




A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative   
 101 Main, P.O. Box 230, Scott City, KS 67871  
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 www.weci.net

**WHEATLAND  
 ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

# NEWS

## Wheatland Electric Co-op Inc.

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### 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

# A New Year for New Connections

When we say we live in a “connected” world, most of us think about technology, like our smartphones and other devices and gadgets. But when you’re a member of an electric co-op, there’s so much more to being part of our connected co-op community.

A new year means an opportunity for new connections — connections across your personal network, your professional network, and your co-operative network. As a member of Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc., you help us power good in our local communities through initiatives like **CRAM THE VAN**, our annual food drive, which helps those most vulnerable.

During this past year, many of our neighbors experienced financial struggle or hunger for the very first time. And many of our local social service agencies, which serve as safety nets in our communities, experienced unprecedented challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

When we first planned our Cram the Van donation drive-in events last fall, we weren’t sure what kind of support we would receive or the turnout we could expect. We knew the **WAY** we did things would look different but that the **WHY** was more important than ever before. Despite our initial apprehension, we asked. And our communities answered — resoundingly and overwhelmingly.

Thanks to your generosity and the generosity of members across our southwest and south-central Kansas territory, we were able to collect over 16 tons of food in another record-breaking Cram the Van season. In our seventh consecutive year, we collected the equivalent of **32,206 POUNDS** of food. This brings our total pounds of food collected since 2014 to **127,733 POUNDS**.



Bruce W. Mueller

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## SAFETY Tip of the Month

Electricity can jump from power lines to nearby tools and ladders. When working outside, look up and stay away! Keep yourself and equipment at least 10 feet away from overhead power lines. If you see a tree growing close to a power line, allow the professionals to trim it!



# Cram the Van 2020



The **WAY** has changed, but the **WHY** remains the same

For many of us, 2020 has been a tumultuous year. Among our family, friends and neighbors, there are some who are experiencing hunger for the first time due to the pandemic. And yet, despite all the challenges we've faced this year — across our cooperative and within our communities — we couldn't be prouder and more amazed at the generosity and goodwill that endures year after year.

Since 2014, we've helped collect more than 63 tons (127,733 pounds) of food donations, which have all been delivered to the local food banks in the communities in which they were donated. As we wrap up our seventh consecutive year of Cram the Van, we are blown away by the support and kindness of everyone who has stepped up to help feed their neighbors in need!

Earlier this year, amid a public health pandemic and with greater than ever need, we knew we needed to act even if things looked different. That is, we knew the **WAY** we did Cram the Van would certainly look different this year; however, the **WHY** would remain the same.

That's because as a cooperative, "Concern for Community" is one of our governing principles. We work daily for the sustainable development of our communities through policies supported by our members. And our success this year — a total of 32,206 pounds collected — can only be credited to the cooperation and compassion from the communities we serve!

Our Co-Ops Care Charity Golf Tournament held Aug. 28 at Mariah Hills Golf Course in Dodge

City served once again as our Cram the Van kickoff event this year. In our second year and in partnership with Victory Electric Cooperative Association, we were able to raise over \$16,000 for our respective causes: Cram the Van and Dodge City's Avenue of Flags.

Thanks to the generosity of more than 120 golfers and our own cooperative employees and



Representatives of the Ministerial Alliance in Scott City accept a check from Wheatland Electric trustee Katie Eisenhower for the local food bank in Scott City.

volunteers, we're excited to share that half these funds (\$8,319) have been split evenly among our local food banks that power food pantries across our southwest and south-central Kansas territory.

Additionally, our Co-ops Care annual fundraiser — “fore” a good cause! — would not have been possible without the assistance of at least three dozen businesses who made corporate sponsorships at the \$250 (watt), \$500 (kilowatt), and \$1,000 (megawatt) levels.

