



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 
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 620-872-5885
 www.weci.net

**WHEATLAND
 ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

NEWS

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FROM THE MANAGER

Annual Meeting Recap, Summer Storms



Bruce W. Mueller

I would like to thank our members who attended Wheatland Electric Cooperative's 70th Annual Meeting in Scott City. We had approximately 159 people in attendance, 112 of which were registered members. Thank you also to the special guests in attendance. During the meeting we presented the 2017 financial report and the annual summary, which told the Wheatland story. This year, we did something different and produced a video for the financial report and annual summary. So far, the feedback has been positive and we will look to continue using that format. You may view the videos on our website at

www.weci.net.

Wheatland recognized 12 high school senior scholarship winners who will each receive a \$1,000 scholarship to continue their education. We also recognized two Electric Cooperative Youth Tour and two Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp winners. Wheatland awarded employees for years of service ranging from five to 35 years.

In 2017, Wheatland Electric paid out \$750,000 in capital credits. This was the first time since 2006 we've been in a financial position to return capital credits to members. The Wheatland Board of Trustees has budgeted to retire \$1 million in capital credits in 2018 based on the 2017 financials. I want to emphasize "budgeted" in case an unforeseen financial crisis would inhibit our ability to pay capital credits. Barring that

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Wheatland welcomes members to the 70th Annual Meeting of the Members. Wheatland delivers electricity in 14 Kansas counties and parts of two Colorado counties.

CHARGED

Up to Race

Local Youth Race in ElectroRally Series

Wheatland Electric is committed to the communities we serve. We take great pride in giving back to those communities through several programs—one of which is the ElectroRally. For more than 20 years, Wheatland Electric has sponsored high school teams in this unique program, which brings together several disciplines including design, construction and racing.

Wheatland Electric sponsors one of the races in the Kansas ElectroRally series each year. This year, the race was on April 18 at the Scott City Airport. The Spencer Flight and Education Center graciously allows us to use their facility for check in, meals and shelter during harsh weather conditions. Race day is usually unseasonably cool, windy and possibly even rainy—and this year was no exception. Wheatland linemen help set up the course and grill hamburgers and hotdogs for participants and volunteers. Additional Wheatland employees help teams check in, serve food, take photos and run errands.

Fourteen teams from Kansas and Nebraska participated in the Scott City race this year. Cars are labeled standard or experimental (typically solar) and can race in one of two heats for a chance at a trophy. Prizes were awarded to the top three places in each class.

Kansas ElectroRally is governed by Electrothon America, who has developed a handbook and guidelines for vehicle construction and



Lane Millholland, Great Bend, gets his game face on at the Scott City ElectroRally on April 18.



The Scott City Electric Car team takes a photo with two of their vehicles. Allen Thornburg (kneeling) is in his first year as faculty advisor for the team after the retirement of longtime advisor Chuck Ellis.



The Scott City car 195 driven by Chandler Hornbostel competes in the Standard Class.

sanctioned races. Electrathon racing began in England, spread to Australia and made its way to the United States in 1990. The basic premise is to design a vehicle that can travel the furthest in one hour within the limitations set forth by the program (vehicle size, battery weight, safety features required, etc). Even with the rules, there is a surprising amount of leeway in vehicle design. It's always inspiring to see the students' end results and the creativity and problem solving they used to design their vehicle. With each success and failure, students put their skills to work to make improvements to their creation.

The program's goal is to inspire an interest in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) by involving participants in the design, construction, testing and development of competitive electric vehicles. That is not to say the only students who could benefit from the program are those who are interested in STEM activities. To help further develop a diverse set of skills, all Kansas ElectroRally teams must also submit a written report, which includes construction plans, diagrams and photos of the building process, problems encountered or help needed, a list of sponsors and a plan for thanking those sponsors. Reports are judged based on creativity, clarity and quality writing.

