

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

# Why You Should Attend Wheatland's Annual Meeting

It's that time of year again — **ANNUAL MEETING** time. On behalf of Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc. (WEC), I'd like to personally invite you to join us on April 14, 2021, at the Great Bend Events Center, 3111 10th Street in Great Bend, Kansas.

Due to COVID-19, we are having the event in Great Bend to allow:

- ▶ **SOCIAL DISTANCING** – the large space allows for proper social distancing.
- ▶ **COMMUNICATIONS** – the venue allows improved communications to our remote locations where we will be simulcasting.

We look forward to gathering with you — the members of Wheatland Electric — to catch up, hear what you have to say and enjoy some good food and fellowship. We will have great door prizes to give away and will announce

the winners of the WEC scholarships for local high school seniors throughout the WEC service territory.

This event is not only a chance to visit with other members of the cooperative, but also a great opportunity to learn about what WEC has accomplished in the previous year, and what we are planning in the upcoming year and beyond.

It's also an opportunity for you to exercise one of the greatest benefits of being a member of WEC, by voting for the **UPCOMING BOARD OF TRUSTEES**.

WEC is not owned by far away investors. It's run by a democratically **ELECTED BOARD OF TRUSTEES**, a board who is given the privilege to serve

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Bruce W. Mueller

## SAFETY Tip of the Month

Hypothermia occurs when the normal body temperature (98.6 degrees Fahrenheit) drops to less than 95 degrees Fahrenheit. Exposure to cold temperatures causes the body to lose heat faster than it can be produced. Prolonged exposure to cold will eventually use up the body's stored energy. Hypothermia can even occur at temperatures above 40 degrees Fahrenheit if a person becomes chilled from rain, sweat, or immersion in cold water.

WHEATLAND ELECTRIC MEMBER

# SPOTLIGHT

## John Ross & Co. Signature Catering

When **JOHN ROSS HARMON** was working as a young cook at the Ritz Carlton in downtown Denver, he was asked to set up an omelet station during his first two weeks on the job.

As he finalized his work area, his back turned to arriving guests, he heard a voice from behind ask for egg whites with bell peppers and cheese.

Harmon turned to greet the patron and was shell-shocked to see his first customer, the late NBA legend Kobe Bryant.

“Soon after that I realized the level of clientele coming through. You’d be in the service elevator and Madonna would be standing next to you,” he said. “The experience of cooking that kind of food, the quality of the food and the events we would do was just unforgettable.”

Unforgettable culinary experiences — ones full of flavor and delight — are what the local cook and entrepreneur aims to bring to southwest Kansas through John Ross & Co. Signature Catering.

Since 2010, Harmon’s company has cooked for thousands, from small business settings to wedding crowds of thousands.

“One time, we served 600 people in under 18 minutes – that was a lot of fun,” he said and laughed.

The Montezuma native has sharpened his culinary skills over the years at prominent spots like the Ritz and Elway’s Restaurant, both in Denver, The Club at Porto Cima at Missouri’s Lake of the Ozarks, and Old Chicago in Manhattan, just to name a few.

These experiences, coupled with the financial acumen he’s picked up from family members, have helped Harmon build a small business that reaps success primarily from word-of-mouth referrals.





## Find Out More About John Ross & Co. Signature Catering

Visit [JOHNROSSANDCOSIGNATURECATERING.COM](http://JOHNROSSANDCOSIGNATURECATERING.COM)  
for more information.

John Ross Harmon puts the finishing touches on his famous shrimp boil — jumbo shrimp, red potatoes, sweet corn, sausage, celery, sweet onions, garlic, lemons and mushrooms boiled and covered with seasoned butter, fresh lemon juice and Cajun seasoning.

“It was neat to see all those superstars of the world. But after two months of it, it just wasn’t a big deal,” he said. “I missed my dirt roads — you don’t see a lot of dirt roads in downtown Denver. I was eager to get back home and do it on my own. I didn’t want to be 50 years old, look back, and ask myself why I didn’t try it.”

Of course, building a business from scratch, much like cooking, takes a lot of time, patience and skill.