The following month, our signature red van — the largest in our fleet — made its way to Great Bend on Sept. 22, 2020, to greet attendees at this year's Great Bend Tribune's Women's Expo event at the Great Bend Events Center. For the second year in a row, we collected freewill can and cash donations from participants. All proceeds from this community event are included in our donation totals for the Community Food Bank of Barton County.

Of course, our signature Cram the Van events — community get-togethers in each of our seven districts — had to be modified due to this year's special public health challenges. To prioritize safety and health while carrying out our mission, we set up drive-thru style donation drop-offs with no need for members to exit their vehicles.

Our first donation drive-in was held in Scott City on Oct. 13, 2020, between our main office and warehouse location. In exchange for a cash or can donation, we served hot-off-the-grill hamburgers and hot dogs in prepackaged boxes and collected canned and other nonperishable food items from our generous members. Thanks to the generosity of our members, we collected 4,045 pounds of food, and we were able to deliver these donations to Hope's Closet on Dec. 2, 2020.

Our next stop with our big ol' red van occurred Oct. 16, 2020, in Great Bend, where we not only set up another donation drive-in for our members but also collected a



Nine Great Bend schools also raised food and cash donations for Cram the Van this year! Members of our Great Bend line crew, Tyson Ryff and Nick Lawson, pose with staff at Riley Elementary School.

whopping 4,500 pounds of food from Great Bend schools. Central Kansas Christian Academy earned a \$500 prize from Wheatland for raising the most donations in a friendly competition sponsored by **HISS SHERMAN WEALTH MANAGEMENT GROUP**. Jefferson Elementary School came in second, receiving \$300, and Riley Elementary School came in third, receiving \$200.

Thanks to the amazing efforts of our youngest cooperative members, we were able to collect 7,590 pounds of food for the Community Food Bank of Barton County, which we delivered Nov. 9, 2020.

We continued our donation drive-ins the following week in October in Tribune and Syracuse. Thanks to the generosity of our members we were able to collect 2,596 pounds of food dona-

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## More than 16 tons of food!

- ▶ Caldwell — 2,055 lbs.
- ▶ Conway Springs — 2,672 lbs.
- ▶ Finney County — 3,394 lbs.
- ▶ Great Bend — 7,590 lbs.
- ▶ Harper — 2,152 lbs.
- ▶ Holcomb — 1,927 lbs.
- ▶ Leoti — 3,096 lbs.
- ▶ Scott City — 4,045 lbs.
- ▶ Syracuse — 2,679 lbs.
- ▶ Tribune — 2,596 lbs.

# Helping Feed Our N

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tions for the Greeley County Food Bank and 2,679 pounds of food donations for the Hamilton County Food Bank. Both these food banks received their donations Dec. 9, 2020.

Our Wheatland team was forced to reschedule donation drive-ins in both Leoti and Harper due to inclement weather. Though both these events were rescheduled, that didn't stop our members from showing how much they cared about their neighbors in need.

In Leoti, we were able to raise 3,096 pounds of donations, which we delivered to the Wichita County Food Bank on Dec. 9, 2020. In Harper, we raised 2,152 pounds of donations, which were delivered Nov. 20, 2020, to the Harper Mission Mart.

We also held a special Cram the Van event Nov. 12, 2020, at **THE STOCK EXCHANGE BANK** in Caldwell. To show how much "Caldwell Cares," we collected cash and can donations for the United Methodist Food Pantry and the Caldwell Food Bank. In exchange for their generosity, Caldwell residents enjoyed a sweet treat on us from Pekarna Coffee+Bakery. Our Cram the Van campaign netted both Caldwell food banks 2,055 pounds in food donations this year, which we delivered Dec. 11, 2020.

Our efforts to assist the food pantries in our eastern districts didn't stop there. The following week, we treated some of our youngest members in Conway Springs to pizza

parties, thanks to their incredible efforts to help us Cram the Van. A friendly school competition — the Cardinal Cares Canned Food Drive — between Kyle Trueblood Elementary School, St. Joseph Catholic School and Conway Springs middle and high schools garnered us a total of 2,672 pounds of food donations for the local Mission Mart.

