

WHEATLAND  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

# NEWS



## Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Bruce Mueller—General Manager

### Board of Trustees

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**Wes Campbell**

Vice President

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Trustee

**Katie Eisenhour**

Trustee

**Bob Hiss**

Trustee

**John Kleysteuber**

Trustee

**Mike Thon**

Trustee

### 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

# A Piece of the Pie



**Bruce Mueller**

### Capital Credits. Margins. Allocation. Retirement.

These concepts are unique to cooperatives. I'll try to explain the process of the above terms without your

eyes glazing over.

Let's say that Capital Credits are like a huge pie—I'll pick coconut (since that's my favorite). Each eligible coop member gets a slice of the pie based on how much energy they used in a given year and how much they paid for that energy. A residential member whose monthly bill is relatively modest will get a small piece of the pie, but larger commercial or industrial members who pay thousands of dollars each month will receive a much larger piece.

Obviously, that's an oversimplification; nonetheless, it's sometimes a helpful comparison to teach the concept of Capital Credits. I encourage you to read the "[Your Capital Credits Questions Answered](#)" on page 16-D and 16-E for a more thorough understanding of Capital Credits and how they are distributed.

**Members Economic Participation is one of the Seven Cooperative Principles** that distinguishes electric

cooperatives from investor owned and municipal utilities. As a member of Wheatland Electric Cooperative, you have equity in Wheatland Electric. That money is used as working capital to operate, maintain and upgrade the cooperatives electric distribution system.

As a cooperative, we don't talk about profits because we're a not-for-profit business. By definition, a cooperative is an enterprise that is collectively owned and operated for the mutual benefit of all members. These benefits include the generation, accumulation and return of capital.

In **March** of this year, Wheatland Electric's Board of Trustees decided how much to retire, or payout, in Capital Credits based on the 2016 financial year. The Board of Trustees considered the impact the retirement would have on the financial strength of the cooperative. The Board of Trustees decided it was economically feasible to **retire \$750,000 in Capital Credits**.

Hopefully, as you read this column and the other articles in this month's magazine on Capital Credits, you will have a better understanding of Capital Credits. If you have any questions, please give us a call. Enjoy your piece of the pie!

*Until next time, take care.*



# Wheatland Wraps Up Cram the Van Season 4

Hard to believe another "Cram the Van" season

is over, but by the time you're reading this, we'll have wrapped

up season four of our Cram the Van food drive. Seven weeks, 10 communities and 11 events later, we've made our final stop for the year. Last year, you helped us to collect more than 4.5 tons of food and donations, bringing our three-year total to 11.5 tons.

We were hoping to top our 4.5-ton mark from last year and, with your tremendous support this year, we're certain we've made it. Next month, we'll give you the grand total and the total we delivered to each of our local food banks in November. We can't wait to see the totals; the 10,000-pound mark is well within our reach!

Once again, a *huge* thank you to you, our members, who came out to the van events or dropped off donations at our local offices. We couldn't do this without you and we're always amazed by the generosity we experience in our communities. We enjoy seeing everyone supporting us, their local food banks and our communities when we're out and about at the events. Thanks for helping us Cram the Van!



Member Services Representative Teresa Mazouch picks up the donations collected by Central Kansas Christian Academy.



District 2 (Leoti) linemen, Bruce Loy and Nathan Porter, grill up burgers for the Cram the Van event in Leoti.



Wheatland member Lisa Lovins (right) volunteers at the Cram the Van event in Scott City held at Heartland Foods.

## Cold Weather Accommodation Effective Nov. 15 to March 15

As of March 1, 2016, Wheatland Electric has adopted the following Cold Weather Accommodation policy for **residential members**. All accounts are subject to disconnection when temperatures exceed 35 degrees for a 48-hour period between Nov. 15 to March 15, unless a member requests a cold weather accommodation.

In order for a member to retain electric service when temperatures are above 35 degrees during the cold weather period, they must comply with the following cold weather accommodation provisions:

- ▶ Inform Wheatland of their inability to pay their account in full;
- ▶ Pay half of each current bill during the cold weather period;
- ▶ Have a zero balance due at the start of the cold weather period;

- ▶ Apply for federal, state or local funds for which the member may be eligible;
- ▶ Agree to make a payment plan at the conclusion of the cold weather period; and
- ▶ Complete and sign a Cold Weather Accommodation agreement at any Wheatland district office.

