



Todd Nemechek  
Lineman Foreman  
26 Years at Wheatland in Tribune

## A Day in the Life Todd Nemechek

BY SHAWN POWELSON,  
MANAGER OF MEMBER SERVICES  
AND CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

I arrived at the Tribune office in my "work clothes" and toting my lunch. As I entered the office, the line crew said a quick hello and immediately ran through the checklist of items. Coat? Check. Gloves? Check. Safety glasses? Check. Hard hat? Umm, no. Mace Bender, a fourth year apprentice lineman, headed off to find me a hard hat and returned shortly with a brand new one still in the package. "Here, take this and keep it," Mace said. "Now you'll have your own."

I hopped in the truck with Line Foreman Todd Nemechek, and we headed out to the job site. On our way to the site, Todd filled me in that we were going to complete a line extension project for a local farmer.

As we continued to the site, Todd told me that he had been hired 26 years ago with no previous experience and eventually became a certified Journeyman Lineman. Previously, Todd went to school to be a carpenter. His carpentry skills later earned him the pleasure of being the point man in the Tribune office remodel a few years ago.

Todd told me he'd been married for almost as long as he'd worked at Wheatland and had two adult children. When I asked him what he liked to do for fun, he said bowl. He bowls in a men's league on

one night and in another league with his wife as his partner on a different night. I quickly discovered that bowling was a family affair for the Nemecheks.

Once on site, Todd held a "tailgate meeting" to review the specifications of the job. After the meeting, everyone, including me, signed off on a sheet acknowledging that we understood what we were going to be doing, and we got to work!

Throughout the course of the day, I helped set two poles, got to run a super-cool hydraulic tamper and got a general birds-eye view of a typical day of line work. (If there is such a thing.) One of the things Todd told me he liked best about his job was that he gets to do something different almost every day.

As I observed the work by the crew, I gained a new appreciation for what it takes to be a lineman and more specifically for the responsibility associated with being a crew foreman. Todd gave the group guidance, showed attention to safety, contributed to the task at hand, and displayed camaraderie with the crew.

After finishing the job, we all headed back to town for lunch. As we sat around the break room, I got a keen sense of family. The room was full of laughter and good-natured ribbing, and I felt like I had been part of the family. Thanks for sharing your day with me Todd!

## Wheatland Awards Sharing Success Fund Grants to Local Organizations

Wheatland Electric's Sharing Success Fund recently awarded three \$1,000 grants to local organizations.

The program was created through a partnership with one of Wheatland's partner banks, CoBank, and the Scott Community Foundation.

CoBank began by offering a \$5,000 matching donation to a charitable organization of the cooperative's choosing. Wheatland approached the Scott Community Foundation with the idea of leveraging the funds to make a number of smaller grants to other non-profits throughout Wheatland's service territory. The program grew from there.

Combined, Wheatland and CoBank contribute \$10,000 yearly, and the Scott Community Foundation manages the funds and the grant application process.

The **DIXON TOWNSHIP LIBRARY** located in Argonia received a \$1,000 grant to help purchase new books for their library in both the adult and children's sections. The money will also be used to purchase new bookshelves in their growing children's area. "We are so grateful for the Sharing



(Left to right): Dixon Township Library and Harper Hospital receive \$1,000 grants from Wheatland's Sharing Success Fund.



Shawn Powelson, Manager of Member Services and Corporate Communications, awards the Bad Boyz Boxing Club with a \$1,000 grant.

**BOXING CLUB** located in Finney County received a \$1,000 grant to assist in purchasing boxing shoes for club participants. The boxing club not only teaches the fundamentals of boxing, but coach Robert Gonzales also instills the importance of education and a healthy lifestyle. The club has been active in Finney County for over 25 years and has kept thousands of boys and girls off the streets.

The **HARPER HOSPITAL** located in Harper submitted their request for \$1,000 to help with the purchase of a new scale for the Clinic, a Hand-held Digital Pulse Oximeter with a pediatric attachment and new lead aprons for the Radiology Department. The funds from the Sharing Success Fund assist the hospital in getting equipment that is greatly needed and helps them provide "Quality Care Right Here at Home."



Success Fund and the money that was awarded to our small town library," said Kim Dunn, Head Librarian, Dixon Township Library. This was the first grant we have applied for, so I was thrilled when I found out we would be receiving the funds to help purchase new books!"

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Non-profit groups interested in receiving funding from the Wheatland Electric Sharing Success Fund should contact the Scott Community Foundation at 620-872-3790 for further details.



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 Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Bruce Mueller—General Manager

#### Board of Trustees

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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

**Harper**  
906 Central  
P.O. Box 247  
Harper, KS 67058  
620-896-7090

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

**Scott City-Main**  
101 Main Street  
P.O. Box 230  
Scott City, KS 67871  
620-872-5885

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

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

#### FROM THE MANAGER

### Attend this Year's Annual Meeting



Bruce Mueller

to join us on April 20, 2016, at the Greeley County 4-H Building, 905 Ingalls Ave., in Tribune.

