


A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 
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 www.weci.net

**WHEATLAND
 ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

NEWS

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FROM THE MANAGER

What is a Cost-of-Service Study?

An Overview of Rate Setting



Bruce W. Mueller

Earlier this year, Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc. hired consultant C.H. Guernsey to prepare a study to examine the cooperative's cost of providing

electric service. This cost-of-service study determines the revenue needed to cover the cooperative's operating expenses and debt obligations, as well as examines the equitability of the rates among various consumer classes. Please read the article on the cost-of-service that follows on page 16F. The article explains in detail, the cost-of-service study process and how it can affect electricity rates.

In 2015, Wheatland previously prepared a cost-of-service study with

the outcome being an increase in the base rates by approximately 7%. The base rates went into effect in April 2016. This time we are seeking a revenue-neutral rate adjustment, not a rate increase. A revenue-neutral rate adjustment means the changes to rates should result in no increase to the average Wheatland Electric members' bills. However, depending on your specific rate classification and energy consumption, your bill may decrease or increase slightly.

If approved by the board, the plan is to phase-in the rate adjustment over a three-year period beginning in 2020.

Goals for the Rate Adjustment

- ▶ A decrease in the monthly kilowatt-hour (kWh) charge over a three-year period.
- ▶ An increase in the monthly service

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SAFETY

Tip of the Month

The greatest risk to a child isn't riding a bus, but approaching or leaving one. From 2008 to 2017, 264 school-age children were killed in school transportation-related crashes. The majority of those students weren't on the bus; 203 were either walking, waiting for the bus, biking, or in another vehicle. Please, watch the road and not your phones.

Member

SPOTLIGHT

THE COUNTRY OVEN BAKERY

The sweet smell of success. No, literally, when you walk into **THE COUNTRY OVEN BAKERY**, owner **ASHLYN NIGHTENGALE** and other employees are busy pulling hot cinnamon rolls from the ovens that fill the room with a sweet cloud of cinnamon and sugar.

Ashlyn grew up with flour on his hands. His father, Mark, is one the founders and general manager of Heartland Mills in Marienthal. The mill processes several varieties of flour and other baking staples, which have become commonplace in Kansas grocery stores and are now shipped all around the world.



Ashlyn Nightengale mixes ingredients to make frosting for fresh cinnamon rolls.



From left: Cheri Koehn, assistant baker, Ashlyn Nightengale, owner, Beau Masters, cake designer, Arle Masters, assistant baker/sales are ready to start their day at the Country Oven Bakery.

Top: The Country Oven Bakery and Heartland Mill opened their new facility in October 2016.

Middle: Heartland Mill produces many baking and cooking staples.

Bottom: The Country Oven Bakery has a variety of products available at their retail locations.



Ashlyn and his grandmother spent much of their time in the test kitchen of Heartland Mills performing quality control, baking and perfecting recipes. One year the duo decided to raise some chickens, not expecting the over abundance of eggs. But when life gave Ashlyn and his grandmother flour and eggs, they baked. Just like that, The Country Oven was born.

Ashlyn began selling egg noodles and cakes at local farmers markets. Soon demand grew, and so did his product line, adding breads and other pastries. He continued to work out of the test kitchen for several years, adding retail partners to sell their products daily.

In October 2016, The Country Oven and Heartland Mill opened a new facility, which includes a large high-end commercial kitchen and retail store. The current facility is in Marienthal, right off Highway 96 between Scott City and Leoti. In addition to selling the various products produced by the mill, The Country Oven offers fresh donuts, jams, breads, pastries and wedding cakes. With the extra space of the new facility, they now offer pre-made, frozen dinners and burritos.

If you can't stop in and say hello to Ashlyn and his team at the Marienthal location, The Country Oven offers products at several retail locations: Suzy B's in Scott City, Patrick Dugan's Coffee House in Garden City and Leoti Foods in Leoti.

Outside of the retail locations, The Country Oven participated in Whimmydiddle, an arts and crafts fair, which brought thousands of visitors to Scott City, and they will have a booth at the Peddlers Market Oct. 26-27 at the Garden City Fairgrounds.

To contact The Country Oven, call 620-214-0933 or visit their Facebook page.



THE COUNTRY OVEN BAKERY

904 East, KS-96, Marienthal, KS 67863

620-214-0933

Follow The Country Oven on Facebook



NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH

Working Toward a Common Goal



As October rolls around, we are excited to celebrate National Co-op Month. You might be wondering, what is a co-op or what does co-op mean?

There are two definitions of the word cooperative and we love both! The noun means a farm, business or other organization that is owned and run jointly by its members who share the profits or benefits. The adjective means involving mutual assistance in working toward a common goal. We believe both accurately describe exactly what our cooperative is all about! In fact, our vision statement describes our commitment to the meaning of a cooperative: Wheatland Electric Cooperative will continue to improve the quality of life of our members and the communities we serve by providing services that are safe, reliable and competitively priced.

