




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

# Constant Change



**Bruce W. Mueller**

I hope this article finds each of you safe and healthy during these unprecedented times. I have written several articles over the last two months on the

COVID-19 virus. The articles outlined the processes and procedures Wheatland Electric Cooperative is doing to protect our employees, their families and the membership. We discussed Wheatland's emergency plan to combat the pandemic. We also shared what WEC has done to assist the hospitals and first responders in the communities we serve, along with donations to our local food banks.

In this month's article, I'd like to discuss the ever-changing electric power

market during this rapidly changing world environment. Technology is paving the way for innovation in the way electricity is used, produced, stored and shared. Consumer-members are interested in more green energy alternatives while smart homes and apps make managing energy use and paying your electric bill more convenient than ever.

The changing energy market has created more options for consumers and unfortunately, more options for utility scams and misleading information surrounding solar installations.

### Utility Scams

Utility scams are common because of the vast number of utilities that exist and consumers are understandably anxious with the threat of disruption to their electric, gas or water service, especially now in these uncharted

*Continued on page 16H▶*

HAPPY

★

# 4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY

★★★

INDEPENDENCE DAY

Our office will be closed on  
 Friday, July 3 for the holiday.

# #POWERON



**We would like to thank everyone who took the time to send us pictures. We truly appreciate it and hope it inspires others to keep on pushing through these difficult times until we are able to return to normalcy.**

During these unprecedented times, Wheatland Electric has been searching for creative ways to help the communities we serve.

If you follow Wheatland on social media, you most likely have seen our #PowerOn signs and you may even recognize some of the people in the photos. We received a great response from all our communities encouraging others to #PowerOn as we navigate through the pandemic and the strain it has caused our members. We would like to thank everyone who took the time to send us pictures. We truly appreciate it and hope it inspires others to keep on pushing through these difficult times until we are able to return to normalcy.

Through encouragement and positivity, we will get through this together. Don't forget to thank your local first responders and healthcare workers for the extra time they have put in to keep us safe. When it is safe for you to do so, please remember to shop local to support small businesses and donate at your local food bank to help mitigate the extra demand. Most importantly remember to #PowerOn.

*Continued on page 16D ▶*

Thanks to the Boot Hill Distillery in Dodge City, Wheatland was able to distribute 700 bottles of hand cleanser to all the first responders across our service territory.





By purchasing products from local businesses, Wheatland was able to provide appreciation treats to all the hospitals we serve.



# #POWEROn

Continued from page 16C ▶

Wheatland gave each employee \$50 in Downtown Dollars/Chamber Bucks to encourage more spending at local businesses.



Wheatland Electric started our Cram the Van food drive early this year. Wheatland made \$500 donations to all ten of the local food banks we typically partner with in the fall.



# HUNGER Doesn't Wait

While COVID-19 affects our communities, helping our members experiencing hunger is more necessary than ever. Every contribution is valuable and no donation is too small.

## Scott City

**MINISTERIAL ALLIANCE**  
PO Box 101, Scott City, KS 67871

## Leoti

**WICHITA COUNTY FOOD BANK**  
c/o Gary Salmans  
First Baptist Church  
PO Box 1571, Leoti, KS 67861

## Tribune

**GREELEY COUNTY FOOD PANTRY**  
PO Box 594, Tribune, KS 67879

## Syracuse

**HAMILTON COUNTY FOOD PANTRY**  
504 N. Hamilton, Syracuse, KS 67878

## Holcomb

**HORNS FOR HOPE**  
c/o USD 363 Holcomb School District  
P.O. Box 8, 305 Wiley Street  
Holcomb, KS 67851

## Garden City

**EMMAUS HOUSE**  
802 N. 5th Street  
Garden City, KS 67846

## Great Bend

**COMMUNITY FOOD BANK OF  
BARTON COUNTY**  
3007 10th Street, Great Bend, KS 67530

## Harper

**HARPER MISSION MART**  
c/o BancCentral National Association  
1021 W. 14th Street, Harper, KS 67058

## Caldwell

**UNITED METHODIST FOOD PANTRY**  
c/o Amy Futhey  
Stock Exchange Bank  
PO Box 273, Caldwell, KS 67022  
**CALDWELL FOOD BANK**  
PO Box 44, Caldwell, KS 67022



During these uncertain times, staying positive can truly make a difference for your own well-being and those around you. Whether you are interacting with your family, co-workers or even the drive-thru staff, having a positive attitude is something we can all control and use to create a Positive Charge in the peoples' lives around us.

Last month, Wheatland Electric asked our employees to film short videos explaining how they are staying positive. We received so many great responses that we had to compile the submissions into two "Wheatland's Positive Charge" videos.

Whether you stay positive by gardening, riding horses, fishing or simply spending time with family, maintaining a good attitude is important for yourself and those around you.

To view these Positive Charge videos, visit the Wheatland Electric Facebook page or our YouTube channel. While you are there, make sure to leave a comment on how you are staying positive. We always love to hear from our members. Remember to stay safe, stay positive and we will get through this together.