We look forward to gathering with you—the members of Wheatland Electric—to catch up, hear what you have to say and enjoy some good food and fellowship. We will have great door prizes to give away and will be announcing the winners of the 13 scholarships for local seniors, two Youth Tour recipients in Washington D.C., and the winner of the Youth Leadership camp in Colorado.

This event is not only a chance to visit with other members of the cooperative, but it is a

It's that time of year again—annual meeting time. On behalf of Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc., I'd like to personally

invite you

to what Wheatland Electric has accomplished in the previous year and what we are planning in the upcoming year and beyond. It's also an opportunity for you to exercise one of the greatest benefits of being a member of Wheatland Electric, by voting for the upcoming board of trustees. Wheatland Electric is not owned by far away investors. It's run by a democratically elected board of trustees, a board who is given the privilege to serve because of your vote. Our trustees are members of your community. They are concerned with the issues you face every day because they face them, too.

So make a point to attend the Wheatland Electric Annual Meeting and exercise your right as a member of the cooperative and vote.

**Until next time, take care.**

### Cold Weather Accommodation Reminder

Wheatland Electric voluntarily participates in disconnect procedures for residential members from November through March. This cold weather accommodation will end March 31. Any account in arrears will be subject to disconnection April 1. Please make sure your account is current, or that you have made arrangements with your local office to avoid disconnection.

### Get to Know Your Co-op Staff **Trent Suchy**

Substation Maintenance  
in Great Bend  
7 Years at Wheatland



Trent Suchy

**TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAMILY.** I have been married to my wife, Joann, for one year. We have our first child on the way, due in April. We also have two pets: A rat terrier named Dala, and a black labrador retriever named Drake.

**WHERE ARE YOU FROM ORIGINALLY?** Great Bend

**WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME?** I like to hunt, fish and train labrador retrievers.

**WHAT SPORT OR TEAM IS YOUR FAVORITE?** My favorite sport is football, and I'm a fan of the Denver Broncos.

**WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE VACATION?** Going to Cancun.

**IF YOU COULD HAVE ANY SUPER POWER, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?** The ability to fly. I don't know why. I just think it would be cool to have the ability to fly.

**WHO HAS INSPIRED YOU IN YOUR LIFE AND WHY?** My dad, because of his hard work, success and his guidance.

# Safety is Wheatland Electric's Top Priority

There are many areas of safety that must be recognized and acknowledged at Wheatland Electric. Member safety, employee safety, community wide safety education, electrical safety and the list goes on and on. Safety is at the forefront of the co-op's daily operations. Delivering reliable electric power to more than 21,000 members across a 15-county service area is no small task, but providing that service safely requires employees to approach their daily responsibilities with an intense focus on safety. Our members get to see the results of our employees' efforts every day through the safe, reliable service we provide.

Because we care about the safety of you, our members, Wheatland is active in educating about and promoting electrical safety. We provide educational and safety programs utilizing our safety demonstration trailer and our table-top display.

Additionally, as part of our commitment to safety, employees, both inside the organization and in

the field, undergo safety training on a regular basis. "Our line crews participate in regular training sessions to ensure that our employees are constantly reminded of the safety aspect of the job and the importance of using equipment in the safest manner possible," said Luke West, Manager of Safety/Policy and Documents.

#### Pole Top Rescue

A lineman's job is dangerous, and Wheatland makes every effort to achieve safety excellence. Ongoing training of safe practices for linemen is a priority for our cooperative. Pole top rescue is yet another exercise in safety and emergency training that Wheatland employees participate in.

The annual training helps linemen prepare for situations where they might have to climb a pole to rescue a co-worker. One-by-one, linemen test their skills by securing and lowering a practice dummy from a pole to the ground where co-workers are prepared to provide emergency first aid and



Luke West, Manager of Safety/Policy and Documents, Shawn Ryan, Serviceman, and Clint Gullick, Line Foreman, create a realistic picture for audiences.

care until emergency medical service professionals arrive on scene to take over. Crews are expected to have the injured lineman on the ground in less than four minutes after beginning the rescue effort.

#### High-Voltage Demonstration

At Wheatland, safety not only applies to our employees but to our members, as well. Because of our commitment to safety, Wheatland developed a High-Voltage Safety Demonstration Trailer. The trailer is used to illustrate the dangers associated with electricity. Electricity is the safest form of energy, but only when treated with respect.

The electrical safety demonstration features an open trailer outfitted with actual equipment necessary to distribute electricity, such as poles, wires, transformers, meters and other items. Linemen use several props and scenarios, including hot dogs, to visually demonstrate the consequences of what can happen when individuals or objects make contact with 7,200 volts of electricity.

