

# WHEATLAND ELECTRIC

Delivering Energy for Life

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 Co-op, Inc.

### Board of Trustees

**William Barnes**

President

**Wes Campbell**

Vice President

**Mark Arnold**

Treasurer

**Stacey Addison-Howland**

Secretary

**Dan Bonine**

Trustee

**Vic Case**

Trustee

**Katie Eisenhour**

Trustee

**Bob Hiss**

Trustee

**John Kleysteuber**

Trustee

**Mike Thon**

Trustee

### District Offices

**Garden City – 620-275-0261**

2005 W Fulton, P.O. Box 973  
Garden City, KS 67846

**Great Bend – 620-793-4223**

2300 Broadway, P.O. Box 1446  
Great Bend, KS 67530

**Harper – 620-896-7090**

906 Central, P.O. Box 247  
Harper, KS 67058

**Leoti – 620-375-2632**

N Hwy 25, P.O. Box 966  
Leoti, KS 67861

**Scott City-Main – 620-872-5885**

101 Main St., P.O. Box 230  
Scott City, KS 67871

**Syracuse – 620-384-5171**

206 1/2 N Main  
P.O. Box 1010  
Syracuse, KS 67878

**Tribune – 620-376-4231**

310 Broadway  
P.O. Box 490  
Tribune, KS 67879

### FROM THE MANAGER

## We're Thankful for Your Membership

"Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it."

In the spirit of this quote by author William Arthur Ward, I'd like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for your membership in our electric cooperative. Because of your connection to Wheatland Electric Cooperative, we are able to make our communities a better place.

I generally use this space to provide updates on new projects and developments, and report on the progress of ongoing initiatives. We share these updates, so all our members have a window into our priorities, progress and challenges. However, during this season of giving thanks, I think it's equally important to let you and other members of Wheatland Electric know just what an impact you have on our cooperative and the greater community, likely in ways you may not even realize.

As part of the cooperative business model, one of our core principles is "Concern for Community." While our

priority is always to provide safe, reliable and competitively priced electricity, we view our role in the community as a catalyst for good.

We are purposeful in partnering with local groups such as the Scott Community Foundation for the Sharing Success program.

We work closely with our local schools to provide safety demonstrations, award college scholarships and offer assistance with the Kansas ElectroRally series. Wheatland Electric also participates in the annual NRECA Youth Tour where we take our community's brightest young people to Washington, D.C., for a weeklong immersion to experience democracy in action. The trip is inspirational for many students, and we are both humbled and honored to be a part of this leadership development journey. Wheatland Electric sponsors two high school students from our



**Bruce W. Mueller**

*Continued on page 16A*

### Offices Closed for Thanksgiving

Our offices will be closed Thursday, Nov. 22, and Friday, Nov. 23, in observance of the holiday. From our co-op family to yours, Happy Thanksgiving!



Attention High School Juniors—Apply for these Amazing Trips!

# YOUTH PROGRAMS BUILD

LEADERSHIP, COMMUNITY, MEMORIES

## Scan these Codes to Get More Information

Electric Cooperative  
Youth Tour



Cooperative Youth  
Leadership Camp



Download a free scanning app in the Apple  
App Store or Google Play.

Each year, Wheatland Electric offers free trips to four youth from our membership. If you are a high school junior whose parents/guardians are Wheatland members, contact your school guidance counselor for a chance to win a trip to Washington, D.C., or Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

### Tour Our Nation's Capital

Imagine—a chance to visit our nation's capital for one week, meet with more than 1,800 students from across the U.S. and visit with Kansas' senators and congressional representatives. The best part? It won't cost you a penny.

Wheatland will choose two winners to go to the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., from June 13 to 20, 2019.

The week-long trip to Washington, D.C., is jam-packed with sightseeing. Students will visit many of the major historical sites, including the Lincoln Memorial, the Jefferson Memorial and Mt. Vernon.

While in Washington, D.C., students will meet with state and national legislators and nationally recognized speakers to talk about current topics important to our rural communities. Many past participants were so inspired by this experience that they later served as interns on Capitol Hill, and many have pursued a career in politics.

To see what's in store, visit <http://bit.ly/dcytvideo2015>.



During the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., students meet with our elected officials. Next year's tour will be June 13-20, 2019.



Each year, campers go rafting during Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in Steamboat Springs, Colorado. Next year's camp is scheduled for July 12-18, 2019.

## Adventure in the Rockies

Two winners will also be chosen to attend Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, July 12 to 18, 2019.

Rafting, hiking and building memories—it's not just another trip! Campers will stay at the scenic Glen Eden Resort in the beautiful Rocky Mountains. At camp, you will join winners from other co-ops in Kansas, Colorado, Oklahoma and Wyoming to build valuable leadership skills while forming lasting friendships.

