



## A Day in the Life Beth Nelson

BY BETH LOONEY,  
ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER

*Beth Nelson  
Accountant in Garden City  
4 Years at Wheatland*

Knowing in advance that I was going to spend a day with an accountant looking at spreadsheets and talking about debits and credits, I knew I needed a good night's sleep or I would pass out by 10 a.m. I arrived bright eyed and bushy tailed and was not disappointed: **BETH NELSON** almost immediately jumped into a spreadsheet.

The first task of the day was to reconcile cash balances at the various banks Wheatland uses. This process involves logging into the bank's website and reviewing balances, deposits, and withdraws from the day before. Once all the cash is reconciled (on a spreadsheet!), then Beth determines whether we need to transfer funds into or out of any particular bank. Typically, the transfers are out of the bank and these funds are used to pay off debt at yet another bank.

"Doing cash is like doing a puzzle, which is challenging," Beth replies when asked about her favorite task.

All the while, Beth was working through this procedure she kept me entertained. Beth is friendly and talkative, not the stereotypical accounting square. As we work in the same building, I noticed Beth had lost a significant amount of weight. She explained to me that

what started as a friendly competition with her sisters turned into a lifestyle change for her that has resulted in over a 50 lb. weight loss. Good for you, Beth!

Our next task was to process invoices for Wheatland's water department. After watching her "process" these invoices, I quickly determined that this was actually a cat and mouse game of questions like...Where is the packing slip?; Do I have an approval signature?; How should I code it?; etc. I would say problem solving skills is a high requirement for her position.

At the end of our morning together Beth and I went to lunch with another accounting staff member, Lucy Martinez. It's clear they have a good working relationship and support each other on tasks so that no one person is overly burdened.

When I asked Beth what her favorite thing about working for Wheatland is, she said, "The employees. There are a lot of great people at Wheatland."

I'm starting to see a trend—every "Day in the Life" employee I ask this question of, essentially says the same. Thanks for the day Beth and for keeping me awake while looking at your spreadsheets!

## Members Participate in Engagement Meetings, Giving Wheatland Valuable Insight



Phillip Shelley discusses the modernizing of the electrical grid with members attending the Member Engagement Meetings in August.

Wheatland recently held three Member Engagement Meetings in Great Bend, Harper, and Scott City. The Board of Trustees invited groups of members, representing all member districts, to participate in the meetings.

The objectives for the meetings were to help the Board and management better understand the needs of the members, serve as a sounding board for ongoing and developing programs and initiatives, and to enable the co-op to be responsive to the needs and expectations of the membership.

The new automated metering system and a cost-of-service study that is currently being conducted to combine the East and West territories into one rate structure were also discussed.

"The meetings went really well,"

said Bruce Mueller, General Manager. "Director of Operations, Phillip Shelley's presentation on the new AMI meters was a big hit. (It) really helped the members understand the benefits of the new meter system."

The meetings were well-attended. Each of the meetings generated good discussion and questions from the members present.

The Great Bend meeting, held at Great Bend Coffee, was especially well-attended. More than 30 members and cooperative staff gathered to enjoy the catered dinner and presentation at the local eatery.

"We received a lot of good feedback from the group in Great Bend," Mueller said. "I'd call it a big success. I'd also like to thank the staff and everyone who helped put the meetings together. They did a fantastic job!"



Members learned about electric cooperatives, AMI and Wheatland's programs.

## Get to Know Your Co-op Staff

### Jillane Koochel

Customer Service Representative in Great Bend  
7.5 Years at Wheatland

#### TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAMILY (SPOUSE, CHILDREN, PETS).

Married for 29 years to my husband Pat. He is a Lead Substation Tech with Sunflower Electric.

We have three kids: Christopher, Emily and Ethan. Christopher is a Commercial Estimator and is a Captain in the Army National Guard. He lives in Olathe and is married to Lindsey and they have a beautiful nine-month-old daughter, Madeline. Emily is a PhD Student at Kansas State University and Ethan is a student at KU Med studying Physical Therapy.

#### WHERE ARE YOU FROM ORIGINALLY?

LaCrosse

#### WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME?

We are sports people and enjoy Kansas State football and basketball and watching the Royals. Spending time when we can with the kids and our granddaughter is always on the list. During the summer, we spend a lot of time outdoors walking, biking and doing yard work.

#### WHAT SPORT OR TEAM IS YOUR FAVORITE?

Our favorite sports teams are the Oakland Raiders, the Kansas State Wildcats and the Kansas City Royals.

#### WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE VACATION?

We took our family to Cancun for our 25th wedding anniversary.

#### WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

The success of my children. They teach me every day that you need to be a life-long learner and are proving it.

#### WHAT IS SOMETHING NOT MANY PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT YOU?

I have 65 first cousins. My dad is one of 14 kids and my mom is one of seven. Yes, I do know them all and most are here in Kansas.



Jillane Koochel

## Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Bruce Mueller—General Manager

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### District Offices

**Garden City**  
2005 W Fulton  
P.O. Box 973  
Garden City, KS 67846  
620-275-0261

**Great Bend**  
2300 Broadway  
P.O. Box 1446  
Great Bend, KS 67530  
620-793-4223

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302 W. 6th  
P.O. Box 247  
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620-896-7090

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N Hwy 25  
P.O. Box 966  
Leoti, KS 67861  
620-375-2632

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101 Main Street  
P.O. Box 230  
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206 1/2 N Main  
P.O. Box 1010  
Syracuse, KS 67878  
620-384-5171

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310 Broadway  
P.O. Box 490  
Tribune, KS 67879  
620-376-4231

### FROM THE MANAGER

## Thank You for Your Feedback!

In last month's article, I wasn't able to comment (due to printing deadlines) on the recently held Member Engagement Meetings.

I want to say a big **thank you** to our membership who participated in this year's meetings. We held meetings in August in Great Bend, Harper, and Scott City.

The primary objectives of the meetings were to:

- ▶ Help the Wheatland board and management to better understand the feelings of the members relating to the community, cooperative, and its members.
- ▶ Serve as a sounding board for the evaluation of ongoing programs, policies and initiatives and for the development of new programs, policies and initiatives.
- ▶ Foster a higher degree of understanding with the membership for their cooperative and the cooperative business model.
- ▶ Enable Wheatland to be totally member-oriented and responsive to the expectations and needs of the membership.

Our **focus** this year was on the following topics:

- ▶ What is a cooperative and what are the benefits of being a member?
- ▶ Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI) as part of the Automated Grid
- ▶ Cost of Service

We received great feedback from the members who participated. We left each meeting with actionable items to implement to better serve the membership.

Speaking of serving the membership,

Wheatland Electric once again is organizing the "Cram the Van" food drive across our entire service territory. The food drive started in September and will be running through the end of October. We have our red Wheatland van all "logo'd up" for the duration of the drive. Look for the van out at community events throughout our service territory including football games, festivals and special "Cram the Van" events held at our local service offices and other designated locations throughout our service territory.

Last year, the donations delivered to the food banks across our service territory were approximately 7,000 pounds. Let's see if we can beat that total this year. Please come out to the events and support the food drive, or stop by any of our local offices to drop off your items. All donations will be given to the local food bank in the community in which it was collected. Help us "Cram the Van!"

**Until next time, take care.**



Bruce Mueller

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative  
101 Main, P.O. Box 230, Scott City, KS 67871  
620-872-5885  
www.weci.net

WHEATLAND  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

# NEWS



## Wheatland Celebrates National Co-op Month

October is National Co-op Month. Wheatland Electric is celebrating the benefits and values that Co-ops bring to our members and community.

While co-ops operate in many industries and sectors of the economy, seven Co-op principles set us apart from other businesses: voluntary and open membership; democratic member control; member's economic participation; autonomy and independence; education, training and information; cooperation among Co-ops; and concern for community.

"The co-op business model is unique and rooted in our local communities," said Bruce Mueller, Wheatland's General Manager. "Co-ops help us build a more participatory, sustainable, and resilient economy."

When Wheatland was formed in 1948, it was formed for the sole purpose of providing a benefit (electricity) to its members. Today, Wheatland continues to provide the benefit of electricity and more!

Every April, Wheatland conducts an annual meeting as an opportunity for our members to get involved. Members have an opportunity to engage with Co-op leadership, hear updates about the programs and business of the Co-op and vote on important matters. One member, one vote, is an important part of the Co-op difference.

Concern for the community is another guiding Co-op principle. Wheatland and its employees practice this principle nearly every day. Through programs like Sharing Success, Youth Tour and Cram the Van, Wheatland gives back to our community and our members. Wheatland employees regularly volunteer and give their time to civic organizations, help out at county fairs, participate in community parades and serve as board members, councilman and commissioners in your local



Wheatland linemen help the Scott City High School communications class film the All School Reunion parade.



Wheatland's Manager of Member Services, Shawn Powelson, presents a check for \$1,000 to the Hamilton County Library as a part of our Sharing Success program.

communities.

