, we began offering tours of our outdoor green space at our new Great Bend office. We've had about 150 visitors come to learn more about renewable energy through the wind, solar, and water resources that power the small park.



501

ANNUAL MEETING ATTENDEES

We had record attendance at our 74th WEC Annual Meeting.

There's no doubt about it, 2022 was a standout year! Check out the numbers that powered us through the year, from the very large — like a record \$2.25 million in capital credits — to the small but significant — like our NRECA Spotlight on Excellence Gold Award. They're proof we have a lot to celebrate!

3 YOUNG ADULT MEMBER ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

We hosted new events for young adult members including free food at Great Bend Bat Cats and Garden City Wind baseball games and a Chamber Business After Hours at Dry Lake Brewing in Great Bend.



\$2.25 MILLION CAPITAL CREDITS

We returned \$2.25 million in capital credits to our membership. Eligible members from 1989, 1990 and 2021 were presented checks on Dec. 6, 2022, at our Capital Credits Harvest Day.



16 EVENTS

We opened our new Great Bend meeting room facilities to outside community, school and other civic and statewide groups. Offering our space at no cost is one more way we can serve our community.

30 SAFETY DEMOS

Line crews hosted 30 safety demos to educate everyone, from school-age children to critical first responders like EMTs and firefighters, on staying safe around power lines.



\$25,000

SHARING SUCCESS GRANT FUNDS

We distributed \$1,000 grants to 25 community-based organizations throughout our southwest and central Kansas service territory to bolster deserving projects and improve the quality of life for the communities we serve.





POWER YOUR YEAR!

Win **FREE**
electricity for
one year!

HOW?!

Sign up for paperless
billing & auto-pay by
March 31, 2023
to be entered to WIN!



One residential co-op member (active account holder) will be selected for a total maximum prize value of \$1,200. Participants must register for paperless billing through their SmartHub account and sign up for automatic payments through Wheatland Electric using a bank draft or recurring debit or credit card on or before 3/31/23 to be entered to win. View additional promotional details at www.weci.net/win-free-power.