


A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 
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**WHEATLAND
 ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

NEWS

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FROM THE MANAGER

A New Year with New Challenges

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

Thank you to all of the members who attended **WHEATLAND CAPITAL CREDITS "HARVEST DAY"** at each of our seven area offices. We had many members come by and pick up their capital credits checks, check on their bill credit, and enjoy some coffee, hot chocolate and cookies at the events. 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 you, the members, and hopefully a tradition we can continue annually.

As the nation prepares to welcome a new Congress, America's electric cooperatives are ready to welcome back old friends and meet the newcomers.

The co-ops' message to elected officials, both old and new, Republican and Democrat, will be the same: We need to work together to protect member access to safe, reliable and competitively priced electric service. We have reason to believe this message will be well-received. After all, co-ops speak for more than 42 million electric consumers nationwide, a sizable constituency by any measure. Moreover, whatever you thought of the 2018 midterm campaign, one message came

through loud and clear: Many, many people don't believe their concerns are being heard. For member-owned cooperatives, listening to people is at the heart of our business model. And we carry our members' concerns to public officials every day.



Bruce W. Mueller

As co-ops reach out to engage with elected officials, they will build on the strength of **CO-OPS VOTE**, the grassroots initiative to reverse declining voter turnout in rural areas. Co-ops Vote did more than register voters. This initiative sent a strong message to the country's elected officials that rural electric members matter.

Co-ops will be reinforcing this message with a request that policymakers keep the needs of electric co-op members front and center: needs such as funding for infrastructure, especially transmission lines and access to natural gas; increasing the efficiency of the electric system; and determining the future of renewables. Elected officials will be making decisions affecting every aspect of the electric system.

Advocating for these issues is nothing new. In fact, we've been doing it for years. And we're ready to continue the fight on your behalf. The time is now to reach out

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A LOOK BACK

5 Years & 32 Tons Later

Wheatland received recognition for Cram the Van in the 2015 “Spotlight on Excellence” national awards program, sponsored by the Council of Rural Electric Communicators and NRECA earning a Gold Award in the Best Event Category.

Doesn't time fly when you are having fun and helping others? Five years ago, Wheatland Electric set out to find a new way to expand our involvement in the seventh cooperative principle “**CONCERN FOR THE COMMUNITY.**” Several ideas were kicked around, but we ultimately settled on a community food drive.

The main objective was set—collect non-perishable food items from co-op members and deliver to local community food banks in time for the holiday season. Members helping members. And just like that, **CRAM THE VAN** was born.

According to the USDA, in 2017 the percentage of U.S. households considered food insecure was 11.8 percent. This means 11.8 percent of households in the United States had limited or uncertain access to adequate food. Our communities are not immune to these hardships, so we decided to do something about it.

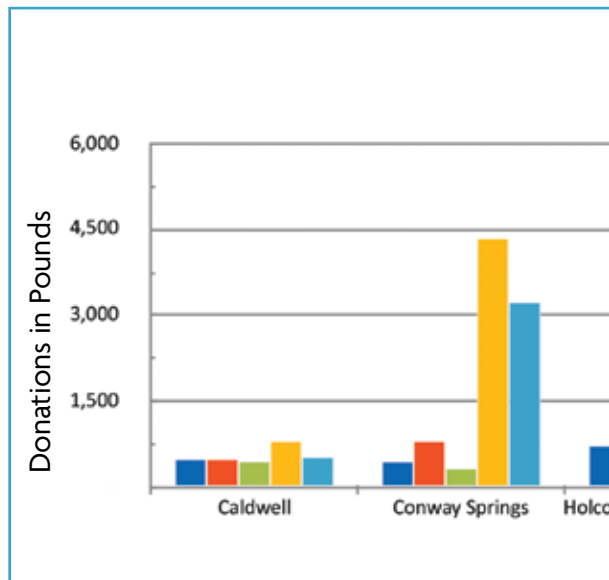
In 2014, we found the largest vehicle in our fleet (a big, red extended passenger van), removed all the seats from the back, plastered on some flashy graphics, and set out to help the people of our communities. The plan was to grill hamburgers and hot dogs as a “thank you” for donations, and to make stops throughout our service territory.