So pack your sunscreen and hiking shoes, and get ready to build memories that will last a lifetime. Learn more at <http://bit.ly/CYLCVideo>.

The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour and Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp are much more than sightseeing and adventures. Students spend every waking minute together for a solid week, and it's not uncommon for lasting friendships to form. In fact, many of Kansas' past participants ended up being college roommates, professional colleagues and lifelong friends. Most importantly, these youth programs inspire many students to discover who they want to be.

## How to Apply

To apply, interested students should contact their school guidance counselor. If chosen by their school, students take an open-book quiz, write a short essay and interview before a panel of three judges comprised of the cooperative's Board of Trustees. The quiz and interviews will be conducted in Scott City at the Wheatland Electric and Wheatland Broadband offices.

The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour and Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp are just two of the ways we invest in our future leaders. Wheatland does so much more than provide safe, reliable and affordable power—we are dedicated to improving the futures of students in our community because we know they are next in line to lead the way.

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.

**ALL YOUTH TOUR APPLICATIONS ARE DUE JAN. 7, 2019.**

# Wheatland Offers 14 Scholarships

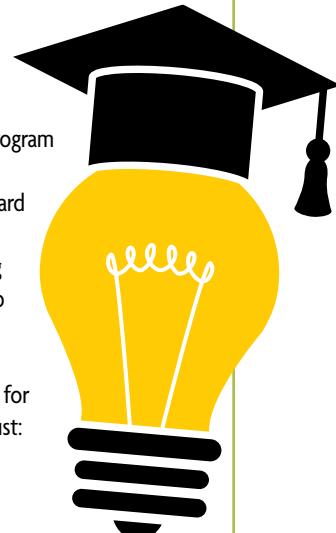
Applications for Wheatland Electric's Empowering the Next Generation Scholarship Program are now available. Wheatland will award 14 \$1,000 scholarships to graduating seniors going on to a post-secondary institution.

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, are home-schooled, or attend a high school outside of Wheatland territory.
- ▶ One at-large scholarship is available to students that have a parent/guardian who is a member of Wheatland Electric, but does not 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 JAN. 7, 2019**.

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  
Jan. 7, 2019.**



# OUR COMMITMENT TO ZERO CONTACTS

Every cooperative aspires to eliminate serious injuries due to electrical contacts. The number of serious injuries and fatalities among lineworkers across the country remains high. It's a trend that Quinten Wheeler, manager of safety and compliance, and Wheatland want to stop through a new initiative of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange called "Commitment to Zero Contacts." The initiative was created to help prevent and eliminate life-altering injuries resulting from electrical contact.

The factors that increase the likelihood of accidents vary but creating a strong culture of safety helps mitigate the risk at all levels, and Wheatland is doing just that. Wheatland's General Manager Bruce Mueller took the pledge to commit to zero contacts and made a voluntary commitment for Wheatland to join this nationwide initiative. The effort to eliminate serious injuries and fatalities due to electrical contacts involves educating and engaging every single employee.

As part of the Commitment to Zero Contacts initiative, Wheatland provided every lineman with a coin to carry in their pocket each day that reminds them of why they work safe.

"We have made one of our top priorities at Wheatland to have every lineman make their own voluntary commitment to working safer and smarter. Every lineman has signed an employee commitment form and that is something we couldn't be more proud of," Wheeler said.

By signing the employee commitment form, Wheatland Electric linemen commit to use the following work practices and ideas:

- ▶ Use our Life Saving Rules
- ▶ Personal protective equipment (gloves and sleeves)
- ▶ Application of personal grounds
- ▶ Application of proper insulating material
- ▶ Proper use of clearance procedures
- ▶ To "speak up" and not accept, or walk by, a shortcut to safe work
- ▶ Slow down and perform effective job planning on all work assignments

At Wheatland we know how dangerous electric utility line work can be; that's why safety comes first and why we've made the commitment to work safer and smarter.

All Wheatland linemen made the commitment to zero contacts by signing the employee commitment form.

1. Garden City Linemen
2. Great Bend Linemen
3. Harper and Caldwell Linemen
4. Syracuse and Tribune Linemen
5. Scott City and Leoti Lineman



# Taking Safety to New Heights

Servicing our members in remote areas is something we take great pride in at Wheatland Electric. When our crews are repairing electric poles or maintaining towers, it's not uncommon for them to be hours away from first responders. If an emergency were to arise, crew members have the training to safely lower the person down from the pole or tower, begin first aid, and wait for emergency crews to arrive.

As part of their annual safety training, linemen go through pole top rescue drills. Every lineman in the company has four minutes to don climbing and safety gear, climb up the pole to the "injured man," secure a rope around the test dummy, and lower him to the ground.

