



## WHEATLAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

# NEWS

### Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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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

## 2018 Brings New Challenges for Co-ops

I want to start this month's article with a wish that all the Wheatland Electric Cooperative membership have a safe and prosperous new year.

I also would like to thank the members who attended the Wheatland Capital Credits Harvest Days at each of our seven area offices. We had more than 350 members come by and pick up their capital credits checks, inquire about their bill credit and enjoy some coffee, hot chocolate and cookies.

We were also able to verify contact information to make sure we had the most current information available for each member. It was a good interaction with members and hopefully a new tradition we can continue annually.

### Challenges in 2018

As with any new year, our cooperative faces challenges. This year, one of our biggest challenges will be to introduce new legislation in Kansas to protect the electric cooperatives' service territories.

Last month, Bruce Graham, CEO of Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., wrote an article addressing the cooperatives concerns and plan of action. I have included his article in this month's column:

*"Kansas is fortunate to have a utility network in place that provides a reliable and affordable electric*

*supply across the state. It doesn't matter where the customer lives—rural or urban. It doesn't matter if the customer is small residential or large industrial either. Kansas utilities work hard to assure adequate generation and a distribution network that will serve all Kansans today and in the future.*



Bruce W. Mueller

*That service guarantee is the result of Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC) action in 1976 to establish utility territories. Service to those territories is provided primarily by three distinctive utility structures. Investor-owned utilities, such as Westar, serve much of the population that resides in Kansas communities. Many other communities are served by municipals that operate utility divisions. The more sparsely populated rural areas are served by the 28 not-for-profit electric cooperatives in Kansas.*

*Electric service territory is critical to assure cooperatives can adequately plan a generation, transmission and distribution system that enables electric service and economic opportunity in rural Kansas.*

*However, in parts of the state, our service territory is being eroded*

**Continued on page 16-F ▶**

# Wheatland Retires \$750K in Capital Credits



The City of Lakin received more than \$15,500 in capital credits from Wheatland Electric this year.

Did you know you actually own Wheatland Electric Cooperative? As a member-owner, you are entitled to margins, also known as the Co-op's profits. This is one of the many, but perhaps most recognizable, benefits of being a member of a cooperative. Your share of the cooperative's profits are called capital credits.

Wheatland Electric recently retired \$750,000 in capital credits, to both active and inactive members. Wheatland Electric members who purchased electricity in 1987 and 2016 received a capital credits allocation. The board allocated 65 percent of the \$750,000 to the retirement of allocations for 1987 and 35 percent to retire-

ment of allocations made in 2016. These retirements were made through a check or bill credit, depending on the amount you were owed and whether you were an active member of Wheatland.

Capital Credits Harvest Days were held in each of our seven district offices in early December. Hundreds of members stopped at their local office for refreshments and to pick up their capital credits check.

Residential members weren't the only ones to receive a check. Both the City of Lakin and the City of Great Bend received a capital credits check. The City of Lakin received retirements for allocations from both 1987 and 2016, which made it one of the largest checks in our west territory. The City of Great Bend received retirements for allocations from 2016 and received the largest check in our eastern territory.

The Board of Trustees felt that it was im-



Wheatland general manager Bruce Mueller and Radona Smythe, CFO, distribute capital credits checks to members in Garden City.



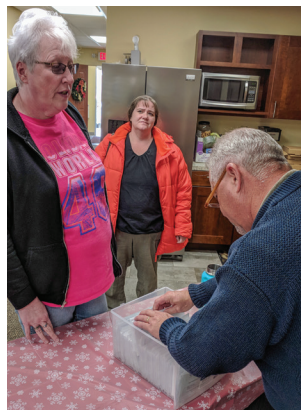
Wheatland employees Julie Stoss (left) and Eileen Jacobs prepare for members to arrive at the Harper Harvest Days event.



