

WHEATLAND
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

NEWS



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Great Bend, KS 67530
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Harper, KS 67058
Leoti—620-375-2632
N. Hwy. 25, P.O. Box 966
Leoti, KS 67861
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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

Rates to be Discussed on Jan. 21



Bruce W. Mueller

As I discussed in last month's article, Wheatland Electric Cooperative has engaged a consultant, C.H. Guernsey to prepare a study on the cost of providing electric service and the rates Wheatland charges for its service. Wheatland's last cost-of-service study in 2015 required the cooperative to increase the base rates. The rates went into effect with the April 2016 billing (March 2016 energy usage). This time we are seeking a revenue-neutral rate adjustment, not an overall rate increase.

Impacts will vary based on rate classifications (residential, general service, large general service, irrigation,

municipal) and energy consumption, and some member's bills may increase or decrease. The preliminary results of the study show that some rate classes needed adjustments to more accurately cover their contribution toward the cost of providing electric service.

The potential plan is to phase-in the rate adjustments over a three-year period: 2020, 2021 and 2022.

Below are the goals for the study as listed in several prior articles:

- ▶ A decrease in the monthly kilowatt-hour (kWh) charge.
- ▶ An increase in the monthly Service Availability Charge.
- ▶ Simplify and modernize the Lighting Tariffs to include LED lights.
- ▶ A complete overhaul of the Time of Day Tariff.

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Notice of Open Meeting to Discuss Rate Changes and Adjustments

The Wheatland Electric Cooperative Board of Trustees will convene a meeting on January 21, 2020, at 9:00am at the Wheatland Broadband office (Bryan Center), 416 S. Main in Scott City, KS. During the meeting, Wheatland Trustees and management will be discussing and voting on potential electric rate changes and adjustments based on the findings of consultant, C.H. Guernsey. The goal of this cost of service study has always been a revenue neutral rate adjustment, and not an overall rate increase. The portion of the meeting where rate changes are discussed and voted on is open to all members. For more information regarding any potential rate adjustments visit www.weci.net Wheatland members are advised that any member has a right to receive customer information and request that the Corporation Commission of the State of Kansas review the rate changes pursuant to K.S.A. 66-104d(g).

Dinkel, Martinez & Stoss Present at National Conference

Last fall, Wheatland Electric was proud to have three employees present to numerous other cooperatives at the 2019 NISC Member Information Conference in St. Louis, Missouri.

JULIE STOSS and **AMANDA MARTINEZ**, consumer services supervisors, presented on prepaid metering. They covered the need for alternate payment solutions for members and how cooperatives can implement such programs, with a focus on empowering members to make their own choices in energy consumption and monitor their usage 24/7.

After their presentation, Martinez and Stoss attended sessions on new software, enhancing billing statements and membership engagement through SmartHub and Messenger.

"Presenting and listening to other co-ops at conferences like this one is a great way to improve the Wheatland Electric member experience," Martinecz said.

MARK DINKEL, GIS administrator, also presented on "Using Drones in an Electric Cooperative." He demonstrated the uses of Wheatland's quadcopter and fixed wing drones and answered many questions from other curious co-ops.

After his presentation, Dinkel attended sessions on new software Wheatland will be utilizing over the next few years to assist in mapping



Mark Dinkel, GIS administrator at Wheatland Electric, presents to a full room at the 2019 NISC Member Information Conference in St. Louis, Missouri.



Bruce Mueller (left), CEO/general manager, presents Mark Dinkel, GIS administrator, with his Member Experience Award from NISC. Dinkel was one of 10 presenters from the multi-day conference who received this award that was voted on by conference attendees.