Wheatland linemen along with West recently gave an electrical safety demonstration to volunteer and rural firefighters in Conway Springs. At the program, 46 firefight-



Wheatland linemen discuss the importance of electrical safety using the High-Voltage Safety Demonstration Trailer.



Mace Bender, fourth-year apprentice and David Allen, Journeyman Lineman, offers table-top safety demonstrations to elementary students at Tribune Ag Safety Days.

ers from Argonia, Conway Springs, Mayfield, Norwich, Sedgwick County Fire Station 39, Sumner County Fire District #9, Sumner County Emergency Management, and Viola got a close-up look at various conductors and components of the electrical distribution system and gained a clearer understanding of how the distribution system operates. The demonstration also displayed the severity of injuries electrical contact can cause and what first responders can do to avoid injury while working with and

near high voltage.

#### Low-Voltage Safety Demonstration

Wheatland also offers table-top safety demonstrations for local schools and organizations in our service territory. Using a table-top model of a farm, Wheatland personnel demonstrate the value of electricity as well as how to use it safely.

"We take safety very seriously," said Bruce Mueller, General Manager at Wheatland Electric. "We believe that safety is a key component of cooperative principle five: Education, training and Information. We know it is our duty to educate our employees, members and the communities we serve on the importance of electrical safety."

If you would like to learn more or set up a safety demonstration, please contact West at lwest@weci.net or Shawn Powelson, Manager of Member Services and Corporate Communications, at spowelson@weci.net, or call 800-762-0436.

### Attend the Annual Meeting on April 20

The Wheatland Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 20, 2016, at the Greeley County 4-H Building in Tribune. Lunch is at 11:30 a.m. MDT and the meeting will follow at 12:30 p.m. MDT.

We hope to see you there!

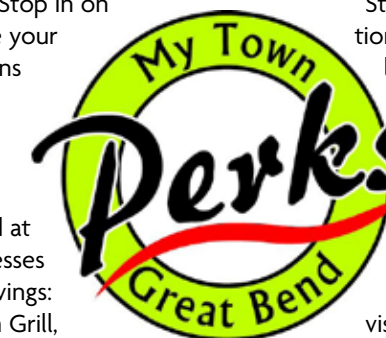
April 2016						
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### Save Money Using Your Co-op Connections Card

Perks Coffee Shop in Great Bend is all about coffee done the right way— your way! Stop in on Saturdays and use your Co-op Connections Card to enjoy 20 percent off all specialty drinks!

Use your Connections Card at these local businesses for more great savings:  
► Maria's Mexican Grill, Great Bend

► Pizza Hut, Scott City; and  
► The Country Store, Scott City.



Still need a Connections Card? Contact your local office for more information on how to start saving now with the Co-op Connections Card! For a complete list and deals visit [www.connections.coop/weci](http://www.connections.coop/weci).

## Check Out a New Way to Curb Your Energy Usage

*Borrow a Kill-A-Watt at Your Local Library Today!*

The Kill-A-Watt™ EZ is an electricity monitoring device designed to easily measure how much electricity is being used by your plug-in appliances at home or work.

Find out how much money you would save on your electricity bills by turning them off and being smarter in your home energy management.

The Kill-A-Watt EZ is now available for checkout at your local library.

*You must have a valid library card to borrow a Kill-A-Watt through this program.*

### Get to Know Your Co-op Staff **Julie Stoss**

Consumer Services Representative, Great Bend  
2 Months at Wheatland



Julie Stoss

**TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAMILY.** I am one of two children. My mom works as a teacher and my dad is a farmer, both in the Great Bend area. My younger brother, Brent, lives and works in Garden City for a crop consulting company. I have six farm cats, "fur babies," that are pampered despite living outdoors.

**WHERE ARE YOU FROM ORIGINALLY?** I was born in Hoisington. When I was about four years old, our family moved to a farm near Olmitz.

**WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME?** I like to help with activities on the farm and enjoy being outdoors. Calving season is my favorite time of the year. I love seeing all the new calves running around. I also enjoy traveling with family when I get the chance.

**WHAT SPORT OR TEAM IS YOUR FAVORITE?** My favorite sports team is the Kansas City Royals. I've been to a few games and would love to go back.

**WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE VACATION?** Hawaii. While I wasn't thrilled about the long plane ride, the weather and scenery made up for it! In Hawaii, there are a lot of sights and activities to do that Kansas can't offer. (Kansas sunsets are still the best.)

**WHAT IS SOMETHING NOT MANY PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT YOU?** I have played piano since the fourth grade. It is my go-to for stress relief and relaxation.

**WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MOVIE?** My favorite movie is The Lone Ranger. Comedy/action is my favorite genre. I absolutely love the soundtrack for the movie!