Preparing a finished product for catering is different from the restaurant industry, in terms of preparation, time and environment.

“In a restaurant, you can cook something in the kitchen and have it out the window in 10 minutes or less,” Harmon said. “With catering, you’re not able to cook things fresh. Once you cook, the quality is going to diminish very quickly. The name of the game in catering is to keep the quality of the product to hold for an hour or hour and a half after it’s prepared — keeping it

moist and keeping the flavor there.”

That challenge is a skill Harmon’s perfected over the years, having cooked countless pounds of food for tens of thousands of people. Alongside him in the kitchen is Tanner Spangler, who’s been with John Ross & Co., Signature Catering for about six years. Spangler helps prep, cook and serve at all their events.

Harmon’s menu features a wide range of delectable dishes, from soups and sandwiches to hot and cold hors d’oeuvres, Cajun cuisine, Italian meals and dessert.

“Some people see us as just barbecue, but we do so much more than that — our taco bowl bar menu is a very fun and flavorful one. One of my favorites,” Harmon added.

The master cook credits the startup and success of his culinary hometown enterprise to family and friends who represent the “& Co.” component of his business.

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## John Ross & Co. Signature Catering Continued from page 16C ▶

In the early days, when Harmon started with a mobile kitchen, his mother was his “nurturer,” helping and offering praise and encouragement along the way. His stepfather would also offer valuable business and relationship-building advice.

Harmon’s father helped in the kitchen and on the “engineering side of things,” including fixing broken ovens, assisting with trailer repairs, and other electrical or remodeling work.

Growing up in an entrepreneurial family with hard-working parents taught Harmon a lot, he says and inspired him to keep his business going.

“I’ve been around entrepreneurs my whole life, so I guess the apple didn’t fall far from the tree,” he said.

In addition to family, friends have also played a big role in his business’ success, including those who asked Harmon to cater their weddings in the early years.

“Them giving me the opportunity allowed me to show my skills to all their friends and families, which is why ‘& Co.’ is a very big list and a show of appreciation to so many people,” he added.

Relying primarily on word-of-mouth marketing as opposed to paid advertising helped Harmon’s business and clientele grow steadily over the past decade, as he cautiously took on new catering challenges.

“Building that equipment is just like farming – the bigger the implements and equipment that you have, the faster and more efficient your job is going to go,” he said.

Harmon’s growing business has taken him from Kansas City to the front-range of Colorado. He even traveled as far as Dallas to cook for injured service men and women as part of the Wounded Warrior Project.

At home, Harmon enjoys cooking comfort-food for a small crowd including himself, his wife, Tiffany, and their

## WIN DINNER FOR 5 from John Ross & Co. Signature Catering!

This **DINNER FOR FIVE** includes brisket, sausage and cheesy spuds, packaged and delivered right to your doorstep!

To enter, email [sdonecker@weci.net](mailto:sdonecker@weci.net) or write to Shajia Donecker, Social Media Specialist, Wheatland Electric, 2005 W. Fulton St., Garden City, KS 67846, **BY MARCH 19, 2021.**

Include your name, address, telephone number and include your request to enter the **“JOHN ROSS & CO. GIVEAWAY.”** One winner will be selected at random.

three-year old son Brooks, who he’s already teaching to peel potatoes and core avocados.

The past year was challenging for almost everyone in the hospitality industry, in light of the ongoing pandemic and limited social gatherings.

Despite these challenges, Harmon and his team found unique ways to serve local clientele and generate business, including packaging and delivering vacuum-sealed meats and sides to local businesses and their employees and families.

“Packaged meat items are just another notch in our belt we’re able to provide as a service. I’m always looking for ways to get us out of our comfort zone, to evolve as a business, and make us that much better,” he said. “You only get one shot to make that first impression. If you do a good enough job, people talk.”



John Ross & Co. Signature Catering provides a variety of dishes and meals for business meetings, weddings and other gatherings.

# CONGRATS to our Mini-Members!

Last year's coloring contest was such a success, we decided to hold it again this year for Valentine's Day. We had so many kids show the love, it was difficult to choose a winner!