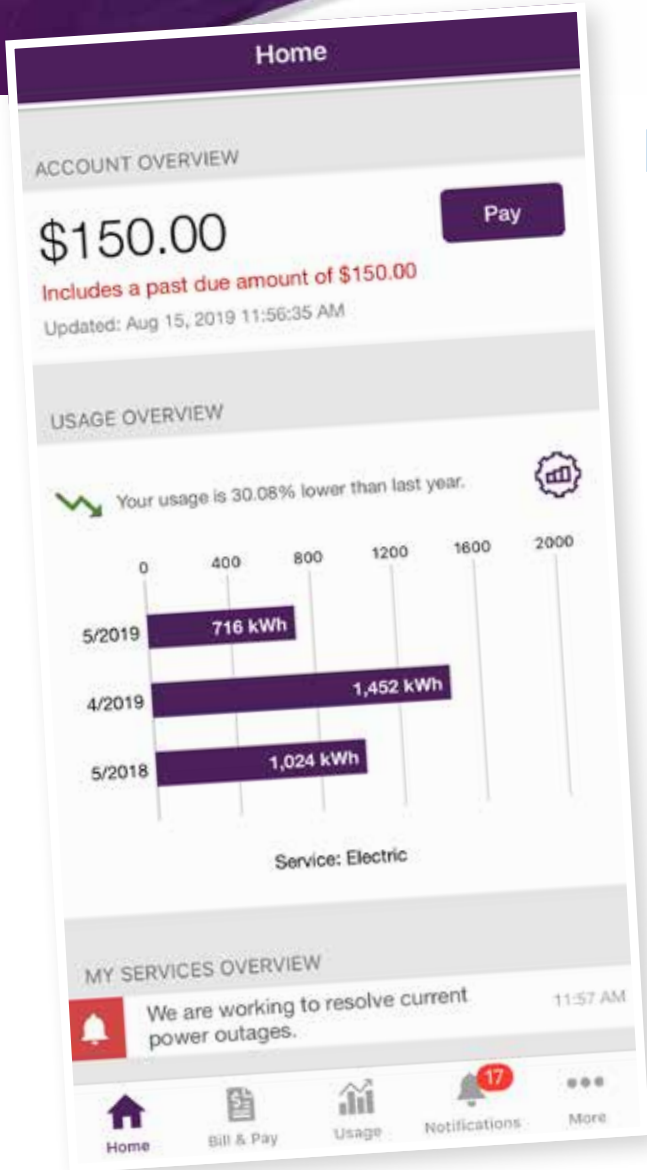
and staking, as well as new software to further understand outage data analysis and help with state and federal reporting.

After the conference, Dinkel received the Member Experience Award. This award was given to the top 10 presenters, as voted by conference attendees, and highlighted Mark for going above and beyond in sharing his knowledge of the topic.

This was an excellent conference filled with learning and networking. Thanks to Mark, Amanda and Julie for representing Wheatland Electric and for the time and effort they put into developing their excellent presentations.



Julie Stoss (left) and Amanda Martinez (second from left), consumer services supervisors, discussed prepaid metering.



New Look. New Experience. Same SmartHub.

Take Control of Your Energy Use with Refreshed Mobile App

Wheatland Electric's SmartHub online and mobile app provides a lot of features to help you manage your account, from billing and payment info to detailed usage analysis. It's a great tool to help you access your account information on the go or online.

Recently, SmartHub rolled out a new upgrade for the mobile app to help users access features you need quickly and efficiently.

First, you'll notice the mobile app has a fresh, new look. When you open the app, you see your usage analysis right up front or you can contact us with the click of a button right from the home screen.

Outage and billing alerts are also displayed right on the home screen, making it easy for us to communicate important information with you. Billing, payment and other features are available with one click of a button in a new condensed menu.

We hope these app updates provide a more user-friendly and efficient experience. All of the features you love about SmartHub are still available, just with a refreshed look and an enhanced user experience. If you have any questions about SmartHub, please do not hesitate to reach out to your local office.

Member

SPOTLIGHT

HOPE'S CLOSET

As the “giving season” winds down it is important to remember that generosity shouldn't be limited to only a couple of months. There are some great organizations in our communities that exist to help people throughout the year.