Because this year had its special challenges, we also introduced a new way for members to donate — online! With a few fast and simple clicks, individuals could donate to one (or more) of our 11 local food banks at [www.weci.net](http://www.weci.net).

Our online campaign raised \$1,150. Our average online donation was just under \$40, another sign of the generosity and kindness shown by our members and cooperative employees who also comprised much of our donor list. As our way of saying "thank you," we gave away a Traeger Tailgater grill to one lucky donor on Dec. 9, 2020. Jana Harkness of Finney County was the winner. A video of our drawing can be viewed on our Facebook page.

Every year, we Cram the Van because we care. And every year, our members show us why the travel and time is worth all the sweat. We know there are many families, children and seniors within our communities who struggle with hunger. Providing some relief to our local food banks is why we Cram the Van every year. And this year — our most



Randy Coleman, district manager, (left) and Riley Waggoner, line apprentice, grill hamburgers and hot dogs during our Cram the Van donation drive-in events.



Because of the special challenges this year, our Cram the Van events were held with safety and health in mind. Members dropped off their donations and picked up a hamburger or hot dog meal without exiting their vehicles. Pictured here is Todd Nemechek, line foreman, from Tribune.

# neighbors in Need

challenging yet — we couldn't have broken these records or raised these totals without the dedication, kindness, and compassion of the communities we serve. It costs so little to help so much — **THANK YOU** from the bottom of our hearts, for helping us make 2020 another successful year!



Representatives of Genesis Family Health in Finney County help Alli Conine, manager of member services & corporate communications, unload Cram the Van food donations for the county food pantry.



Regan Reif (right), member services and key accounts manager, presents a check to representatives of the Community Food Bank of Barton County for cash donations made from Cram the Van events in Great Bend.

## \$1,150 Raised in Online Donations!



This year, we introduced a new way for our members to donate to Cram the Van — online! This helped us raise an additional \$1,150 for the 11 food banks across our Wheatland Electric service territory.

As our way of saying thank you, every \$10 online donation was considered one entry into our Traeger Tailgater Grill giveaway. Our winner was Jana Harkness of Finney County, who made a \$100 donation to the Emmaus House. You can watch a video of our drawing on our website and our official Facebook page.

Thank you to all our donors who helped us Cram the Van this year and raise donations for those in need.

## New Virtual Youth Leadership Experience Being Planned

Wheatland Electric will no longer be taking applications for the 2021 Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., or the 2021 Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in Colorado due to cancellation of both programs by the Kansas Electric Cooperatives (KEC), Inc.

Trustees of KEC, a service organization for Kansas' 27 electric distribution cooperatives, voted during their Dec. 3, 2020, board meeting to cancel all out-of-state youth programs in 2021. KEC staff indicated they will organize a virtual youth leadership opportunity or a possible in-person statewide leadership conference, if deemed safe to do so, in place of next year's out-of-state tours.

Wheatland Electric will communicate any information about a virtual or in-person leadership opportunity for high school juniors to our members and service area schools when details become available.

## Wheatland Employees Sponsor Nearly 100 Children Through Saint Francis Angel Tree Program

Wheatland employees sponsored 92 children this Christmas through Saint Francis Ministries' annual Angel Tree program, making the holidays just a little brighter for a few kiddos in need.

As part of the charitable endeavor, employees purchased items on wish lists provided to us by the non-profit agency that serves children in the foster care system. Gifts were pre-wrapped and delivered to Saint Francis' Garden City and Great Bend locations in mid-December for distribution across our southwest and south-central service territory.

In addition, in the spirit of the giving season, Wheatland Electric also awarded a \$1,000 Sharing Success grant for Saint Francis' Angel Tree program, to help the faith-based agency cross a few more items off Christmas wish lists.

We feel lucky to have generous employees who care, and we appreciate everything social service agencies like Saint Francis do to help those most vulnerable in our communities.