# Edits During Harvest Days



Above left: Bruce Mueller, Wheatland's general manager (middle), enjoys visiting with members during Harvest Days in Scott City. Above right: Assistant general manager Trey Grebe hands out capital credits checks to members in Syracuse.



portant to retire a portion of the capital credits from 2016. Wheatland acquired the eastern portion of our service territory through the Aquila acquisition in 2007. The last time Wheatland made a general capital credits retirement was in 2006 for allocations made in 1986, so members in our eastern service territory haven't received capital credits since becoming a Wheatland member. Last year, was the first year Wheatland has been able to allocate capital credits since 2006. "We wanted our members in the east to reap some of the same benefits as our



Mueller (left) discusses cooperative topics with members at Leoti Harvest Days.

long-time members. It was a good opportunity for Wheatland to show the benefits of being a cooperative member. There are many benefits that come with co-op membership, but perhaps one of the best benefits is capital credits," said Bruce Mueller,

general manager of Wheatland Electric.

Thank you to everyone who visited us at capital credits Harvest Days and thank you for helping build, sustain, and grow Wheatland. We appreciate you, our members!

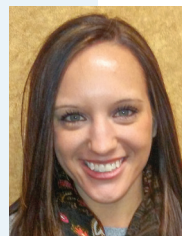


The City of Great Bend received more than \$2,000 in capital credits from Wheatland Electric.

## Get to Know Your Co-op Staff

### Kiersten Dockter

Consumer Service Representative  
1 month in Leoti



Kiersten Dockter

**TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAMILY.** I have one older sister, one younger brother and one younger sister. I don't have any children, but my fiancé and I have three dogs that keep us plenty busy! We have a Bullmastiff, a Husky and a silver Labrador. They all have very different personalities and are definitely three of a kind! My fiancé, Derick, is a farmer who was born and raised in Leoti. When we got engaged, I decided to move out to Western Kansas!

**WHERE ARE YOU FROM ORIGINALLY?** I am originally from Clay Center, Kansas.

**WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME?** I enjoy crafting and doing anything outside in my spare time. I also enjoy learning how to do things around the farm so I can help out if I need to!

**WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE VACATION?** One of my favorite vacations was when I went to Colorado last year with my fiancé. I had never been to Colorado before and we did a lot of hiking and explored several different attractions. I love the outdoors and the weather was perfect so it was one of the best by far!

**WHAT ACCOMPLISHMENT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?** A huge accomplishment would be where I am today. I worked very hard to get through college on my own and have been successful in my career. I have a wonderful family, job and amazing fiancé and that makes me very proud.

**WHAT IS SOMETHING NOT MANY PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT YOU?** If I am on the right type of floor, I can moonwalk pretty well! Not as good as Michael Jackson himself, but it's close

**IF YOU COULD BE ANY ANIMAL, WHAT WOULD YOU BE AND WHY?** A lab. They are always so full of life and just always happy!

## Youth Tour & Camp Participants Share Their Experiences

# LOOKING BACK 2017

Wheatland Electric Cooperative is proud to offer once-in-a-lifetime youth tour experiences. In 2017, we had an impressive group of youth winners who attended either the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., or the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in Steamboat Springs, Colorado. Read their first-hand experiences as they share how they benefited from these opportunities.

## Electric Cooperative Youth Tour

### Payton Garrison



Payton Garrison

Youth Tour was an experience of a lifetime! I have always been intrigued by American history, so traveling to Washington, D.C., was truly amazing.

I was able to visit monuments and

memorials that taught me about famous figures such as the Martin Luther King Jr. and Abraham Lincoln. I also visited places that taught me about famous time periods including the Holocaust Museum, the World War II Memorial, and Mt. Vernon, the home of George Washington. I was also given the opportunity to come out of my shell and make new friends.

Being from a small town, it was intimidating to meet and connect with new people but it was definitely worth it. My favorite part was attending my first musical, *The Sound of Music*, at the Kennedy Center. Overall, it was such an amazing experience and I could never thank Wheatland Electric enough for sending me.

### Arely Yanez

A good leader is confident, and that is exactly what my trip to Washington, D.C., this summer influenced me to be. With that confidence, I learned to socialize more comfortably while developing life-long friendships with students all over the country. This Electric Co-op Youth Tour provided me with opportunities, which will forever impact my life because of the confidence I earned.

The start of a friendship begins with confidence, and the newfound confidence I found in myself during my trip pushed me to reach out and start conversations with others.