There have been several versions of a community food bank in Scott City dating back to the 1960s, however, when the ministerial alliance decided to team up to buy and operate out of the old American Legion building in 2013, they finally had enough space to expand operations of the thrift store and food pantry under one roof.

Kris Fetty has been the Managing Director of **HOPE'S CLOSET** for the past nine years. During her tenure, Fetty has seen the operation grow into its' current role as the main conduit for giving in Scott County.

During Thanksgiving and Christmas, the breadbasket (food pantry) puts together approximately 140 “meal boxes” filled with all of the trimmings including turkeys for Thanksgiving and hams for Christmas. Each box provides a family with an opportunity for a joyous holiday meal.



Hope's Closet thrift store and breadbasket is located at 309 Main Street in Scott City.



Managing director Kris Fetty (second from right) receives donations from Wheatland's 2019 Cram the Van campaign.

Through Wheatland's Cram the Van efforts in Scott City this year, we were able to help pay for the Thanksgiving turkeys along with our donation of nearly 2,000 pounds of food and over \$1,000 in cash.

Thankfully, Fetty has help to ensure everything stays stocked and operating smoothly, “We have around 25 volunteers who help on and off, but we could always use more help,” she said. “You don't have to donate food or thrift items to make a difference, sometimes the giving of a person's time can make the greatest impact.”

If you would like to make a donation, you can drop it off during the normal business hours Monday, Wednesday and Friday 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m.-2 p.m. The breadbasket is always in need of powdered milk and frozen meat and the thrift store has a hard time keeping men's jeans and belts in stock along with kid's clothes and coats.

The holidays may be over, but there are no breaks for the people who help our community members. Donating to a local food bank is a great way to spread the holiday spirit throughout the year.

NEW Year, NEW Opportunity to Share Success with Non-Profits

Wheatland is proud to support the communities we serve through our Sharing Success Program.

Since 2012, Wheatland Electric, in partnership with Co-bank, has given nearly \$85,000 to the communities we serve through our Sharing Success Program, managed by the Scott Community Foundation. Throughout the year, Wheatland accepts applications for grants typically given out in \$1,000 increments. In 2019, Wheatland and CoBank increased their contributions to \$7,500 expanding the program.

In 2019, Wheatland's Sharing Success Program awarded \$13,000 in grants to non-profit organizations throughout our service territory. Recipients of our 2019 Sharing Success Grants were:

- ▶ Agora Inc. in Wichita County
- ▶ Argonia PTO
- ▶ Barton County Fair Association
- ▶ Caldwell Historical Society
- ▶ Caldwell Opera House
- ▶ Child Abuse Prevention Education organization in Great Bend
- ▶ Circles program in Great Bend
- ▶ Harper Art Association
- ▶ Quilts of Valor in Syracuse
- ▶ Real Men Real Leaders in Garden City
- ▶ Saint Francis Ministries

- ▶ Scott City Takedown Club
- ▶ Wichita County Community Foundation

The Sharing Success Program will once again have \$15,000 available for nonprofit organizations in 2020. The application process for the Sharing Success program requires a letter with a description of your nonprofit organization, the project details and the costs associated with the project for which you are requesting the grant.

Nonprofits interested in receiving funding from the Wheatland Electric Sharing Success Fund can contact Alli Conine, Manager of Member Services & Corporate Communications, at 620-874-4563 or aconine@weci.net.

Applications should be mailed to:
 ATTN: Sharing Success Program
 Wheatland Electric
 416 S. Main
 Scott City, KS 67871



* WHEATLAND gets into the *Christmas Spirit* *



This Holiday season, we challenged our consumer service representatives to decorate our offices for Christmas, with one catch, they had to integrate items from the warehouses. Some of them got very creative including various equipment and tools

Along with the Christmas decorations, Wheatland found other ways to spread the holiday cheer. Once again, Wheatland employees participated in the Saint Francis Ministries Christmas Wish List Program. Altogether, 38 Wheatland employees helped provide Christmas presents for 89 children in our service territory. Thank you to all of those who made this a Holiday Season to remember.