The Benefits of Your Ownership in the Cooperative

Cooperative members receive several benefits from membership. The first being capital credits earned by every member and based on the amount of electrical use. Our board of directors evaluates the financial condition of our co-op at the end of the year to determine if we can retire capital credits, the funds (margins) remaining after expenses are paid. These margins are allocated back to our members. Capital credits are also used to invest in infrastructure to ensure we are providing you with the safest, most reliable and cost-effective electricity.

Another benefit for residential members is the opportunity to apply for our HVAC Rebate Program. If you are considering replacing your heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system, look into this program first to learn about the rebates you could qualify for. Don't miss out on this opportunity to be rewarded for an energy-efficient purchase! Details can be found at weci.net/hvac-rebates.

Investing in the Future of Our Communities

Each year, Wheatland Electric sends up

to four students on all-expense-paid trips to Washington, D.C., or Steamboat Springs, Colorado, to participate in **COOPERATIVE YOUTH LEADERSHIP CAMP** and the **ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE YOUTH TOUR**. High school juniors, whose primary residence is in Wheatland Electric's service territory, are nominated by their high school guidance counselor. They then write an essay, take a test and are interviewed by a three-judge panel. Wheatland strongly believes in educating our next generation and helping them further hone leadership skills and these tours are an excellent way to further that goal.

Wheatland Electric works with many other organizations to accomplish common goals. This year, as a member of both the Mid-Kansas Electric Company Inc. and Sunflower Electric Power Corporation, we broke ground in partnership with other organizations on the 20-MW **JOHNSON CORNER SOLAR PROJECT** in Johnson City, which will be the largest solar facility in the state upon completion in 2020. This new facility will power more than 4,900 homes across central and western Kansas and provide another diverse fuel-generation source.

This month, we will be visiting numerous communities for our sixth annual **CRAM THE VAN** food drive allowing us to re-stock food banks before the holidays in the many communities we serve. Over the past five years, we have collected more than 32 tons (64,773 pounds) of food donations thanks to you, our members! We couldn't have this much success without your generosity, and we are grateful for your help in making Cram the Van such a huge success and for helping so many.

In 2019, through our **SHARING SUCCESS PROGRAM**, we presented \$11,000 in grants to non-profits in the communities we serve. This year's recipients were the Caldwell Opera House,

Agora Inc. in Wichita County, Quilts of Valor in Syracuse, the Circles program in Great Bend, Scott City Elementary School, Real Men Real Leaders in Garden City, the Harper Art Association, the Barton County Fair Association, Wichita County Community Foundation, the Scott City Takedown Club, and the Child Abuse Prevention Education organization in Great Bend. In total, Wheatland Electric, in partnership with Co-Bank, has given back nearly \$85,000 to the communities we serve through our Sharing Success Program.

On Sept. 13, Wheatland Electric partnered with Victory Electric Cooperative to host the **CO-OPS CARE CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT** in Garden City. All proceeds from this event benefited Wheatland Electric's Cram the Van efforts and Friends of Wright Park Zoo in Dodge City. Thirty teams raised money for these two worthy causes.

This year, we hosted two **CO-OPS VOTE** events in our offices—one in April in Harper and another event in Garden City during late July. Co-ops Vote is a program in which Wheatland collaborates with Kansas Electric Cooperatives Inc. to host. The mission is to inform both our members and electoral candidates about issues important to America's electric co-ops and the communities they serve. Issues Wheatland Electric educates and informs about range from the continued need for affordable and reliable electricity to broadband access and other rural economic development issues.

Wheatland Electric takes great pride in our efforts and our hope is that you, as a member of our cooperative, also take pride in the many activities and organizations our co-op supports. As always, if you have questions about our co-op or the programs described above, please reach out to your local office and ask to speak with a member services team member. We are

An Overview of Rate Setting

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availability charge over a three-year period.

- ▶ Simplify and modernize lighting rates to include LED lights.
- ▶ A complete overhaul of the time of use rate.
- ▶ Implement a standardized primary facilities charge rider.
- ▶ Redesign the process of collecting the property tax adjustment (PTA) and power cost adjustment (PCA), which is built into the current rates.
- ▶ Simplify the irrigation rate language.

Wheatland will continue to update you with information in *Kansas Country Living* magazine as we finalize the cost of service process and calculate and complete the proposed new rate adjustments. A meeting notice will be sent to the membership in an upcoming edition of *Kansas Country Living* magazine detailing when the Board of Trustees will consider action on the proposed cost-of-service study.