Congratulations to the winner of each age category: **Emma**, age 4, Deerfield; **A'zreal**, age 8, Holcomb; and **Carsyn**, age 12, Deerfield. Winners will receive a special prize!

Thank you to everyone who participated. Each child who submitted an entry will also receive a special delivery from Wheatland Electric.



## Cold Weather Accommodation Ends March 15

Spring is just around the corner and with it, warmer weather. Wheatland issues a friendly reminder that the **COLD WEATHER ACCOMMODATION FOR RESIDENTIAL MEMBERS ENDS MARCH 15.**

For more information, please visit [www.weci.net](http://www.weci.net). If your service is disconnected for non-pay, please review Wheatland's rules and regulations, found on our website under the 'My Cooperative' tab.

# What Do the Initials PE Mean for a Wheatland Electric Employee?



Brandon Barrett

Barrett reviews and seals various documents related to line design, construction work plans, and environmental and financial compliance.

In the electric industry we have an abundance of acronyms and abbreviations our members might not understand. We're here to break down our alphabet soup!

## PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER

**BRANDON BARRETT**, an electrical engineer at Wheatland, was recently promoted to manager of engineering after obtaining his Professional Engineering (PE) license.

To become licensed, engineers must complete a four-year degree, work under a professional engineer for at least four years, pass two intensive competency exams, and earn a license from their state's licensure board. To retain their licenses, PEs must continually maintain and improve their skills throughout their careers, according to the

National Society of Professional Engineers.

Barrett, a 2011 graduate of Kansas State University, passed his Fundamentals of Engineering (FE) exam following graduation. The eight-hour exam covered the basics of engineering and all disciplines within electrical engineering.

Following nearly a decade of service to Wheatland Electric, Barrett earned his Professional Engineering license in December 2020 and was promoted to his new role at the start of this year. The more recent PE licensure exam covers an engineer's specific discipline, in this case power engineering.

With his new credentials, Barrett reviews and seals various documents related to line design, construction work plans, and environmental and financial compliance.

We are fortunate to have someone like Brandon leading our engineering efforts!



## Office Closing

Our offices will be closed on April 2 in observance of Good Friday.

## Electric LINGO

**TRANSFORMER** – Transformers are electrical devices used to increase (step up) or decrease (step down) voltage levels, to efficiently transmit power over long distances. Without transformers, we would need to build power plants all over the place rather than use the large electrical grid that we have today. The voltage can be stepped up or down several times before it reaches your meter.



*Save the Date*



# WHEATLAND ELECTRIC 73RD ANNUAL MEETING

GREAT BEND EVENTS CENTER | 3111 10TH STREET

## APRIL 14, 2021

*Join us in Great Bend or a Remote Location near you!  
Masks are required & proper social distancing  
will be practiced at all meeting locations.*

### DISTRICT 1 - SCOTT CITY

WHEATLAND BROADBAND OFFICE, 416 MAIN STREET

### DISTRICT 2 - LEOTI

WHEATLAND ELECTRIC WAREHOUSE, 103 WEST F

### DISTRICT 3 - TRIBUNE

WHEATLAND ELECTRIC WAREHOUSE, 310 BROADWAY AVE.

### DISTRICT 4 - SYRACUSE

VFW BUILDING, 609 N. MAIN STREET

### DISTRICT 5 - GARDEN CITY

WHEATLAND ELECTRIC OFFICE, 2005 W. FULTON

### DISTRICT 7 - HARPER

WHEATLAND ELECTRIC WAREHOUSE, 302 W. 6TH STREET

### DISTRICT 7 - CALDWELL

CALDWELL COMMUNITY BUILDING, 119 E. FIRST STREET

11:00 AM CST - REGISTRATION  
11:30 AM CST - LUNCH  
12:00 PM CST - MEETING BEGINS



# Why You Should Attend Wheatland's Annual Meeting

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because of your vote. Our trustees are members of your community. They are concerned with the issues you face every day because they face them too.

**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN RUNNING FOR ONE OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES SEATS** up for reelection, the process is outlined below. Please contact Jim McVay, WEC's general counsel, at 620-793-4223 if you have any questions.