What we learned that first year was invaluable, and toward the end of the campaign we really started to hit our stride. We knew we were onto something when the van was met with enthusiasm and generosity everywhere it went. We ended up setting a great baseline that first year with a total of 6,615 pounds of food items donated.

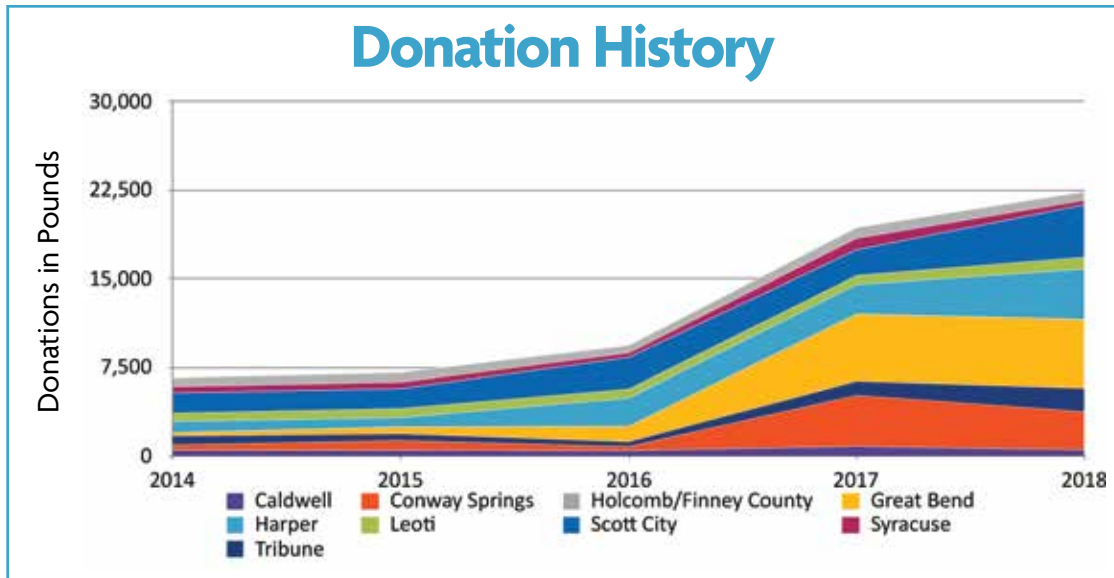
Now armed with a year of experience, Cram the Van cruised through 2015 with growth of 7 percent. In that time, we continued to host 11 events in 10 communities and



Our members donated 520 pounds of food in Caldwell, Kansas, as part of Cram the Van in 2018.



Donation History



added drop-off locations at all of our seven offices and partnered with the grocery stores in Conway Springs and Caldwell to set up drop-off points where we don't have offices.

We also expanded the Fall Finale, an annual event now hosted at Scott City airport's Spencer Flight and Education Center. Just in time for Halloween, this is a chance to mark the end of the Cram the Van campaign for that year. There are activities for the entire family: face painting, pumpkin decorating, plane rides, marshmallow roasting, and more. Again, the response from the community was tremendous.