To develop teamwork and collaborative learning, students are encouraged to involve teachers and fellow students who are talented in English, journalism, computers and business. Additionally, to acquire funds and school support, some teams must present their project in forensics or drama, aiding them in learning to become compelling speakers and overcoming the fear of public speaking.

For information about Electrothon including tips on starting a program at your school, visit electrothonamerica.org.



The Great Bend team, sponsored by Wheatland Electric, took first in Solar Class and second in Standard. Pictured (from left) are Advisor Travis Straub, Lane Millholland, Jace Schwager, Tristen Milligan, and Addi Ehrlich.



The Scott City team, sponsored by Wheatland Electric, took first in the Standard Class and second in the Solar Class. Pictured (from left) are Advisor Allen Thornburg, Alec Berry, Chelsea Amerine, Andrew Prochnow, Chandler Hornbostel, Angel Rodriquez, Nick Cheney, Jose Martinez, Brady Herman, and Maricio Zarate.

2018 ElectroRally Scott City Race Results

Standard Class

1. **SCOTT CITY, #23** – 95 laps
2. **GREAT BEND, #388** – 94 laps
3. **HOISINGTON, #431** – 89 laps

Solar Class

1. **GREAT BEND, #488X** – 92 laps
2. **SCOTT CITY, #123X** – 84 laps
3. **CAMPUS, #219X** – 59 laps

Open Class

1. **FORT HAYS, #500X** – 78 laps
2. **FORT HAYS - #500** – 72 laps

Annual Meeting Recap, Summer Storms Continued from page 16A ▶

circumstance, Wheatland plans to pay capital credits in December 2018, so be sure to look for information about the 2018 Capital Credits Harvest Days where your checks will be distributed. We hope to see you at next year's 2019 Annual Meeting in Great Bend.

Preparing for Summer Storms

One of the topics discussed during the annual summary video was the Winter Storm Ursa. It's now summer, and although a winter storm is not on the horizon, we will more than likely experience an occasional severe summer storm. In the event of a power outage, you can trust that Wheatland Electric is ready to respond.

The major cause of most power outages in our service territory is damage to power lines from falling trees and branches. Through year-round right-of-way clearing, we work to ensure power lines in our service



Left: Wheatland linemen Randy Rogers (left) and Jordan Habiger (right) give a tabletop safety demonstration for members at Annual Meeting. **Right:** Jim McVay, Wheatland's General Counsel, addresses the membership.



territory stand little risk of being damaged by trees, branches or other types of vegetation.

Despite our best efforts, major storms can cause damage to transmission structures, substations and power lines. When this happens, our priority is to safely restore power to as many members as possible in the shortest amount of time.

We start by mobilizing our line crews and other critical staff. Every phone line available is used to take your outage

calls. Outages affecting the most members are handled first—in particular damage to transmission lines, which serve thousands of members. These outages must be repaired before we can focus on other areas where more localized damage may have occurred.

Wheatland line crews inspect substations to determine if the outage starts there or if there could be an issue down the line. If the root of the outage is at the substation, power can be restored to thousands of members quickly.



Bruce Mueller, General Manager, welcomes members to the annual meeting.



Mike Thon, District 3 Trustee, Phillip Shelley, Director of Operations, and Mark Arnold, District 7 Trustee, use the Annual Meeting as a time to catch up.



Wheatland members attend the 70th Annual Meeting.

Next, line crews check the service lines that deliver power into neighborhoods and communities and repair the damaged lines, restoring power to hundreds of people.

After service lines are repaired, if you continue to experience an outage, there may be damage to a supply line outside of your home or business. Make sure you notify Wheatland so crews can inspect these lines.

We will do our best to avoid power outages, but sometimes Mother Nature has other plans. Be sure to check Wheatland's website and Facebook for the latest updates during a power outage.

Until next time, take care.