A ladder from the warehouse made a creative Christmas tree with a lot less mess in Leoti.



Neil O'Connell Wheatland Broadband helped load gifts donated by ABATE.



A security light cover and a hard hat made a the perfect tree topper in Tribune.



Wheatland employees pitched in to collect gifts for 89 children through St. Francis Ministries' Christmas Wish List program.



Some mischievous elves got off the shelf and onto Wheatland's training utility pole in Garden City.



Willie Wiredhand with Frosty the Spoolman greeted members in the Garden City lobby.



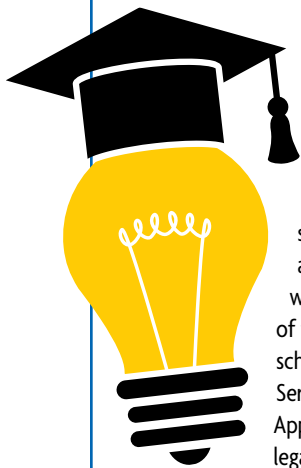
Santa's arrester terminator bracket "sleigh" being pulled by his hotline clamp "reindeer".



Empty wire spools made great snowmen and a Christmas tree at the Great Bend office.



LAST CHANCE to Apply for Wheatland's Scholarship



This year, Wheatland Electric will again award 14 \$1,000 scholarships! Thirteen \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded to students who attend one of the thirteen high schools in Wheatland's Service Territory. Applicants must be a legal dependent of an

active member receiving service from Wheatland Electric. Children of Wheatland employees or board members are not eligible to apply.

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, which are as follows:

- ▶ Argonia
- ▶ Caldwell
- ▶ Chaparral
- ▶ Conway Springs
- ▶ Deerfield
- ▶ Great Bend
- ▶ Greeley County
- ▶ Holcomb
- ▶ Norwich
- ▶ Scott County
- ▶ South Haven
- ▶ Syracuse
- ▶ Wichita County

The deadline to submit applications is **Friday, January 10, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.** Applications may be submitted via email to scholarships@weci.net or mailed/dropped off at:

Wheatland Broadband
Attn: Heather
416 S. Main Street
Scott City, KS 67871

Christmas Lights Contest Shines Bright

Thank you to all of those who submitted entries to Wheatland Electric's first Christmas Lights Contest. We were blown away with the creativity of our members. To see photos of the winners, visit Wheatland Electric's Facebook page or website at weci.net.



Thank you for all of the submissions including Michelle Nix of Scott City.

Rates to be Discussed on Jan. 21 *Continued from page 16A* ▶

- ▶ Implement a standardized Primary Facilities Charge Rider.
- ▶ Redesign the power cost adjustment (PCA) process of collecting the PCA, currently the PCA is built into the current tariffs.
- ▶ Redesign the process of collecting the property tax adjustment, currently the property tax adjustment is built into the current tariffs.
- ▶ Simplify the Irrigation Tariff language. The Wheatland Electric Board of Trustees and management always carefully consider the interests of the

membership when any type of rate adjustment is recommended to them. You will be receiving a notification in the mail about a meeting in which the board of trustees will discuss and vote on the rate adjustments. That meeting will be held on **TUESDAY, JAN. 21, 2020, AT 9 A.M. AT THE WHEATLAND BROADBAND OFFICE (BRYAN CENTER), 416 S. MAIN IN SCOTT CITY.** The portion of the meeting where rates are discussed is open to all members who wish to attend.

Until next time, take care.

SAFETY Tip of the Month

Increased holiday traffic and winter road conditions can be frustrating. Put the safety of everyone in your car first by letting impatient and aggressive drivers pass you or go through the intersection ahead of you so that you control the situation.