Members who do not adhere to the Cold Weather Accommodation rules are not eligible for payment arrangements at the conclusion of the cold weather period. Their entire outstanding balance is due and payable prior to reconnection if service is disconnected after March 15.

# Wheatland Retires in Capital Credits **\$750,000**

*Pick up your Capital Credits Check at Harvest Days in December*

It's time for you to get the credit—Capital Credits, that is—for helping build, sustain, and grow your local electric cooperative. In December 2017, Wheatland Electric Cooperative will retire \$750,000 in Capital Credits, to both active and inactive members, across portions of sixteen counties served by the co-op.

When you sign up to receive electric service from an electric co-op, such as Wheatland Electric, you become a member-owner of that electric co-op. While investor-owned utilities return a portion of any profits back to their shareholders, electric co-ops operate on an at-cost basis. So instead of returning leftover funds, known as margins, to folks who might not live in the same region or even the same state as you do, Wheatland Electric allocates and periodically retires Capital Credits (also called patronage dividends, patronage refunds, patronage capital, or equity capital) based on how much electricity you purchased during a year.

This year, Wheatland Electric members who purchased electricity in **1987 and 2016** will receive a Capital Credits retirement. The retirement will be through a check or bill credit, and reflects your contribution of capital to and ownership of, the cooperative during those years. The percentages of Capital Credits retired for the aforementioned years are as follows:

Years Retired	% of Capital Credits Retirement
1987	65%
2016	35%

1987 may seem like a long time ago, however, those funds helped Wheatland Electric reduce the amount of money we needed to borrow from outside lenders to build, maintain, and expand a reliable electric distribution system, and covered emergency expenses. If you were a member in 1987 and 2016 you will receive

two Capital Credits retirements.

**In December 2017**, each Wheatland district office will host **Wheatland Capital Credits Harvest Days**. On specific days during that month, each Wheatland Electric district office will have Capital Credits checks ready for pickup. If the amount owed is **less than \$20 Wheatland Electric will credit your electric bill** in December (no Capital Credits will be paid that are **under \$1**).

To find out if you have a check to pick up please go to our website, [www.weci.net](http://www.weci.net), and click on Capital Credits under the Billing tab or call your local Wheatland Electric office, **after Nov. 16**.

We will have coffee and snacks available from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on these days. We'd love for you to stop by and visit with your fellow members, friends and employees of the cooperative. Below is a schedule of the Capital Credits Harvest Days, scheduled for each Wheatland Electric office:

- ▶ **Monday, Dec. 4** – Scott City
- ▶ **Tuesday, Dec. 5** – Leoti
- ▶ **Wednesday, Dec. 6** – Tribune
- ▶ **Thursday, Dec. 7** – Syracuse
- ▶ **Friday, Dec. 8** – Garden City
- ▶ **Monday, Dec. 11** – Great Bend
- ▶ **Wednesday, Dec. 13** – Harper

**Inactive members or persons not currently purchasing their electricity from Wheatland Electric**, but who were members during the years of the Capital Credits retirement will receive a check for their Capital Credits. It is very important that Wheatland Electric has the current mailing address of all inactive members to ensure the delivery of the Capital Credits checks.

To confirm or update your mailing address, please call Wheatland Electric at 800-762-0436. Please see the following pages for a list of frequently asked questions regarding Capital Credits.

**To find out if you have a check to pick up please go to our website, [www.weci.net](http://www.weci.net), and click on Capital Credits under the Billing tab or call your local Wheatland Electric office, after Nov. 16.**

# Your Capital Credits

## What Are Capital Credits?

An electric cooperative operates on an at-cost basis by annually “allocating” to each member, based upon the member’s purchase of electricity, operating revenue remaining at the end of the year; later, as financial condition permits, these allocated amounts—Capital Credits—are retired. Capital Credits represent the most significant source of equity for Wheatland Electric Cooperative. Since a cooperative’s members are also the people the co-op serves, Capital Credits reflect each member’s ownership in, and contribution of capital to, the cooperative. This differs from dividends investor-owned utilities pay shareholders, who may or may not be customers of the utility.

## Where Does the Money Come From?

Member-owned, not-for-profit electric co-ops set rates to generate enough money to pay operating costs, make payments on any loans, and provide an emergency reserve. At the end of each year, we subtract operating expenses from the operating revenue collected during the year. The balance is called an operating “margin.”