There are additional factors when starting a rescue operation from an electrical pole. Before anyone starts to climb, the mayday call needs to be made over the radio and the victim and pole need to be checked to ensure neither are energized. Quinten Wheeler, manager of safety and compliance, says "When in an emergency situation, the most important thing is to remain calm and go through the proper steps." Following procedure ensures no one else will be harmed during the rescue operation.

Likewise, when Wheatland Broadband tower crews are out upgrading or maintaining equipment, they must act as first responders in case of an emergency. To provide internet service for our members, part of Wheatland Broadband's infrastructure consists of a network of 60 towers ranging in height up to 400 feet.

Every two years Broadband tower crews and servicemen attend a two-day

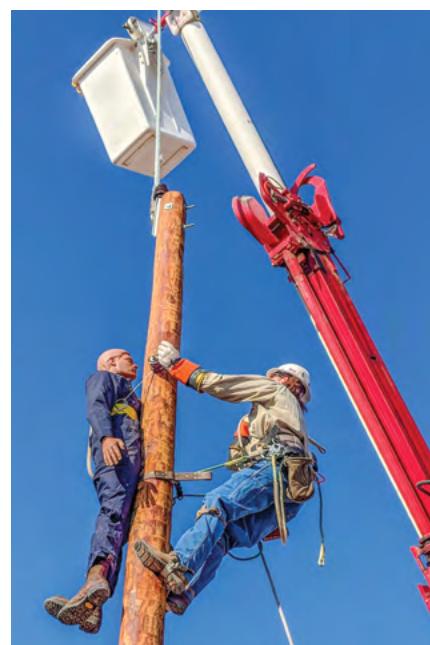


Wheatland Broadband tower technicians and servicemen complete rescue training by learning how to safely lower an "injured" man from the top of a grain elevator.

tower rescue course where they learn proper climbing and safety techniques, and how to properly lower a potentially injured person down off the tower.

When it comes to the training, Tower Technician Nick Buehler says, "It's good to get a refresher and to see if there is any new equipment or techniques being used by other tower crews out there."

Being prepared for any situation is something all Wheatland employees take seriously. Whether working on a 30-foot electric pole or a 400-foot tower, relying on the quick thinking of your co-workers could mean the difference between life and death. Although pole top and tower rescues are only a small part of the safety program, they both have the potential to be the most vital. Through training and refresher courses, crew members give themselves the best opportunity to act as first responders.



Parker Flemming, Garden City, climbs a pole to assist "Rescue Randy" during pole top rescue training.

## SAFETY Tip of the Month

Deer are most active at dusk and dawn: periods when your vision is most compromised. In addition, deer are on the move during mating season (between October and January) when you're more likely to travel after the sun sets. Slow down and stay alert, especially after dark.

## Cold Weather Accommodation Begins Nov. 15

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

## We're Thankful for Your Membership

*Continued from page 16A ▶*

service territory for the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in Colorado. The camp teaches them leadership skills. Ultimately, the entire community benefits from these programs because of you. You empower the co-op through your membership and through your participation in and support of these programs.

When you attend cooperative events, alert us to problems, provide suggestions online or to our employees, you help us improve operations and thereby better serve the membership.

Because we are locally governed by members of our community, we are able to get a first-hand perspective on community priorities, thereby enabling us to make more informed decisions.

We are thankful that our cooperative board members carve out time to attend important training sessions, participate in planning meetings and keep abreast of industry trends. This invest-

ment in time results in better informed board members that serve the co-op's interests in a way that our members expect and deserve.

On a more personal note, we appreciate the countless acts of kindness our lineworkers and other employees receive when they are working in severe weather and dangerous conditions. Our employees are thankful for your patience and consideration when we are trying to restore power during challenging situations and prolonged periods.

Wheatland Electric Cooperative was originally established 70 years ago to bring electricity to our area when no one else would. The cooperative is a reflection of our local communities and their evolving needs. Together, let's continue making our corner of the world a better place. We can't do it without you, and for that, we're thankful for your membership.

***Until next time, take care.***



*Fall Back on Nov. 4*

On Sunday, Nov. 4, remember to turn your clocks back one hour. It is also a good time to change the batteries in your smoke detectors and have a professional check your fire extinguishers.

**VETERANS  
Nov. 11 DAY**  
HONORING ALL WHO SERVED



In honor and remembrance of all who served, Wheatland Electric Cooperative will be closed on Monday, Nov. 12.

# 5 Years & 21 Tons of Cramming the Van

Five years of "Cram the Van" and it just keeps getting bigger and better. Over the course of the last two months, the van has made stops in 10 communities for 11 events in the Wheatland service area. Last year, thanks to the tremendous support from our communities, we exceeded our goals and fell just a couple hundred pounds short of 10 tons of donated nonperishable food items!

This year, we are determined to make it the most successful food drive of our five-year campaign. With our sights set on breaking the 10-ton mark we expanded the weeklong school competitions to include Scott City and Holcomb. They joined Great Bend and Conway Springs, and the response from our students was over-whelming.