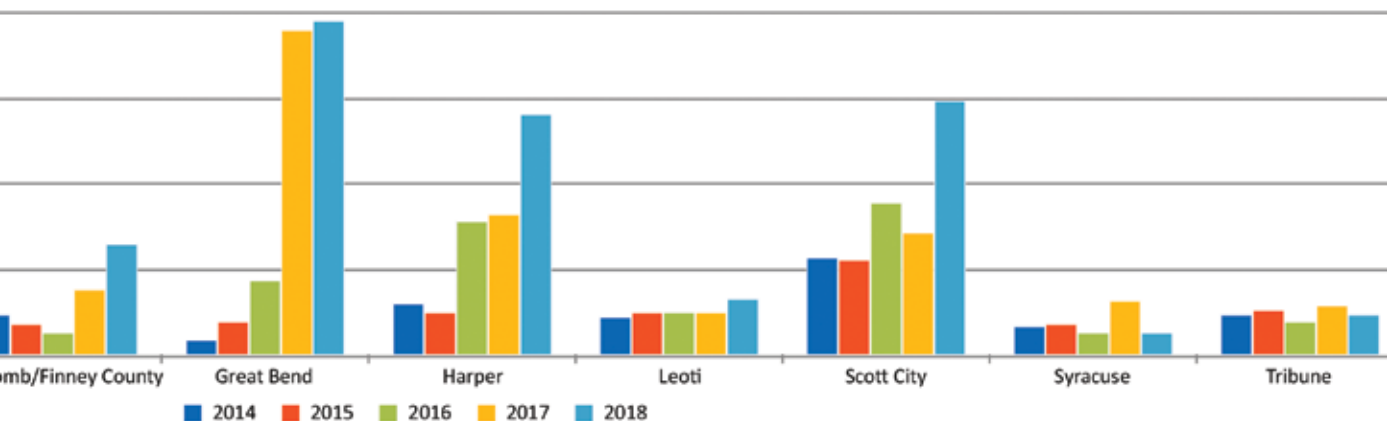
Wheatland Electric received recognition for Cram the Van in the 2015 "Spotlight on Excellence" national awards program, sponsored by the Council of Rural

Electric Communicators and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association earning a Gold Award in the Best Event Category.

In 2016, the third year of the campaign, we started to think outside of the box for different ways to reach community members who may not have participated in years prior. This was the first year we partnered with the Cardinals Care Food Drive, a school competition in Conway Springs, and Harper Fall Fest, a barbecue competition, craft fair, and all sorts of family fun in Harper. Both events were extremely successful and helped us collect nearly 5 tons (9,363 pounds), a 32 percent increase of donations from the previous year.

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Community Contributions



A Look Back Continued from page 16C

After seeing the great response from the school competition in Conway Springs, we decided to get other schools involved. In 2017, Wheatland partnered with Hiss-Sherman Wealth Management Group to sponsor a district-wide school competition in Great Bend. Calling the event a success would be an understatement. The students of Great Bend responded in a big way, nearly quadrupling Great Bend's previous year's total, collecting 5,700 pounds of donations.

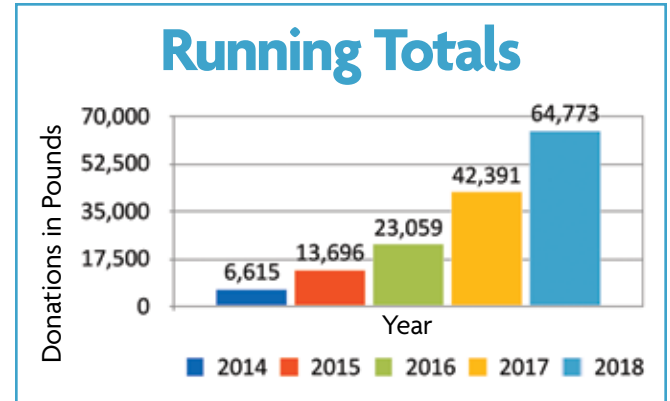
There are leaps and then there are bounds. In 2017, Cram the Van collected nearly 10 tons (19,332 pounds) of donations—more than doubling the previous year—with a growth of 107 percent!

This year, Cram the Van extended the school competitions to Holcomb and Scott City. Scott City not only had competitions between the middle and elementary schools, but also internally between the classes and ended up more than doubling the amount of donations by Scott City from the previous year.

Similarly, Holcomb hosted competitions between the four schools to see who could get the most pounds in donations per student. The finale of the school competition coincided with the inaugural Longhorn Fest, a family event the night prior to the homecoming football game.

Wheatland staff was optimistic, but anxious about beating last year's record total. But, with the expanded school competitions, not only did we beat last year, but Cram the Van grew 15.8 percent to more than 11 tons (22,382 pounds) of non-perishable food items.

Whether it has been a cold Friday night football



game in Conway Springs or a hot windy afternoon in Tribune, Cram the Van has braved the Kansas weather making dozens of stops every fall, and our communities have always responded. Over the past five years Cram the Van has collected more than 32 tons (64,773 pounds) of food donations. All items are then taken to the local food bank in the community they were donated.

So, where do we go from here? We are always looking for new ways to expand, but eventually, we would like to grow the school competitions to every school in our service area.