► **NOMINATION BY THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE.**

Every year the board of trustees appoints a nomination committee. The committee is made up of one member from each of our seven districts. You are welcome to contact WEC to get the contact information for your fellow member who represents your district on the nomination committee.

► **NOMINATION BY A PETITION OF MEMBERS.** Fifteen members, or more, of WEC can nominate any member as a candidate for trustee. These nominations by petition must be sent to Wheatland at least 40 days before the annual meeting. However, even if your petition doesn't make it in time, that petitioned nominee will be presented as a candidate at the annual meeting and considered a nomination from the floor. That candidate would then be a "write-in candidate" at the meeting.

► **NOMINATION FROM THE FLOOR.** Any member can make a nomination from the floor at the annual meeting to

present a member as a trustee candidate.

Wheatland will again have **CONCURRENT ANNUAL MEETINGS** at all other WEC office locations: Scott City (Broadband Office), Leoti (Warehouse), Tribune (Warehouse), Syracuse (VFW Building), Finney County (Fulton St. Office) and Harper (Warehouse). We are also adding Caldwell to the list this year. Caldwell members will be able to attend Wheatland's annual meeting at the Caldwell Community Building. Members in attendance at any location will be able to:

- **ATTEND**
- **NOMINATE**
- **VOTE**
- **WIN A DOOR PRIZE (IF SELECTED)**

Lunch will be provided at each location. Make it a point to attend the **WHEATLAND ELECTRIC ANNUAL MEETING** on April 14, 2021, at the Great Bend Events Center or any of the remote locations listed above, and exercise your right as a member of the cooperative and vote.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, we will be requiring members in attendance to wear masks and practice proper social distancing at the Great Bend Events Center and all remote locations.

**UNTIL NEXT TIME, TAKE CARE.**

## Wheatland Electric Provides \$5,000 for Great Bend Affordable Housing Study

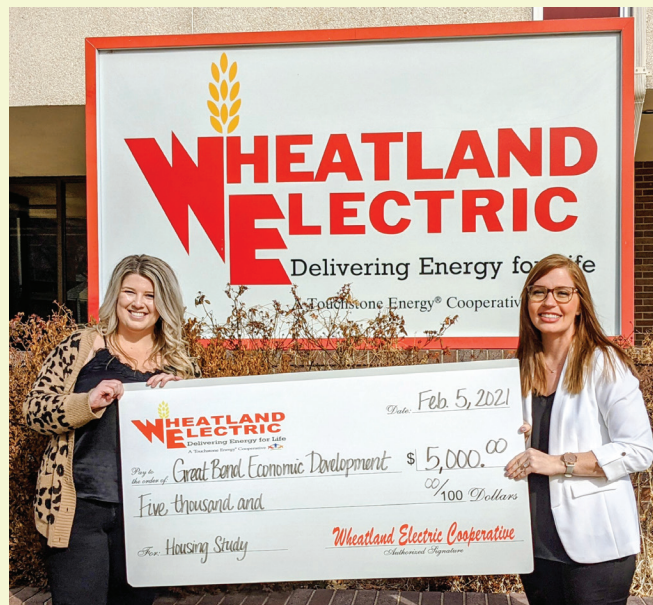
Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc. has provided \$5,000 to Great Bend Economic Development to assist with a local housing study.

As a member-owned cooperative, Wheatland Electric is guided by several cooperative principles, including concern for community. This principle encourages us to work toward the sustainable development of the communities we serve.

The housing assessment, which will be completed by RDG Planning & Design, a national firm, is designed to encourage affordable, safe housing in the Great Bend community.

The study, which will cost approximately \$10,000, will take at least 60-90 days to complete, according to Sara Hayden, president of Great Bend Economic Development.

The City of Great Bend is covering the remaining \$5,000 cost of the housing assessment, which is set to begin later this spring.



Regan Reif, member services and key accounts manager (right), presents \$5,000 to Sara Hayden, president of Great Bend Economic Development, to help cover the cost of a local housing assessment.