Wheatland employees in Great Bend also contributed gifts for kids in the foster care system via Saint Francis Ministries' Angel Tree program this past Christmas.



Alli Conine (left), manager of member services and corporate communications, presents a \$1,000 Sharing Success Fund check to representatives of Saint Francis Ministries in Garden City.



Wheatland Electric employees crammed the van — this time with Christmas presents — for nearly 100 children across our southwest and south-central Kansas service territory.

# Your Opinion Matters

High levels of member satisfaction have always been the hallmark of electric cooperatives. This accomplishment reflects our recognition that enhancing member satisfaction is a never-ending service opportunity.



collect member feedback. Today's cellphones utilize increasingly sophisticated technology to screen unwanted/scammer calls, including legitimate survey efforts. The combination of screening technology

and regulations have resulted in significantly lower response rates and dramatically higher survey costs.

Fortunately, cooperatives around the country are expanding their collection of email addresses for use in communications and survey work. TSE Services has made the decision to transition 100% to online surveys.

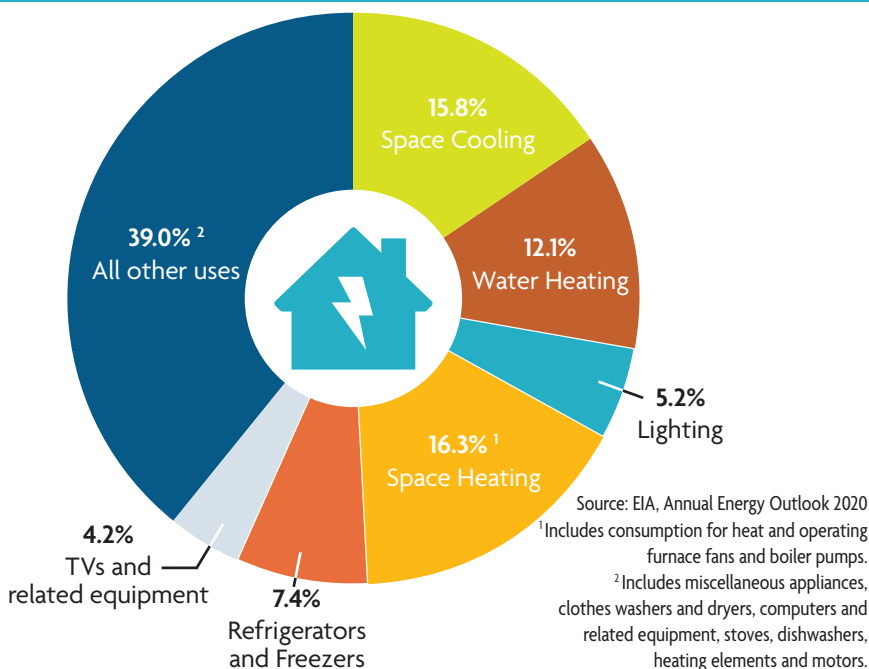
Over the coming weeks, TSE Services will be conducting Wheatland's annual member satisfaction survey. Help us better serve you by giving us your feedback. Your input will help us improve service and plan for the future.

To provide us with continuous and tactically actionable feedback from the membership on the cooperative's service performance, Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc. contracts with TSE Services, an independent research company, to conduct annual member satisfaction surveys. The feedback provided from the surveys allows us to target improvements, measure progress, and help achieve higher levels of performance in serving members.

For nearly two decades, TSE Services relied upon telephone surveys to

## How Americans Use Electricity

The latest data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration shows the combined use of clothes washers and dryers, computers, dishwashers, small appliances and other electrical equipment (noted as "all other uses" below) accounts for nearly 40% of electricity consumption in American homes.



## 14 Scholarship Opportunities

**LAST CHANCE FOR HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS TO APPLY FOR \$1,000 SCHOLARSHIP!**

We're giving away \$14,000 in college scholarships to our area high school seniors, and the deadline to apply is fast approaching!