"We're more than just the light company," Mueller said. "Electricity is what we do, it's not who we are. We're a Co-op and we want our members to see the value in Co-op membership. Whether it's through programs like Cram the Van that help out those in need or our Youth Tour program that invests in the future of young people in our communities, giving back, helping out members, those are the reasons we should celebrate National Co-op Month."

Help us celebrate Co-op Month by joining us at a Cram the Van event. Bring a non-perishable food item or a cash donation for your local food bank or drop them off at your local Wheatland office this month. Members helping members, that's something to celebrate!



Each year, Wheatland sponsors the ElectroRally program for local high school students.

# 6 Events To Go!

## Help Wheatland Electric Cram the Van this Fall!



Shawn Powelson (right), Wheatland's Manager of Member Services, chats with members and takes donations at the Women's Fair in Garden City.



Cram the Van events are not just about donations, but also community! Be sure to stop by any of the events listed below to donate, grab a free hotdog and visit with your co-op staff.

The big red van is on the move! So far, we've made stops in Holcomb, Garden City, Great Bend, Leoti and Caldwell. We'd like to thank everyone who has come out to the events to help us Cram the Van at these stops.

In September, we filled up the donation bins several times and collected more than \$200 cash.

We're well on our way to surpassing last year's record of three and a half tons, but we won't make it without your help! Be sure and watch for the big red van at an event near your community in October.

You can also bring your donation by any Wheatland office, the Caldwell City Hall or Hired Man Grocery in Conway Springs from now till the end of October. Thanks for helping us Cram the Van!

## Cram the Van at these Local Events

- ▶ **OCT 2**—Gooch's Foods (Tribune)
- ▶ **OCT 6**—Heartland Foods (Scott City)
- ▶ **OCT. 9**—Chaparral Roadrunners Football Game (Harper/Anthony)
- ▶ **OCT. 16**—Cardinal Challenge (Conway Springs)
- ▶ **OCT. 28**—Wheatland Electric (Syracuse Office)
- ▶ **OCT. 31**—Halloween Finale (Wheatland Broadband-Scott City)



## Wheatland Linemen Teach State Fair-goers About Electrical Safety



Wheatland linemen Lawrence Lubbers and Levi Milner joined Midwest Energy's Les Loker (in blue) and Nate Stryker (far right) to teach electrical safety at the State Fair.

Wheatland linemen once again took part in the High Voltage Safety demonstration at the Kansas State Fair. Two teams of two Wheatland linemen from the Harper district, each took a day to man the demonstration trailer.

The safety demonstration was part of the Kansas Energy Expo spon-



Lawrence Lubbers demonstrates the effect of an electrical current on the human body using a grapefruit, which is then split open for students to view the damage.

sored by the Kansas Corporation Commission. The linemen conducted demonstrations throughout the day to school-age students attending the fair with their classes, as well as general fair-goers.

The demonstrations consisted of a number of examples and illustrations that challenged people to think carefully about electrical safety. A number of common everyday items were shown to the audience and the audience was asked to identify which would be considered conductors of electricity and which would be insulators (or things that might protect you from the flow of electricity). Many of the items the audience identified as insulators were proven to in fact be conductors under the right set of circumstances.

Other topics discussed included downed power line safety, when to call 911, common equipment used by linemen and much more.

## Get to Know Your Co-op Staff

### Barbara Kirk

Payroll Specialist in Scott City  
10 Years at Wheatland

**TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAMILY (SPOUSE, CHILDREN, PETS).** I am

married to Chuck, the most wonderful man in the world.

Between us we have five children, four children-in-law, and five grandchildren.



Barbara Kirk

**WHERE ARE YOU FROM ORIGINALLY?** Lakin

**WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME?** Spend time with my family, play cards or board games, quilt, swim, read, and cook or bake goodies.

**WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE VACATION?** A trip to Israel. Seeing the ruins of thousands of years ago and learning how they lived life and walking where Jesus walked was awesome.

**WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE BOOK OR MOVIE AND WHY?** *The Holy Bible*. It gives me truth, guidance, and inspiration every day.

**WHAT IS SOMETHING NOT MANY PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT YOU?** When I was in Israel, I received my camel driver's license.

**WHO HAS INSPIRED YOU IN YOUR LIFE AND WHY?** My Aunt Geneva. She believed in me and told me so. She was also a very kind and giving woman. I have some of the same rules at my house as she did. My favorite is "If it is in the fridge just go get it. If you ask you may not have it."