**Leoti Line Foreman Bruce Loy speaks about what he and his crew are doing to stay positive.**

To find out how Wheatland has been staying positive, watch our Positive Charge videos on  **YouTube** Wheatland Electric's Facebook page or YouTube channel.

# Congrats to Our Coloring Contest Winners!

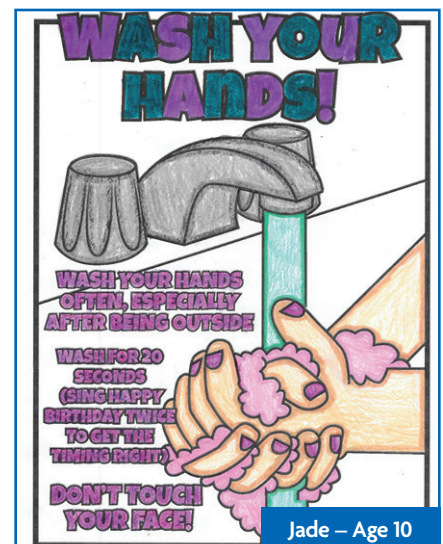
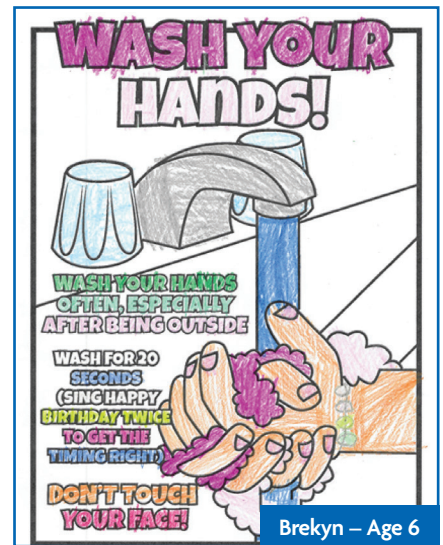
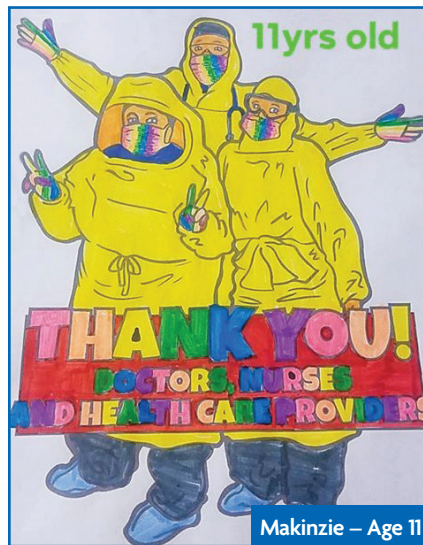
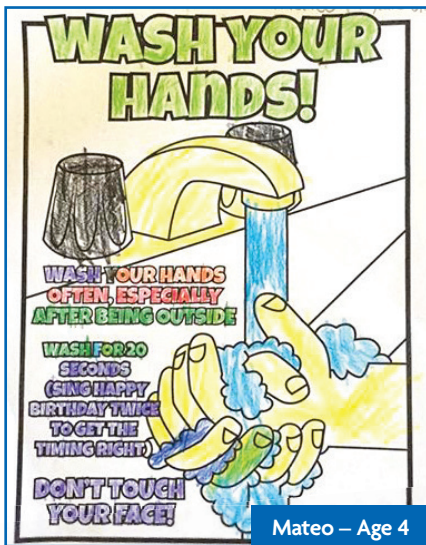
On March 17, 2020, Kansas Governor Laura Kelly closed K-12 schools in the state for the rest of the academic year due to COVID-19. For many parents, this meant working from home while their children were also present. Parents were and still are searching for ways to keep their kids busy, entertained and connected while at home. In an effort to provide children a creative outlet during school closures, Wheatland launched a coloring contest on Facebook.

We had a very difficult time choosing the winning entries for our coloring contest! We finally narrowed it down to five winners: **MATEO**, 4, Leoti; **BREKYN**, 6, Conway Springs; **JADE**, 10, Conway Springs; **MAKINZIE**, 11, Great Bend; and **REED**, 12, Scott City.

Thank you to all who participated. We had a lot of fun looking through the entries!



Each child who participated in the coloring contest received a special package in the mail from Wheatland Electric. Pictured from left are McKynlie, Reece and Emma with their prize packages.



## In the Face of an N95 Mask Shortage, Local Seamstress Got to Work

**PATSY FORT**, a retired Family and Consumer Sciences teacher from Garden City, put her sewing skills to use by making face masks for employees at Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc. Fort started making the masks when one of her former students, a nurse at a Topeka hospital, needed masks during the onset of the coronavirus outbreak. She knew this was something she could do to help. Her idea was to craft masks that would offer at least some protection with supplies she could access at home.