Apply online at <https://www.weci.net/scholarship-program> by **FRIDAY, JAN. 8, 2021.**

Thirteen \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded to students who attend one of the 13 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.

In addition, one at-large scholarship is available to a student who has a parent/guardian who is a Wheatland Electric member but does not attend one of our 13 area high schools.

- ▶ ARGONIA
- ▶ CALDWELL
- ▶ CHAPARRAL
- ▶ CONWAY SPRINGS
- ▶ DEERFIELD
- ▶ GREAT BEND
- ▶ GREELEY COUNTY
- ▶ HOLCOMB
- ▶ NORWICH
- ▶ SCOTT COMMUNITY
- ▶ SOUTH HAVEN
- ▶ SYRACUSE
- ▶ WICHITA COUNTY

Scholarship winners must attend an accredited two- or four-year college, university, or technical or vocational school, and funds will be paid directly to the college/school that the recipient attends. Winners will be awarded at the Annual Meeting of Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc. to be held in April 2021.

## A New Year for New Connections Continued from page 16A ▶

This year's cash and can donations were once again delivered before Christmas to the 11 local food banks that power pantries across our service territory. And as always, all donations were delivered to the communities in which they were made.

We couldn't have pulled off another successful Cram the Van season without the cooperation of our members and our connection with you. We depend on you because you power our success. And when our local pantries are stocked, our communities thrive. Why? Because we are all connected.

A new year also means new opportunities, including our desire to get feedback from our members about the job we're doing. Once again, Wheatland Electric will be contracting with TSE Services, an independent research company to conduct annual member satisfaction surveys. The feedback our members provide allows us to target improvements, measure progress, and achieve higher levels of performance in serving members like yourself.

For the first time this year, TSE will be conducting these surveys on our behalf 100% online. If you receive a member satisfaction survey via email this month, please consider completing this valuable feedback tool so we can improve our services and plan for the future. We appreciate your support!

This year, we'd also like to help you maximize the value you get from Wheatland Electric through our programs, products and services. We rely on data for nearly every aspect of our operations, and up-to-date contact information from our members helps ensure that we can provide the highest level of service that you expect and deserve.

**To update your contact information or to learn more about co-op products and services that can help you save, visit [www.weci.net](http://www.weci.net) or call or stop by your local office.**

That's why we want to make sure we have your most current contact information on hand. In fact, updated contact information can even speed up the power restoration process during an outage. Accurate information helps our outage-management system predict the location and the possible cause of an outage, making it easier for our Wheatland crews to correct the problem.

We hope you will connect with us whenever and wherever you can — whether that means attending our annual meeting in April, providing feedback on a recent visit or call with our employees, or following us on social media to stay up to date on our power restoration efforts, co-op news, giveaways, and much more.

To update your contact information or to learn more about co-op products and services that can help you save, visit [www.weci.net](http://www.weci.net) or call or stop by your local office.

We look forward to connecting with you in this new year! Wheatland Electric exists to serve our members, and when we're better connected to you and our local community, we're better prepared to answer the call.

**UNTIL NEXT TIME, TAKE CARE.**

## Apply **ONLINE** for Sharing Success Funds

We're excited to announce that we have a new online application for our Sharing Success program, available at [www.weci.net/sharing-success-program](http://www.weci.net/sharing-success-program). After completing your contact information, just answer three simple questions and that's it!

Our Sharing Success program exists to make a positive difference in the communities we serve. Charitable, educational, and non-profit organizations can apply for a \$1,000 grant by completing our online application.

The Sharing Success grant cycle begins June 1 of each year, and recipients may only receive one grant per year. The Wheatland Electric Member Services team does its best to evenly distribute grants to all seven districts within the Wheatland Electric service territory.

Questions? Contact Alli Conine, Manager of Member Services and Corporate Communications, at 620-874-4563 or [aconine@weci.net](mailto:aconine@weci.net).