## How Are Margins Allocated?

Margins are allocated to members as Capital Credits based on the value of their purchases. Member purchases may also be called patronage.

## Does KCP&L, Westar or the City of Garden City retire Capital Credits?

No. Within the electric industry, Capital Credits only exist at not-for-profit electric cooperatives owned by their members.

## Are Capital Credits Retired Every Year?

Each year, the Wheatland Electric Board of Trustees makes a decision on whether to retire Capital

Credits based on the financial health of the cooperative. During some years, the co-op may experience high growth in the number of new accounts, or severe storms may result in the need to spend additional funds to repair lines. These and other events might increase costs and decrease member equity, causing the board not to retire Capital Credits. For this reason, Wheatland Electric’s ability to retire Capital Credits reflects the cooperative’s strength and financial stability. The board alone decides whether to retire Capital Credits.

## Do I Lose My Capital Credits in the Years the Co-op Decides Not to Make Retirements?

No. All Capital Credits allocated, for every year members have been served by Wheatland Electric, are maintained until the board retires them.

## What Years Will Be Retired in December?

Wheatland Electric will be retiring a percentage of Capital Credits to members who purchased electricity from the cooperative in the years 1987 and 2016.

## How Much Will Be Retired in Total in 2017?

\$750,000

## How Often Do Members Receive Capital Credits Retirements?

The Wheatland Electric Board of Trustees makes a decision each year whether or not to retire Capital Credits. When the cooperative is strong enough financially and member equity levels are high enough, the board directs staff to retire some portion of past years’ Capital Credits.

## How Will the Retirement Work?

Current Wheatland Electric members, who purchase electricity now and during the years being retired, will receive a check if the amount is over \$20 or a credit on their December electricity bill if the amount is less than \$20 (No Capital Credits will be paid that are under \$1). Inactive or former members who no longer purchase electricity from Wheatland Electric (but who purchased electricity during the years being retired) will receive a check. (Note: If you elected

# Questions Answered

to settle a descendant account in the past and took a discounted retirement payment for these years, you have received your capital credit and it cannot be paid again.)

To find out if you have a check to pick up, members may go to our website, [www.weci.net](http://www.weci.net), and click on Capital Credits under the Billing tab, after **Nov. 16**. Members unable to access our website may also call their Wheatland Electric local office to find out if they will be receiving a check.

Members who will receive a check may pick up their check during Capital Credits Harvest Days at their local office. If they do not pick up their check on the designated day, their check will be mailed. Capital Credits Harvest Days will be held from **10 a.m. to 2 p.m.** and are scheduled as follows:

- ▶ **Monday, Dec. 4** – Scott City
- ▶ **Tuesday, Dec. 5** – Leoti

- ▶ **Wednesday, Dec. 6** – Tribune
- ▶ **Thursday, Dec. 7** – Syracuse
- ▶ **Friday, Dec. 8** – Garden City
- ▶ **Monday, Dec. 11** – Great Bend
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### What If I Have Moved?

If you have moved or no longer have electric service with Wheatland Electric, it is important that you inform the cooperative of your current address, so that future retirements can be properly mailed to you. If you purchased electricity during the years being retired, then you are entitled to a Capital Credits retirement, even if you have moved out of the Wheatland Electric service area.

If we have your current address, then Wheatland Electric will send your retirement check by mail. To confirm or update your mailing address, please call Wheatland Electric at 800-762-0436.

## Get to Know Your Co-op Staff

### Quinten Wheeler

Manager of Safety & Compliance  
11 years in Scott City



Quinten Wheeler

#### TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAMILY.

I've been married to my wife, Julie, for 17 years. We have four kids: Kale, 14; Emma, 11; Matthew, 9; and Noah, 6.

#### WHERE ARE YOU FROM ORIGINALLY?

Scott City

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

I enjoy hunting, fishing, golfing and watching our kids' activities. I also love spending time in the mountains, skiing or camping and trail riding.

#### WHO HAS INSPIRED YOU IN YOUR LIFE AND WHY?

My Father. He taught me how to treat others and that hard work pays off.