Although the season is winding down, donations are still coming in at our local offices and partnering grocery stores.

A huge thank you to our members, who came out to our events or dropped off donations at our local offices and schools. We couldn't do this without you, and we're always amazed by the generosity we experience in our communities. Check next month's issue of *Kansas Country Living* to see if we made it to our goal of 10 tons. Thanks for helping us Cram the Van!



Cram the Van served hamburgers and hot dogs at the Longhorn Festival in Holcomb.



Scott City Middle and Elementary schools competed to see who could donate more food.

## Electrical Safety Education at Ag Safety Days

At Wheatland, we take safety very seriously. We provide our employees with up-to-date electrical safety training to ensure our employees go home safely to their families every night. However, electrical safety not only applies to our employees, but to our members as well. Because

we care about the safety of you, our members, Wheatland Electric is active in educating the public and promoting electrical safety.

Progressive Agricultural Safety Days were held at the Kearny County Fairgrounds in Lakin, Kansas, and the Sumner County Fairgrounds in Caldwell,

Kansas. 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 was taught along with several examples of accidents that can happen and how to best avoid them.

Throughout the day students rotated between several stations where they participated in hands-on activities and demonstrations for each lesson. Demonstrations included electrical safety, firearm



Joe Thomeczek and Chris Oliver, Wheatland linemen, conduct an electrical safety demonstration at Ag Safety Days in Lakin.

safety, farm equipment safety, fire safety, and all-terrain vehicle (ATV) safety.

Wheatland believes safety is a key component of cooperative principle No. 5: Education, Training and Information, which is why we are so active in educating about and promoting electrical safety.

Students had the opportunity to pass around safety gear while learning what happens to squirrels and birds when they touch two power lines at once, and why flying kites near power lines is dangerous. "Providing these demonstrations is a great way to teach kids about electricity, and it's important to Wheatland and all of our employees to help kids learn how dangerous electricity can be if not respected," said Quinten Wheeler, manager of safety and compliance.

Ag Safety Days rotate between several locations in our service area and happen biannually—early spring and fall. To learn more or set up a demonstration for your organization, please email Wheeler at [qwheeler@weci.net](mailto:qwheeler@weci.net) or Alli Conine at [aconine@weci.net](mailto:aconine@weci.net), or call 620-874-4563.



# A DAY *in the* LIFE

BY ALLI CONINE

I hope when you hear "Cram the Van" you know we are talking about Wheatland's annual food drive. Wheatland recently completed its fifth annual Cram the Van food drive, and although we are still waiting on the totals from this year's drive, over the past four years Wheatland has donated more than 21 tons of food. What you may not know is what goes into the planning of Cram the Van. I wanted to share a little behind the scenes peek into the "Life of Cram the Van."

Two months. 11 stops. 10 towns. 3,000 miles. Are you tired yet? Cram the Van keeps the Member Services department at Wheatland hopping during September and October. Trying to schedule 11 events over a two-month period is difficult. We have several factors to consider. We try to have as many events at a football game as we can (we like crowds and football games usually bring them). There are only so many Fridays in September and October and only so many home football games. And, since we still have our "other" job responsibilities to tend to during Cram the Van, we must schedule around meetings, prior obligations and other people's schedules. Sometimes I secretly wish that everything else would be put on a temporary hold for a few months. But once the dates are coordinated and set, we're ready to Cram the Van!

How many people should you plan on feeding at a football game or at an event in, let's say, Leoti? That's a good question and one that I wish was easy to answer. One year you might feed 500 people at a football game and the next you might feed 250. Last year in Leoti it was 38 degrees and

drizzling; this year it was 98 and sunny so we try to factor in the weather and gauge how many people might attend. Clearly, I have it down to a science ... ha! I can tell you that each year it does get a little easier to plan and somehow it all works out. You can ask anyone in Member Services and they'll tell you that I never want anyone to go hungry. If I'm planning an event, I'm usually over-planning the event. Better safe than sorry!

How do we fit everything in the van? Most of the time we are literally "cramming the van!" Each year the van starts out organized and everything is in its place. By the end of the season we are just making sure we can close the door and open it without items falling out.

Do we get tired of eating hamburgers and hotdogs? You bet. I'd say it's a good two to three months before a hamburger or hot dog sounds good again.

To be truthful, September and October are long months for our team. Is it worth it? Absolutely! It doesn't get much better than pulling the van up to a local food bank with empty shelves and unloading thousands of pounds of food to help those in need.

Last but not least, Cram the Van wouldn't be possible or successful without the employees at Wheatland that volunteer time and time again. With their help and your help we will Cram the Van again next year!

**ALLI CONINE**, Manager of Member Services and Corporate Communications