YOUTH TOUR WINNERS | 2018



Cade Dvorak



Sebastian Torres



Brant Cotta



Sammie Strnad

Each year, Wheatland sponsors four local youth to attend all-expense-paid trips of a lifetime. Two will attend the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., from June 7-14, 2018, and two will travel to Steamboat Springs, Colorado, for the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp from July 13-19, 2018.

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE YOUTH TOUR

Washington, D.C.

- ▶ Cade Dvorak, South Haven
- ▶ Sebastian Torres, Greeley County

COOPERATIVE YOUTH LEADERSHIP CAMP

Steamboat Springs, Colorado

- ▶ Brant Cotta, Argonia
- ▶ Sammie Strnad, Caldwell

SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS | 2018

Twelve high school seniors were awarded \$1,000 scholarships at this year's Annual Meeting.

- ▶ **TREVOR PIERCE**, Argonia
- ▶ **JUSTIN BROWN**, Caldwell
- ▶ **HUNTER SMITH**, Chaparral
- ▶ **MAKENNA BEESLEY**, Conway Springs
- ▶ **LAUREN MILLER**, Great Bend
- ▶ **ARELY YANEZ**, Greeley County
- ▶ **KYLE HAMMOND**, Holcomb
- ▶ **PAYTON GARRISON**, Norwich
- ▶ **DEXTER GOODEN**, Scott City
- ▶ **KENDALL RAY**, South Haven
- ▶ **MACEY DEWEESE**, Syracuse
- ▶ **MARELI SALAZAR**, Wichita County



Bruce Mueller presented six of the winners with their certificates at the Annual Meeting. Clockwise from top: Payton Garrison, Lauren Miller, Mareli Salazar, Justin Brown, Dexter Gooden, and Arely Yanez.



SERVICE AWARDS * indicates Wheatland Trustee

35 YEARS

Rick Klaus
Phillip Shelley

30 YEARS

Marcia Matthies

20 YEARS

Jevin Kasselmann

15 YEARS

Josh Holt
Michael Ille
Pam Murphy
Perry Smith

10 YEARS

Paul Aguiniga
Dan Bonine*
Mark Douglas
Steve Gerard
Steve Hageberg
Jillane Koochel

5 YEARS

Kreyton Demel
Katie Eisenhour*
Tyler Gehring
Chris Oliver
Chris Schurle
Justin Skelton

5 Efficiency Tips to Spring into Summer

June 21 marks the first day of summer. As we transition seasons, now is the perfect time to begin saving energy around the home. Here are five ways to spring into summer.

1 Replace your air filter. Replacing a dirty, clogged air filter allows your system not to work so hard to circulate the air. It is also a great time to get your air conditioning (HVAC) system serviced to make sure it is operating most efficiently.

2 Seal the cracks and gaps. Keep the warm outside air from leaking into your home. Inspect the cracks and penetrations around the home. You may need to re-apply caulking or foam where cable lines, dryer vents and telephone lines may penetrate your home. Look around windows for gaps and install door seals to the exterior doors.

3 Install a smart or programmable thermostat. No need to cool an empty home. Installing a smart or programmable

thermostat can yield significant savings when programmed to work around your schedule.

4 Lower your water heating costs. Turn down the temperature of your water heater to the warm setting (120 degrees Fahrenheit). Washing clothes in cold water will help save energy and money.

5 Save in the laundry room. The dryer is one of the largest appliances in a home. Make sure it's operating at full efficiency by inspecting the dryer vent and cleaning the lint trap after every use. Air drying your clothes will help limit your laundry costs.



Set your smart or programmable thermostat to fit your schedule to avoid unnecessary energy use.

SAFETY Tip of the Month

After a storm, stay away from downed power lines and avoid flooded areas—power lines could be submerged and still live with electricity.

Don't enter seriously damaged buildings and avoid using matches and lighters in case of gas leaks.