Cram the Van has played a large part in Wheatland's "**CONCERN FOR THE COMMUNITY**" (the seventh cooperative principle), and in all honesty we have only played a small part in facilitating the response from our cooperative members who want nothing more than to help other members within their own communities. Thank you to all the Wheatland employees and volunteers who have made the last five years a success. We are excited for what the future might have in store, and, as always, thank you for helping Wheatland Cram the Van!

15 LOCAL SCHOOLS COMPETE TO COLLECT FO

It was another great year for the schools and communities participating in our Cram the Van school competitions.

Conway Springs' Cardinals Care Food Drive was held Oct. 1-5. Students collected 1,335 food items and \$1,718.68 in donations. Students were encouraged to meet the superintendent's goal, which would earn them a half-day off school with the winning classes receiving a special lunch courtesy of Wheatland Electric.

The Great Bend school competition was a tight race to see which of the nine area schools could collect the most donations per student. Sponsored by Hiss-Sherman Wealth Management, the schools were competing for \$1,000 in prize money.

► **First place (\$500) – CENTRAL KANSAS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY**
7.00 pounds/student

► **Second place (\$300) – LINCOLN ELEMENTARY**
3.14 pounds/student

► **Third place (\$200) – JEFFERSON ELEMENTARY**
3.11 pounds/student

There was an incredible response for the first-year competition between the Scott City Elementary School and Scott City Middle School. A total of 2,840 pounds of food items were donated the week of the event. In the end, the middle school was able to edge out the elementary school to take the \$500 prize.

► **SCOTT CITY MIDDLE SCHOOL**
1,580 pounds collected (4.65 pounds/student)

► **SCOTT CITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**
1,260 pounds collected (2.96 pounds/student)

The Holcomb School district competition also made its debut this

From Hand to Table: The Donation Process

You did your part. You donated at your local Cram the Van event, but where does your bag of canned goods go from there? Sometimes it's easy to lose sight of exactly how your donations impact your community, so let's follow the process to see exactly how donations go from you to someone in need.

Our Cram the Van community events are only a small part of the donation process. We spend the entire two months of the campaign collecting donations at our local offices, grocery stores and schools—all the while keeping the donations organized, separated, and in the community in which they were donated.

After zigzagging through our service territory, we have our annual Fall Finale at the Spencer Flight Center in Scott City. This family event, held the week-



Families love roasting marshmallows for s'mores at the Cram the Van Fall Finale.

end before Halloween, marks the end of Cram the Van each year.

What happens next? Let's use Scott City as the example. After the Fall Finale, we gathered up all the donations from the hamburger feed, school competition, grocery store donation bins, and Wheatland Electric office donation bins, and we literally crammed the van full of food items and drove it to the grain elevator scales to record the weight of the donations. The total for Scott City was 4,450 pounds of donations this year, more than double 2017's total of 2,180 pounds.

It was a short drive from the scales to Hope's Closet, the local food bank in Scott City, where they were eagerly expecting us. Several volunteers came out and helped us unload and sort through the mountain of cans and boxes. The donations from Cram the Van typically brings in enough food to last them until August!

The timing of the delivery is no mistake. Hope's Closet volunteers were getting ready to put their Thanksgiving boxes together. This year they assembled 150 boxes filled with complete turkey dinners.

Cash donations raised are also put to great use. We are always working with



Pumpkin decorating is always a popular activity at the Cram the Van Fall Finale.

our food bank partners to determine supply shortages and community needs. This year the cash donations from Scott City purchased Thanksgiving turkeys for the meal boxes.

From there, Hope's Closet takes care of the rest, handing out food to people throughout the year. Although Cram the Van takes place in the fall, food banks will accept contributions throughout the year and there's never a bad time to donate. We would especially like to thank all our food bank partners.

If you have questions, please contact **ALLI CONINE**, manager of member services and corporate communications, aconine@weci.net or 620-874-4563.

OD ITEMS AND DONATIONS FOR CRAM THE VAN

year. Wiley Elementary was able to hold off Holcomb Elementary to collect the \$500 prize courtesy of Wheatland Electric. Superintendent Scott Meyers matched the winnings giving Wiley Elementary a total of \$1,000!

► WILEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

680 pounds collected (2.47 pounds/student)

► HOLCOMB ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

460 pounds collected (2.04 pounds/student)

► HOLCOMB HIGH SCHOOL

460 pounds collected (1.84 pounds/student)

The participating schools all did a great job! Thank you for your hard work and donations to local area food banks. We look forward to building off the success of these competitions and hope to add more schools in 2019. Thanks for helping Wheatland Cram the Van!



Wiley Elementary collected 680 pounds of food items and won the \$500 prize courtesy of Wheatland Electric.

Christmas for Kids Brings Gifts to More than 3,200 Kids

For the second consecutive year, Wheatland Electric partnered with Saint Francis Ministries and its annual Christmas for Kids campaign, which works hard to ensure no child goes without a gift under the tree on Christmas morning. Concern for Community is one of the seven cooperative principles that co-ops follow and Wheatland Electric is no different. Giving back to the communities we serve through the Christmas for Kids campaign gives Wheatland the opportunity to enhance the quality of life for our members and their families. Through the Christmas for Kids campaign, Saint Francis is able to provide Christmas gifts to more than 3,200 children each year.

Wheatland employees were given the opportunity to participate in the Christmas for Kids campaign by sponsoring a child. In addition to Wheatland employees participating, Saint Francis Ministries also received a \$1,000 grant from the Sharing Success Fund. The \$1,000 will be used to help supplement the Christmas for Kids campaign, one of Saint Francis's biggest events of the year. Saint Francis staff throughout the state work closely with community donors and supporters to brighten the lives of children.

Saint Francis Ministries sees to it that each child's basic, seasonal needs are met, such as winter clothing, coats and shoes. Christmas for Kids then helps meet a child's wants. Saint Francis



Wheatland employees donated Christmas presents to the Christmas for Kids children in our territory.



Wheatland supplemented employee donations with a Sharing Success grant that will help make this Christmas a little brighter for children in need.

works to ensure every child in their care receives a present at Christmas and knows that someone really cares.

"Each year Wheatland looks forward to making Christmas a little brighter for children in the communities we serve. Collectively, we enjoy knowing we are helping make many children's Christmas a joyous one," said Bruce Mueller, general manager, Wheatland Electric.

The importance of community involvement is magnified during the holiday season. For us, at Wheatland Electric, our community includes our member/owners, and the service territories in which we serve. Partnering with Saint Francis Ministries and the Christmas for Kids campaign is just one of the many ways Wheatland gives back to the communities we serve. "The impact is enormous, since "Our Children" come to us struggling with the sense that no one cares. With your donations it demonstrates that you are willing to support them and their families," said Tammy Brimer, Reintegration Specialist for Saint Francis Ministries.

A New Year with New Challenges Continued from page 16A ►

to all elected officials, new and returning.

At Wheatland Electric Cooperative, we will be reaching out to our local, state and federal officials in the near future. We will explain the unique member-owned, not-for-profit co-op business model and remind long-time politicians of our co-op's commitment to its members.

In Washington, D.C., our national trade association, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, along with other electric cooperatives, will be conducting similar introductions, speaking with key agencies and departments. It is likely many of these new policymakers will know little about the co-op

model. Wheatland Electric will be involved and participating in these discussions.

Forging an energy future that serves rural electric co-op members and protecting access to safe, reliable and competitively priced electric power will be a bipartisan effort. Electric co-ops are optimistic. As we work with our elected leaders, we hope to renew a spirit of cooperation in the nation's capital and in statehouses across the country.

After all, cooperation is what co-ops do best.

Until next time take care.

When Winter Winds Howl, Power Lines Can Gallop

Severe weather with strong winds can cause damage to trees, buildings, and electrical equipment. While power lines can sway in high winds, add freezing rain or icy conditions and the result can be galloping power lines.



Galloping is the bouncing or bucking movement of overhead lines and can cause several problems, from temporary power interruptions to equipment damage, the collapse of power poles and downed lines.

Galloping lines often result from ice buildup on one side of the power line due to strong winds. The buildup of ice creates an airfoil, which changes the flow of air around the line, causing bouncing wires, or galloping power lines.

