



A Day in the Life Rhei Thurman

Rhei Thurman
Consumer Services Representative
2 Years at Wheatland in Leoti

BY BETH LOONEY,
ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER

I arrived a little early in Leoti to meet **RHEI THURMAN** for our Day in the Life. As I was waiting for Rhei, I looked around the office to get my bearings. Of the seven Wheatland offices across our service territory, this is the only one I hadn't visited. I noticed right away that it was a very clean and organized space. Clearly Rhei takes pride in her office. Then I saw it. The ittiest, bittiest microscopic dog bed known to man. As a dog lover, I was excited to meet the owner of such a tiny bed. When Rhei arrived, dogless, I'm certain she could see my disappointment. Alas, Bella the dog was not a permanent resident of the office. But, Rhei obliged me with pictures of the 4-pound Miniature Dachshund.

Rhei began her day by explaining that this time of the month was usually quite slow. Rhei assisted several members who walked in to pay bills or called on the phone, all the while chit-chatting with me about life in Leoti. She grew up in town and enjoys the familiarity and friendship of the people. She explained her unusual name to me. It was created by using the first initial of her grandmother's first and middle names on both her mom's and dad's side of the family. R.H.E.I. Clever and pretty!

During a lull in walk-in traffic, Rhei helped me sign up for SmartHub. SmartHub is a web-based system that members can login and see electric usage, pay their bills and whatnot. It was a helpful website, particularly for

someone like me who despises writing checks. Paying bills online is more my speed.

Our meeting was starting soon, and Rhei and I had some errands to attend to. First, we went to the post office to pick up our mail. We then stopped at Mel's Foodliner to pick up a relish tray for the meeting. The line crew would bring in the pizza. When we got back to the office, we set up the food and drinks for our lunch meeting with all the district employees, as well as a few from Scott City, and Bruce Mueller, General Manager.

As I wrapped up my day with Rhei, she talked about her beautiful family (she has many pictures of them on the wall). She explained that in her spare time she enjoys golf and gardening. Well, we have one thing in common and it's not golf! When I asked her the question of what she likes best working for Wheatland, she said she enjoys the family atmosphere of the employees and thinks the company values its employees. Thank you for the day, Rhei. I really enjoyed getting to know you and Leoti.

This is my last Day in the Life article for Wheatland. My family and I will be moving to Portland, OR, where I have accepted the CEO position of a cooperative there. Shawn Powelson, Manager of Member Services and Corporate Communications, will be taking over the Day in the Life series. Good luck Shawn—have fun! I did.

Wheatland Sends Helping Hand to Oklahoma Cooperatives

Wheatland recently sent a line crew, multiple trucks and equipment to Kingfisher, OK, to assist Cimarron Electric Cooperative with repairs from a recent ice storm.

The Wheatland crew was sent from the Great Bend district office and consisted of line foreman **TYSON RYFF** and linemen **JORDAN HARTWELL**, **BRANDON RITCHIE**, and **BLAKE REED**.

The crew spent a week in Oklahoma replacing poles and lines taken out by the storm along with crews from four other Kansas cooperatives.



Clockwise from Top:
Crews from four Kansas cooperatives joined together to help restore downed lines in Oklahoma.

A closeup of ice buildup that fell off of the lines.

Downed poles caused outages for Cimarron Electric members.

A crew of four from Wheatland joined the convoy of trucks ready to help restore power.



New Authorized Pay Agent in Conway Springs

Attention Wheatland Electric members in Conway Springs and the surrounding area: as of January 4, 2016, **HIRED MAN'S GROCERY AND GRILL**, 424 N. 5th St. in Conway Springs, will be serving as Wheatland's authorized pay agent.

Wheatland members in the Conway Springs area will be able to make payments on their account or sign up

for new service at this location.

Also, coming soon to this location is a full-service payment kiosk that will allow members to process their own cash, credit card and check payments.

Hired Man's Grocery & Grill hours

- Monday-Friday: 7:30 a.m. – 8 p.m.
- Saturday: 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- Sunday: 8:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Get to Know Your Co-op Staff Lisa Loeppke

Senior Customer Service Representative in Garden City
9 Years at Wheatland

TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAMILY.