REBATES AVAILABLE! Upgrade Your HVAC

Did you know that Wheatland offers rebates to residential members for the installation of energy-efficient heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems? Heating and cooling a house often accounts for the majority of a household's monthly energy costs. Many homeowners can save energy and money by installing a more efficient HVAC system. Higher efficiency means lower monthly energy bills and improved comfort.



Plug-in to Savings!

To learn more, visit www.weci.net and click on the "Energy Education" tab and then on "Rebates" or call 800-762-0436.

Rebate Levels

BTU	Min SEER	Central A/C	Heat Pump
Up to 36,000*	13	\$200	+\$150

*Add \$30 for each ½ ton above 3 ton (36,000 BTU). For example, you could receive a \$410 rebate for a four-ton (48,000 BTU) heat pump.

Saturday, Aug. 18 | The Golf Club at Southwind in Garden City | 9 a.m. Shotgun Start

GOOLF

WHEATLAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

TOURNAMENT

TO REGISTER | 3 FLIGHTS WITH 3 PRIZES PER FLIGHT

CALL 620-275-4080

OR EMAIL

ACONINE@WECL.NET

1st Place \$75 | 2nd Place \$60 | 3rd Place \$45

\$70 per person (includes cart & lunch)

4-man scramble

Breakfast provided



**WHEATLAND
ELECTRIC**
Delivering Energy for Life
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Mark Dinkel
GIS/OMS Administrator

A DAY *in the* LIFE

BY ALLI CONINE

MARK DINKEL is the Geographic Information Systems (GIS)/Outage Management Systems

(OMS) Administrator for Wheatland

Electric. Mark tracks all operations data, which is essential when creating work orders. Through the work order system, all of Wheatland's assets are tracked. This allows the stakers to know exactly what is on our lines without having to physically look. He also administers the mapping, staking, work order and fleet management systems.

To start his day, Mark checks and verifies that everything processed correctly for the stakers, which ensures that they have the most recent information in our mapping and asset system. He also checks the outages from the night before.

Mark was hired in 2005 and his job has evolved with technology advancements.

For example, Mark is one of two Wheatland employees who is licensed by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to fly a drone. To earn his license, he took classes online and then attended Kansas State University Polytechnic for three days of classes, and then had to pass an exam. He will have to re-certify every two years to continue to fly.

Drones have been a topic of conversation for several years, but after Winter Storm Ursa, Mark said that having a drone would have been beneficial during the restoration process. When a storm causes major outages, Wheatland crews are in the field as soon as possible, but sometimes extreme conditions keep line crews and pilots from accessing damage to the system. A drone wouldn't be grounded for

pilot or crew safety or blocked from ground access because of debris, flooding or snow. He explained drones can access areas of damage and capture detailed images to help Wheatland dispatch the right crews with the right materials to the right location. Mark emphasized that this kind of intelligence gets members' lights back on faster.

He explained that drones can be used for everyday line maintenance. By using a drone, linemen can identify problems from the air that they are unable to detect from the ground.

His department recently used a drone to capture aerial images of a section of line that Wheatland is preparing to rebuild. He showed me the difference in footage between our previous mapping system and the drone's aerial footage. The accuracy of the drone is incredible. This type of technology makes it easier for Wheatland's stakers to do their job.

Mark splits his time between flying and being in the office, but given the choice, "If the weather is perfect, I'd rather be out flying all week," he said.

We finished the day talking about his wife, Julie, and his two kids: Seth, a senior at Kansas State University; and Sally, a sophomore at Fort Hays State University. Mark enjoys camping, water skiing, snow skiing and he's actively involved in his church. I asked him what he enjoys most about his job. He said not doing the same thing every day, and he appreciates Wheatland's desire to improve their processes. He appreciates the opportunity to be involved in the implementation of automatic metering infrastructure (AMI) meters, iPads and, of course, the use of drones. He said these are the things that make it fun to work at Wheatland. Thanks for sharing your day with me, Mark.

ALLI CONINE, Manager of Member Services and Key Accounts