There isn't much utility workers can do until the wind dies down. That's why many power lines have objects, like twisted wire or round or angular pieces of metal attached to the line. These help reduce galloping of lines and prevent potential danger.

If you see galloping power lines:

- ▶ **Keep your distance**—ice can break off or power lines can break loose.

- ▶ **Contact Wheatland Electric** to let us know of the potential damage as soon as possible.

If you see a downed line:

- ▶ **Stay far away and warn others** to stay away too.
- ▶ **Remember, a downed line can remain energized** even if it is not sparking or arcing.
- ▶ **Always report the location** of a downed power line and damaged electrical equipment.

In the event of an outage, be sure to have a storm preparedness kit ready before a storm strikes to help get you and your family through a power outage. This kit should include bottled water, non-perishable food, blankets, warm clothing, first-aid kit/medicine, flashlight, radio, extra batteries and toiletries.

To learn more about storm and outage safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Downed & Dangerous

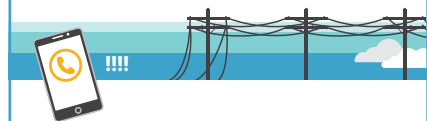
If you see a downed power line, always assume it is energized and dangerous. Avoid going near it or anything in contact with the power line.



Downed power lines can energize the ground up to **35 ft.** away – so keep your distance.



Never drive over a downed line or through water that is touching the line.



If you see a downed line, notify the local authorities immediately.



Never try to move a downed power line, even if you think the line is deenergized or if you're using a non-conductive item – this will not prevent injury or death!

Source: ESFI.org

SAFETY Tip of the Month

Avoid driving while you're fatigued. Getting the proper amount of rest before taking on winter weather tasks reduces driving risks. If possible, avoid using your parking brake in cold, rainy and snowy weather. Do not use cruise control when driving on any slippery surface (wet, ice, sand).



PHILLIP SHELLEY
Director of Operations

A DAY *in the* LIFE

BY ALLI CONINE

A legend is defined as an extremely famous or notorious person, especially in a particular field or someone who is well known. At Wheatland, **PHILLIP SHELLEY**, is just that. A legend. Phillip started his career at Wheatland Electric on Oct. 4, 1982, as a journeyman lineman. In December 1990, he became the director of operations, a title he still holds today. Phillip has been in the electric industry for 45 years. He started his career with the City of Hillsboro in 1973. Phillip's father was a lineman, but he'll tell you that is not why he became a lineman. I asked Phillip if he always knew this is what he wanted to do. He answered honestly and said 45 years later he is still trying to figure out what he wants to do.

If you have had the opportunity to hear Phillip present on automated metering infrastructure (AMI) meters, Wheatland's electrical infrastructure or how Wheatland is using new technology then it becomes very clear, very quickly, the amount of knowledge Phillip holds. Phillip's voice will fill a room. He speaks with such ease and always adds a touch of humor to each presentation he makes.

Phillip will tell you that over the past 36 years at Wheatland the part of his job that he enjoyed the most is the employees, the people he has worked with for a good part of his life. Phillip said the employees at Wheatland are ones you can rely

on—you ask them to do a job and they do it and they do it right.

We talked about what he's most looking forward to about retirement and understandably it's not having the pressure. Phillip said it doesn't matter what your title is, whether you are the director of operations or a journeyman lineman, you have pressure and you have challenges because of an ice storm or a blizzard at the end of April. He's sure he'll miss the challenges of his job, but he said it will be nice to be out from under the daily pressures.

The one thing Phillip wanted me to make sure I included was how much he appreciates the tremendous amount of support he has received from the general managers and the board of trustees at Wheatland over the course of his career. They have trusted his authority and let him make decisions. Phillip believes that because Wheatland trusts their employees and lets them get things done, things at Wheatland keep cooking.

I don't think I'm alone in thinking that Phillip, even after his retirement, will be the one keeping things at Wheatland cooking. Wheatland operates the way it does because of Phillip and the many policies and procedures that he has implemented over the years. Much of Wheatland's success can be attributed to Phillip for close to 30 years.

ALLI CONINE, Manager of Member Services and Corporate Communications