These simple conversations led to bonding with people that I now share a strong friendship with. Not only that, but stepping out of my comfort zone also led to taking a step toward being a better leader.

My confidence grew more after that as my environment began to change. A few of my favorite activities during my trip were touring the White House, taking pictures at Madame Tussauds Wax Museum, touching jellyfish at the National Aquarium, and watching the Washington Nationals vs. Texas Rangers, which also happened to be my first baseball game. One of my ultimate favorites was visiting the various memorials around Washington, D.C. I believe pictures in history books do not compare to the beauty and enormity of these memorials you see when you're there in person, as well as the emotion that comes with it.

The entire trip to Washington is definitely something I will never forget. I will remember this trip as the one where I became more confident and grew as a leader, where I met unforgettable people, and where I made unforgettable memories.



Arely Yanez

**Find out how to apply for these amazing trips on pages 16-F & 16-G!**

# Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp

## Justin Brown

I was skeptical at first signing up for the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp. However, once I got on the bus and headed for Colorado, I was already loving the trip. I made friends with everyone from the Eastern division (Kansas and Oklahoma participants), and even most of the Western division (Colorado and Wyoming participants). Everyone was super friendly and the ambassadors and counselors were very knowledgeable. Overall, everything about the trip was educational and/or fun.

While on the trip, we went rafting on the Colorado River, sightseeing at Lookout Mountain, and visited downtown Steamboat Springs. We also got to listen to guest speakers and learn about how cooperatives function. The whole trip was unbelievable, and it expanded my leadership skills, knowledge and sociability. Everyone and everything we did on the trip had a positive impact on me, and I wish I could go again. I would definitely recommend this trip to everyone eligible.

When it was time to leave camp, and the bus dropped me off, I didn't want to go. I formed a bond with everyone on that bus over the course of a week. The friendships made and the fun times everyone shared are unmatched by any other leadership camp I've ever attended or ever will attend. Today, I stay in touch with a few friends I made at camp, and I have even met up with them at miscellaneous events. The whole Eastern division has a group chat on which we all actively talk to this day. I'm beyond grateful to have had the opportunity to go on the CYLC trip, and I hope all of those eligible will sign up for the amazing opportunity.



Justin Brown

## Rossiel Reyes



Rossiel Reyes

Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp, for me, started out in Russell. As Wheatland's Teresa Mazouch and I waited for the bus to arrive in a McDonalds parking

lot, all I could feel was nervousness. I've always been a shy person and I was scared that my shyness would get in the way of my chance to be included in activities or make new friends. This turned out to be wrong because as I sat in the bus on the way to Steamboat Springs, Colorado, I was greeted by kind and caring students.

On our trip to Colorado, we had the chance to meet and get to know all the students coming from Kansas and Oklahoma. The first night

we even got to scuba dive at the Denver Aquarium (something I never dreamed of doing)! We became very close and arrived at camp excited for more.

Actually going to camp was one of the best experiences I have ever had. I quickly befriended my new roommates, Kaleigh and Mikayla, and every morning we would help each other get ready by cooking each other breakfast and even styling each others' hair.

Some of my favorite experiences at camp were white water river rafting, the talent show, and the dance. White water rafting was definitely one of my favorite days. The day was spent in a raft with some of my new found friends. We rowed all the way down the river and when it came to an end we all sadly piled back into the vans that took us to the river.

Although I loved rafting, I think the event I will always remember about camp was the talent show. I had brought my guitar thinking about performing but I was nervous about

how well I would do. In the end I decided to take the jump and perform at the talent show. It was one of the first times I ever performed in front of anyone and it couldn't have gone any better. Everyone was so supportive and encouraging and even though I didn't win anything, it felt so awesome to do something I would not normally do.

The last day of camp was a day that a lot of us were dreading. I hugged all my friends goodbye and waved at the Colorado and Wyoming campers as the bus full of Kansas and Oklahoma campers pulled away. At every stop that campers exited, hugs were exchanged between all of us and the feeling of sadness engulfed everyone while we said our goodbyes.