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

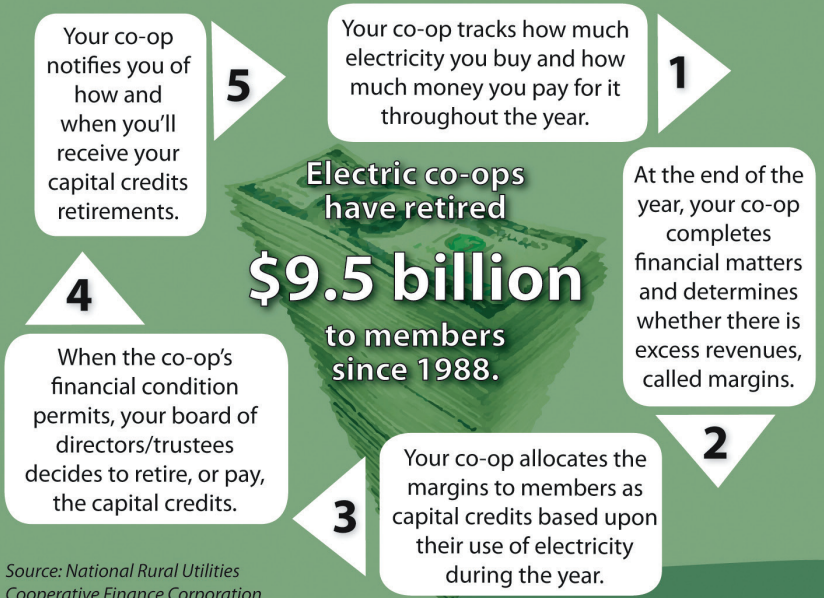
In the eighth grade I was the best seamstress in my home economics class.

#### WHAT ACCOMPLISHMENT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

My kids.

### How Do Capital Credits Work?

Because electric co-ops operate at cost, any excess revenues, called margins, are returned to members in the form of capital credits.



Source: National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation

## SAFETY Tip of the Month

The National Safety Council reports that one out of every four vehicle accidents is due to poor backing techniques. Pay attention to blind spots, perform a walk-around, and use a spotter when needed. Know the clearance for your vehicle and park in easy to exit spaces whenever possible. Remember: Prevention of accidents is what it's about! Get out and recheck if you have any doubt!

## Get to Know Your Co-op Staff

### Holly Guinard

Dispatcher  
5 months in Garden City



Holly Guinard

#### TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAMILY.

Right now, I live with my 75-year-old father, my big dog Baxter and a handful of cats. I also have a brother, Chris.

#### WHERE ARE YOU FROM ORIGINALLY?

I grew up in Garden City but lived in Wichita for the past 25 years. Both are home to me.

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

Cooking (and eating) and watching sports.

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

Boston Red Sox, K-State football, and Kansas University and Wichita State University basketball are my top priorities.

#### WHAT ACCOMPLISHMENT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

A very quick recovery from a life-threatening illness and the strong network of friends who got me through it.

#### WHAT WOULD YOUR IDEAL JOB BE?

A wealthy owner of an animal sanctuary with lots of staff.

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

I don't watch movies. I don't have the attention span to watch ONE thing for two hours!

#### WHO HAS INSPIRED YOU IN YOUR LIFE AND WHY?

I was inspired by three coworkers who were very good at their jobs. They motivated me to work hard so I would be thought of as highly as they were.

## Legislative Connections Tour in Garden City

Wheatland Electric along with Sunflower Electric and its member co-ops joined forces and hosted a Co-ops Vote Legislative Connections Tour event on Oct. 3 in Garden City.

"The Co-ops Vote Legislative Connections Tour is all about outreach and building relationships with our legislators," said Kim Christiansen, director of government relations and legal counsel at Kansas Electric Cooperatives (KEC).

Legislators had the opportunity to tour Sunflower's Holcomb Station, a 340-megawatt, coal-fired generating station. Holcomb Station was designed and constructed as a reliable, economic and environmentally responsible source of electric power for western Kansas. A tour of Sunflower's System Control Center was also given. The morning wrapped up with a presentation by Stuart Lowry, president and chief executive officer at Sunflower Electric.

The tours offered an opportunity for the legislators to learn more about co-ops, as well as a demonstration of the equipment it takes to keep linemen safe on the job. Luke West, director of corporate services and water division at Wheatland, gave a high-voltage demonstration. Legislators got a close-up look at various conductors and components of the electrical distribution system and



Wheatland general manager Bruce Mueller, gives a tour of Wheatland's Garden City office to Kansas legislators during the Co-ops Vote event held on Oct. 3.

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.