My husband, Wade Loeppke, and I have been married for 12 years. We have two kids: Weston, 6 years; and Lyndsey, 4 years. We have four dogs, six cats, two full-size horses, 10 miniature horses, two hamsters, and fish. Of course with that many animals we live on a farm!

WHERE ARE YOU FROM ORIGINALY? Carrollton, MO.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME? I enjoy spending time with our family and showing miniature horses.

WHAT SPORT OR TEAM IS YOUR FAVORITE? I enjoy watching football—Kansas City Chiefs

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE VACATION? My favorite mini-vacation would have to be when we went to the Great Wolf Lodge and had lots of fun at the water park.

WHAT ACCOMPLISHMENT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF? My kids! They are my pride and joy!

WHAT IS SOMETHING NOT MANY PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT YOU? I have raised miniature horses since 2005. I placed in the top 10 in the American Miniature Horse Association World Show.

WHO HAS INSPIRED YOU IN YOUR LIFE AND WHY? My Mother. She has always been there for us. Even through tough times she has been our rock. She is a breast cancer survivor, and even through all that she always had a positive attitude.



Lisa Loeppke

Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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District Offices

Garden City
2005 W Fulton
P.O. Box 973
Garden City, KS
67846
620-275-0261

Great Bend
2300 Broadway
P.O. Box 1446
Great Bend, KS 67530
620-793-4223

Harper
302 W. 6th
P.O. Box 247
Harper, KS 67058
620-896-7090

Leoti
N Hwy 25
P.O. Box 966
Leoti, KS 67861
620-375-2632

Scott City-Main
101 Main Street
P.O. Box 230
Scott City, KS 67871
620-872-5885

Syracuse
206 1/2 N Main
P.O. Box 1010
Syracuse, KS 67878
620-384-5171

Tribune
310 Broadway
P.O. Box 490
Tribune, KS 67879
620-376-4231

FROM THE MANAGER Cooperatively Connected

Every day, Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc., is hard at work to make sure all of our members have the electric power they need at a competitive price. Behind the scenes, we work with a network of cooperatives to make that happen.

Wheatland is a member-owner of Sunflower Electric Power Corporation and Mid-Kansas Electric Corporation, both of which generate power for Wheatland, as well as Lane-Scott, Pioneer, Prairie Land, Victory, and Western electric cooperatives. We helped to create this generation and transmission co-op so that we have more control over power supply and pricing.

Operation of an electric co-op also takes capital, so when we need to borrow money, we turn to either the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC) or CoBank. Both of these organizations are also cooperatives. CFC is owned by electric co-ops throughout the country, and CoBank is owned by electric and agricultural co-ops nationwide.

As you know, every month we generate an electric bill that we send to you. We use National Information Solutions Cooperative, yet another cooperative, to ensure we can apply the latest technology, and send timely and accurate bills to you.

Our business cannot operate without several different types of insurance, such as general liability, auto and workman's compensation. So once again, along with other electric cooperatives across the country, we are members of an insurance cooperative, Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange. This allows us to maintain reliable coverage at an affordable price.

Wheatland Electric is a member of Touchstone Energy, a nationwide alliance of 750 local, member-owned electric cooperatives. Our participation allows us access to a wealth of informational materials. It also allows us to benchmark our performance in comparison with other co-ops so that we can learn from others as we constantly strive to serve you better.

Wheatland is also part of the Cooperative Response Center, which allows us to answer your calls 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

So, while you are a member of one electric co-op (Wheatland), you are actually connected to many other co-ops. And being connected to this cooperative network ensures your needs are met in the most efficient and cooperative way possible.

Until next time, take care.



Bruce Mueller

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 
101 Main, P.O. Box 230, Scott City, KS 67871
620-872-5885
www.weci.net

WHEATLAND
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

NEWS

Making Changes for the Better

Wheatland begins new year with improvements & efficiencies

As part of Wheatland's continued efforts to control costs, we have identified a number of business practices and processes that can be improved. The Board of Trustees and management anticipate that implementation of these changes will result in improved operational efficiencies, which will help Wheatland continue to keep costs as low as possible.

These changes can be read in their entirety at weci.net in the revised Rules and Regulations, approved by the Wheatland Board of Trustees on January 28. Additionally, each member should be receiving a letter outlining each of the changes we are making. Listed below are highlights of some of the business practice changes, which will be effective March 1, 2016.