Until next time, take care.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER:

Understanding Rates and Cost-of-Service

As a member-owned not-for-profit co-op, we rely upon the electric bill payments from our member-owners to pay for the costs of the co-op. These costs include the physical assets (poles, lines, meters and fleet vehicles) of the co-op; as well as the expenses (the wholesale cost of electricity, employee wages, supplies, and property taxes) of the co-op.

To get the income necessary to pay those costs, Wheatland collects revenue from the member-owners in the form of rates for electric service. However, it is the design, implementation and management of these rates that often creates confusion.

Recently, Wheatland hired consultant C.H. Guernsey to prepare a study examining the co-op's cost of providing electric service. This cost-of-service study determines the revenue needed to cover the co-op's operating expenses and debt obligations, as well as balance the equitability of the rates among the various consumer classes. The study outlines rate requirements for each rate class including residential, small commercial, large commercial and irrigation. Additionally, the cost-of-service study looks at how we should collect the revenue in each rate class to ensure one rate class is not overly burdened by costs that should be attributed to a different rate class. This helps to ensure

rates are fair and equitable amongst the various rate classes.

For example, a residential member pays a kilowatt-hour (kWh) charge, a service availability charge, and a power cost adjustment (PCA) charge. Each of these charge types covers a different cost of the co-op.

When looking at revenue collected from a rate class Wheatland needs to ensure each charge type adequately covers the cost type. By reviewing this, we can ensure that we don't over collect revenue from the kWh charges and under collect revenue from the service availability charge.

Rates change due to controllable and uncontrollable costs and Wheatland continuously looks for ways to minimize the effect of those fluctuations on our member-owners. Wheatland also acts as an advocate for our member-owners by representing our co-op on the board of trustees of both Sunflower Electric Power Corporation and Mid-Kansas Electric Company, Wheatland's wholesale power providers.

Lastly, the Wheatland board of trustees govern the budget and planning of the co-op. These trustees are elected by the member-owners of Wheatland to represent the member's interest and ensure that Wheatland can provide safe, reliable and competitively priced electricity.

Business Showcase in Great Bend

On Aug. 14, Wheatland Electric participated in the fifth annual Great Bend Business Showcase event, hosted by the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development, in partnership with USD 428.

This teacher appreciation event welcomes 700-plus employees of the school district back to school and gives area businesses an opportunity to showcase their products and services. This year, more than 70 local businesses participated in the event.

Trent Suchy, journeyman substation tech from our Great Bend crew, presented electrical safety demonstrations to many and shared electrical



Trent Suchy, journeyman substation tech, presents electrical safety demonstrations during the Business Showcase event in Great Bend.

safety tips, while Regan Reif, member services and key accounts manager in Great Bend, visited with teachers and handed out goodies.

Wheatland Electric wishes all a fun and safe school year ahead. Thank you to our educators for all you do for students and community!

FORE CHARITY: Wheatland's Cram the Van Hits the Links



The Big Red Van made an appearance at the first Co-ops Care Charity Golf Tournament.

Wheatland's Cram the Van campaign kicked off on Sept. 13 at the first-ever Co-ops Care Charity Golf Tournament hosted by Wheatland Electric Cooperative and Victory Electric Cooperative, Inc. The warm weather contributed to ideal weather conditions at The Golf Club at Southwind in Garden City where participants joined in friendly competition to raise money for two worthy causes.

All tournament proceeds were divided to benefit Wheatland Electric's Cram the Van food drive and Friends of Wright Park Zoo in Dodge City. Each nonprofit organization makes a positive difference in their communities.

Friends of the Wright Park Zoo is raising funds for a zoo revitalization project aimed at creating a more enriching environment for the animals in the zoo's care, updating habitats and educating the community with unique experiences. The zoo currently entertains more than 60,000 visitors per year and is home to about 126 animals, representing approximately 30 species from nearly every continent.

The Cram the Van food drive program started five

years ago in response to an appeal from cooperative members who wished to have a method to help other members within their own communities. Each fall, the big, red van plastered with flashy graphics, travels to several communities across western and central Kansas including Caldwell, Conway Springs, Great Bend, Holcomb, Tribune and Scott City collecting donations and non-perishable food items. In the five years since the program began, more than 32 tons of food have been donated to local food banks.

Thirty teams participated with the championship team completing the course with an impressive score of 56 followed by two teams shooting 58.



From right: Wheatland Trustee Stacey Addison-Howland and her teammates Mike Howland, Mickey Crues and Marilyn Kohart took part in the charity tournament.

Thank You to Our Sponsors

This event would not be possible without the generosity of our sponsors. Thank you!

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YOUNG EAGLE RIDES (AGES 8-18) 11-2:30 P.M.
PUMPKIN DECORATING | CANDY DROP AT 3 P.M.

FACE PAINTING

OCTOBER 26

HAYRACK RIDES



SPENCER FLIGHT & EDUCATION CENTER