Alex Orel, KEC's manager of government relations, led a Q&A session with legislators about this past session and what to expect this upcoming session. "These events are a chance to give legislators more information on our issues. It's all about getting our legislators to visit our member-cooperatives. Legislators are still surprised to learn that we are not-for-profit utilities, and that electric cooperatives are a unique business model."

By embracing and participating in the Co-ops Vote program, Wheatland is increasing our visibility, vision and voice. Wheatland thanks the legislators for participating in the event and for visiting with employees. With 42

million members across the nation, electric co-ops are a powerful voice on national issues that have a local impact. We want to be sure that our voice is always heard, especially on Election Day.



Wheatland linemen and co-op staff give a safety demonstration to legislators and others in attendance during the Co-ops Vote event.

## Educating Our Youngest Members at Ag Safety Day

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 power to more than 21,000 members across a 16-county service area is no small task, but providing that service 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 Electric is active in educating the public and promoting electrical safety. We provide programs utilizing our safety demonstration trailer and our table-top display.

**QUINTEN WHEELER**, manager of safety and compli-



Linemen Chris Oliver and Joe Thomeczek utilize a table-top safety display to teach electrical safety at the Syracuse Progressive Agriculture Safety Day.

Delivering reliable power to more than 21,000 members across a 16-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.

ance, along with Syracuse linemen **JOE THOMECZEK** and **CHRIS OLIVER** recently spent their day educating students about electrical safety at the Progressive Agriculture Safety Day program in Syracuse on Sept. 19. Caldwell Linemen **DEREK CALLAWAY** and **DEVAN YORK** also spent their day at the Sumner County Fairgrounds, in Caldwell, on Sept. 22 educating fifth graders.

Using a table-top model of a farm, Syracuse and Caldwell linemen demonstrated the value of electricity as well as how to use it safely. The importance of being aware of overhead and underground electric wires is taught along with several examples of accidents that can happen and how to best avoid them.

One student from Caldwell said that the most important thing he learned "was to stay away from electricity—it is powerful!"

Electricity plays an important role in agriculture. "Each year we are excited to be a part of Ag Safety Days across our service territory and demonstrate the precautions that need to be taken on the farm," said Wheeler.

To learn more or set up a demonstration, please email Wheeler at [qwheeler@weci.net](mailto:qwheeler@weci.net) or Shawn Powelson at [spowelson@weci.net](mailto:spowelson@weci.net), or call 800-762-0436.

### CO-OP CONNECTIONS SPOTLIGHT

## Find Co-op Connections Card Savings at C&V Kansas Doors

With 40 years as a local business, **C&V KANSAS DOORS** are your hometown professionals. Unlike out of town contractors, they live here. Their kids go to school with your kids. They attend church with you. They generously support dozens of local charities, and should you have a warranty issue, they are here to help you resolve it.

Their design consultants are educators, not arm-twisting sales reps. Their job is to provide you with options and help you find the solutions that are right for you and your pocketbook.

Use your Co-op Connections Card at C&V Kansas Doors and receive a single button remote with the purchase of Belt Drive Garage Door Opener.

Like C&V Kansas Doors on Facebook and visit them online at [www.cvkdp.com](http://www.cvkdp.com).

Use your Connections Card at these other local businesses for more great savings.

- **Renewal by Anderson**, Great Bend
- **Suzu B's Flowers & More**, Scott City
- **D'Mario's Pizza**, Harper

For a complete list of deals, visit

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



# CAPITAL CREDITS HARVEST DAYS COMING IN DECEMBER

Were you a member in 1987 or 2016? Visit our district offices for Wheatland Capital Credits Harvest Days on the dates listed below to pickup YOUR Capital Credits check.



Enjoy coffee and snacks from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on harvest days.

- ▶ **Monday, Dec. 4 – Scott City**
- ▶ **Tuesday, Dec. 5 – Leoti**
- ▶ **Wednesday, Dec. 6 – Tribune**
- ▶ **Thursday, Dec. 7 – Syracuse**
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- ▶ **Wednesday, Dec. 13 – Harper**

Find out if you have a check to pick up! After Nov. 16, visit [www.weci.net](http://www.weci.net), and click on Capital Credits under the Billing tab.

*Note: You will not receive a check if your if your Capital Credits check is less than \$20; it will be credited to your December bill. Also, no Capital Credits less than \$1 will be paid.*