She learned to sew at a young age; she taught herself in middle school because her mother didn't know how to. Over the years, Fort has "collected" fabric, but her supply came in handy when making the masks. She used scrap fabric for the more than 200 masks she has completed over the past few months. Her son-in-law, a lineman, at Sunflower Electric Power Corporation in Colby, received masks along with his co-workers; her neighbors received the handmade masks, in addition to employees at St. Catherine's Hospital in Garden City.

Fort figured out a few tricks along the way, making the process faster. Initially, she was pressing each pleat. She realized she could do that when she was sewing the masks. She also did not pin anything, which was a time saver. Once the fabric was cut, each mask took about 10 minutes to complete.



From left: Heather Rufenacht, member services coordinator; Alli Conine, manager of member services and corporate communications; and Nolan Numrich, member services and key accounts manager, wear the handmade masks from Patsy Fort when delivering baked goods to Scott County Hospital employees.

"In the face of an N95 mask shortage, Wheatland was fortunate to receive the handmade masks for employees from Patsy," said Bruce W. Mueller, Wheatland's general manager and CEO.

## Youth Tour Canceled; Wheatland Awards Scholarships to Participants



Leah Bowlby

Like many other events this spring and summer, the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., was canceled due to COVID-19. While we are sad these students won't be able to experience this once in a lifetime opportunity, we wanted to be sure to reward them for their efforts after the rigorous process of applying and being selected to represent Wheatland Electric in the Youth Tour program.

"I am sad that we will not be having the trip this year but I am grateful for the experience of interviewing and preparing for it," Leah Bowlby, South Haven High School.

In lieu of the Washington, D.C., trip, **LEAH BOWLBY**, South Haven High School, and **SADIE SCHMANKE**, Conway Springs High School, will both receive \$1,000 scholarships upon their high school graduation.

Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc.

repurposed the remainder of the funds allocated for the Youth Tour to help our struggling communities. A \$500 donation was made to all ten local food banks; hand cleanser was distributed to all first responders; and a treat bag for every hospital employee was delivered across Wheatland's service territory.

Each year, the Youth Tour impacts the lives of young people for the better, and while we were disappointed to hear the trip would not be happening, the health, safety, and well-being of our delegates and chaperones was our primary concern.



Sadie Schmanke

## Constant Change Continued from page 16A ▶

times. New products and services in the energy industry provide an opening for scammers and pop-up companies to provide misleading information or inferior products and services.

### Avoid Phone Scams

A common phone scam typically begins with a phone number that appears to be from a valid utility company. The scammer will claim you have a past due account and threaten to disconnect service or take legal action. The scammer will typically demand that you use a prepaid debit card or money order, often within a very short, urgent time frame to pay the “past due” amount.

Scammers are taking advantage of the current pandemic by developing new ways to scam co-op members.

Many electric cooperatives across the country recently reported scams in which the scammers contact co-op members telling them they’ve overpaid their account and will receive a refund. The co-op member is then asked for their bank account information so the “overpayment” can be returned.

You can combat these scams by being aware of the status of your account. Never give your banking or personal information over the phone to someone you did not initiate a call with. If you have a question or concern about your electric bill, call Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc. directly at

800-762-0436. Do not use the return phone number given by the scammer.

### Use Trusted Sources in Solar Installations

If you’re considering solar for your home, make sure you are working with a reputable company. Because this is still an emerging industry with evolving technology, there has been a proliferation of pop-up companies in the market to make a quick buck. Representatives of rooftop solar companies may have more sales experience than knowledge of the electric industry, and their primary goal could be making a sale and moving on to the next prospect. Wheatland Electric can offer a candid assessment to determine whether rooftop solar is right for you. We take a more holistic, objective view of how to achieve energy and cost savings for our members, and that may or may not include rooftop solar.

In this ever-changing environment, it’s important to remember you have a trusted energy adviser — Wheatland Electric Cooperative. We are a community-focused organization that works to efficiently provide safe, reliable and competitively priced power to our members. We’re just one call or click away, so please reach out with any questions about your electric service, bills or new emerging technologies — we’re here to help.

**UNTIL NEXT TIME. TAKE CARE.**

## SAFETY

### Tip of the Month

Summer is here, which means the weather is warmer, more people are on the roads and highway construction work is underway. Watch for brake lights on the vehicles ahead and the traffic around you so you are prepared to react, which may include merging into another lane. Refrain from tailgating. Know that traffic patterns in work zones can change daily. Don’t become complacent if you drive the same route every day.

## NEW Office Hours Effective June 1

Our Tribune office will be open from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. MT.

Our Syracuse office will be open from 7 a.m.-11:30 a.m. MT and 12:30 p.m.-4 p.m. MT.

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Home cooling makes up a large portion of your energy bills. Try to keep the difference between the temperature of your thermostat setting and the outside temperature to a minimum. The smaller the difference the more energy you will save. **Source: energy.gov**