I wasn't as talkative or outgoing as the other campers, but I felt that I was still a part of all the fun events. The experiences I had at camp are memories that I will always cherish and I know they will be with me for the rest of my life.



# Attention High Sc



Each year, students from Kansas join more than 1,800 youth in Washington, D.C., to attend the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. This year's Youth Tour is scheduled for June 7-14, 2018.



Payton Garrison and Arley Yanez pose at the U.S. Capitol during Youth Tour.

## Don't Miss These Leadership Experiences

Wheatland Electric will select four students to take an all-expense-paid trip in the summer of 2018.

Two winners will be chosen to join over 1,800 young people in Washington, D.C., for the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. Delegates will fly to our nation's capital to visit with government officials and the many historic sites. To see what's in store, visit <http://bit.ly/dcytvideo2015>.

Two winners will be chosen to attend the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in Steamboat Springs, Colorado. Campers will stay at the scenic Glen Eden Resort in the beautiful Rocky Moun-

**The Holocaust Memorial Museum really had the most impact on me. I couldn't help but feel the emotion. Learning more about that era in history really made me think about all of the freedoms we have in our amazing country.**

**PAYTON GARRISON, 2017 YOUTH TOUR PARTICIPANT**

## Scan these Codes to Get More Information

Washington, D.C.



Steamboat Springs, Colo.



Rossiel Reyes and Justin Brown enjoy the view of Elk River near the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in July 2017.

# hool Juniors

On this trip, what had the most impact on me was learning about the linemen that every day put their lives on the line in order to make everyone else's easier. The presentation that taught us about their dangers has truly opened my eyes and I will now appreciate the electricity I have even more.

ROSSIEL REYES, 2017 CAMP PARTICIPANT

tains. At camp, they will join winners from other cooperatives in Kansas, Colorado, Oklahoma and Wyoming to form one of the most outstanding leadership camps in the country. Get more information at <http://bit.ly/CYLCVideo>.

Both trips are funded entirely by Wheatland Electric Cooperative. All you need is spending money for souvenirs and a desire to have a great leadership experience. The winners will gain knowledge and experience

that will help them grow as they pursue their future career.

For more information or to apply, contact your guidance counselor at one of these participating high schools: Argonia, Caldwell, Chaparral, Conway Springs, Deerfield, Great Bend, Greeley County, Holcomb, Norwich, Scott Community, South Haven, Syracuse or Wichita County. Children of Wheatland employees are not eligible to apply. Applications are due by **FEB. 1, 2018**.

Hearing the motivational speaker reminded me how lucky I am and that I should never stop working hard for my goals and dreams no matter what obstacles I encounter along the way.

ARELY YANEZ, 2017 YOUTH TOUR PARTICIPANT



Nearly 100 students representing Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma and Wyoming attended the 2017 Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp.

## Wheatland Offers 13 Scholarships

Applications for Wheatland Electric's Empowering the Next Generation Scholarship Program are now available. Wheatland will award 13 \$1,000 scholarships to graduating seniors going on to a post-secondary institution.

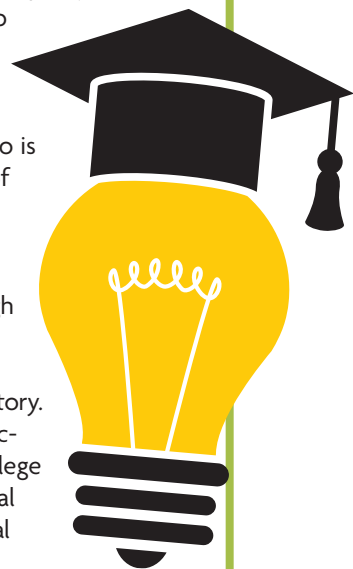
Those who qualify for the scholarship must:

- ▶ Have a parent/guardian who is a member of Wheatland Electric.
- ▶ Attend one of the 13 high schools in Wheatland's service territory.
- ▶ Attend an accredited college or a technical or vocational school.

Children of Wheatland employees are not eligible to apply. Seniors who meet the qualifications will need to complete the application found on Wheatland's website [www.weci.net](http://www.weci.net) under the Community Tab **BY FEB. 1, 2018**.

A committee will then choose the winning applicant from each school, and the scholarships will be awarded at the Annual Meeting in April 2018.

**Application  
Deadline  
Feb. 1, 2018**





## Get to Know Your Co-op Staff

### Sheena McKinley

Consumer Service Representative  
3 months in Garden city



Sheena McKinley

#### TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAMILY.

I've been married to my husband, Robby McKinley, for almost two years, but we've known each other since fourth grade. We have an awesome daughter named Blythe who will be four in December. I have two dogs, a Corgi named Poots and a Husky named Smokey.

#### WHERE ARE YOU FROM

**ORIGINALLY?** Born and raised in Moscow, Kansas.

#### WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR

**SPARE TIME?** In the summer, I like to garden. I have a large vegetable garden in my back yard. I spend a lot of time canning everything in the summer. In the winter, I spend a lot of time reading. My daughter and I do a lot of various activities: go to the water park, make kids Pinterest projects, spend any time we can outdoors.

#### WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE

**VACATION?** I went to Europe for a month when I was in college. I visited London, Paris, Brussels and Amsterdam.

#### WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE BOOK OR

**MOVIE AND WHY?** Favorite book is *Bright Side* by Kim Holden. The author is an amazing writer and the book hits you right in the heart strings.

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

I have double jointed elbows.

#### WHO HAS INSPIRED YOU IN YOUR

**LIFE AND WHY?** My daughter has inspired me the most out of anyone. She makes me want to be a better person every day and makes me work hard to achieve a status in life where I'm able to give her everything she needs.

## 2018 Brings New Challenges Continued from page 16-A

by municipal utilities and the issue needs to be addressed legislatively. Electric Service Territory Protection legislation will not diminish the opportunity for a municipality to annex land and grow. The legislation is intended to recognize the long-standing promise to serve territory, as determined by the KCC, and provide Kansas electric cooperatives with an open and honest voice when there is a proposed change in the provider of electric service to newly annexed areas.

- ▶ The electric cooperatives in Kansas plan to introduce legislation in 2018 to address the issue mentioned above. Our simple and reasonable proposal will ask for:
  - ▶ A voice in the process whenever a municipality desires to change electric service providers to an area it proposes to annex;
  - ▶ Fair and reasonable compensation for areas we serve or have been ready, willing and able to serve in our territory;
  - ▶ A discussion and opportunity to provide a proposal to serve the territory before the change becomes an agenda item presented to the governing body;
  - ▶ A chance to appear before the city governing body to make our case for continued service; and
  - ▶ A record of the city's deliberations and an avenue for review and appeal of the city decision.

*Every time we lose territory, you—the member-owners—are affected. We lose territory that has*

*been in a cooperative's strategic and resource plans since the territories were established. We often have generation, transmission and distribution infrastructure built to serve areas inside that legally mandated service territory.*

*Worse yet, many times territory takings cherry pick to serve a desired load. Adding that load to the city may have a small benefit to municipal operations but it has a disproportionate impact on an electric cooperative. For the smaller not-for-profit cooperative, adding or retaining customers in our system can make a big difference. By addressing this issue now, we can ensure that you—the member-owner—will continue to receive reliable and affordable electric service now and in the future."*

As explained by Mr. Graham, this is a major threat to the electric cooperatives across Kansas. We will be keeping you updated as this legislative initiative unfolds in Topeka. Advocating for issues that affect the cooperative is nothing new, in fact we've been doing it for years. And we're ready to continue to fight on your behalf. It's the right thing to do. We will explain the unique member-owned, not-for-profit cooperative business model and remind the legislators of Wheatland Electric's commitment to its members. To assist us in this effort, we could be asking you for assistance in contacting the legislators that represent you the membership. So, please stay tuned.

**Until next time take care.**

## SAFETY Tip of the Month

With roads covered with ice and snow this time of the year, the hazards are tenfold. Drivers are not advised to go on the road in winter weather. Then again, in the case of linemen keeping the lights on, or workers in charge of delivering goods, traveling during bad winter weather is a necessity. Slow down! Whether you're inexperienced or a pro, it's always best to slow down while driving on slippery surfaces.