Payments

Personnel will no longer be able to accept payment outside of the business office. All payments must be conducted at a Wheatland office, authorized Wheatland payment agent or mailed to a Wheatland office.

Additionally, payments may be made 24 hours a day, seven days a week, online at www.weci.net using Smarthub, through the Smarthub App on any mobile device, or via our automated credit card processing service at 844-262-2417.

Billing Dates

- ▶ Usage will be calculated by the 5th of the month beginning April 5 (for March usage).
- ▶ Bills will be issued by the 12th of the month beginning April 12.
- ▶ Bills will be due the following 5th of the month, beginning May 5.
- ▶ Late charges will be applied on the 6th of the month, beginning May 6.
- ▶ The collection fee for bills subject to disconnection will be applied on the 15th of the month, beginning May 15.
- ▶ Members who have signed up for bank draft will have their payments drafted on the due date (5th of the month), beginning May 5.

Delinquent Notices

Wheatland will only issue one notice, via direct mailing to any member who is delinquent on their bill and subject to disconnection. This will be the only disconnect notice issued and will be identified as such on the notice. Field personnel will no longer leave notices on doors prior to disconnection.

Arrearage Payment Plans

- ▶ May only be offered to members with no previous outstanding payment plans and who have a paid in full deposit (if required).
- ▶ Payment Plans for past due accounts cannot exceed six months and cannot extend beyond October 4 of any given year.
- ▶ 25 percent of the outstanding balance due must be paid upon Payment Plan inception. The remaining balance will be proportionately applied to the remaining Payment Plan term.

After-Hours Reconnect

Wheatland will no longer offer after-hours reconnection due to disconnection for non-payment after the first 24 hours from the time of disconnect.

New Fee Structure

The new fee structure is listed in the chart at the left. Previously, Wheatland members in the eastern and western divisions were paying different fees. The new fee structure will be effective for all members regardless of location.

If you have any questions about these changes, please call your local Wheatland Electric office.

Wheatland Annual Meeting is April 20

The Wheatland Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 20, 2016, at the Greeley County 4-H Building in Tribune. Lunch is at 11:30 a.m. MDT and the meeting will follow at 12:30 p.m. MDT. Watch for your March issue of *Kansas Country Living* magazine for more details. We hope to see you there!

April 2016						
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Harper Office Celebrates Grand Opening



Wheatland Electric employees gather for the Harper office grand opening on Jan. 12.

Wheatland Electric held a grand opening celebration for its newly constructed Harper office on January 12. Tours of the new office were given and refreshments were served at the open house.



Members enjoyed refreshments after a tour of the new office.

Previously, Wheatland had been conducting business in the Harper area out of its warehouse location on 6th street.

"One of my first goals, after coming to Wheatland, was to make improvements to our Harper office," said Bruce Mueller, Wheatland General Manager. "Conducting business out of a warehouse was less than ideal. We look forward to serving our members in Harper and the surrounding area from this great new facility."

The new office, located at 906 Central Street, boasts a drive through window for members' convenience and a meeting room for training and operational use.

Garden City Business Office Relocates to Substation Office During Remodel

Our Garden City business office will be undergoing a remodel to better serve the needs of our members.

The business office, located at 2005 W. Fulton, closed on January 22 and has been temporarily relocated to the substation office, directly east of our current business office.

You may continue to make payments and transact business with us as you normally would at the temporary location. You will be able to deposit your payment, including payment stub and check or money order in the payment drop box located outside the temporary office.

Our mailing address and phone number will remain the

same. Please find below our contact information for the duration of the remodel process:

Wheatland Electric
PO Box 973, 2005 W. Fulton
Garden City, KS 67846-0973
Phone: 620-275-0261
Fax: 620-275-0833

We apologize for the inconvenience and we look forward to serving you from our new and improved facility once the remodel process is completed.



The Garden City office is under renovation and has been relocated to 2005 W. Fulton.

Check Out a New Way to Curb Your Energy Usage

Borrow a Kill-A-Watt at Your Local Library Today!

The Kill-A-Watt™ EZ is an electricity monitoring device designed to easily measure how much electricity is being used by your plug-in appliances at home or work.

Find out how much money you would save on your electricity bills by turning them off and being smarter in your home energy management.

The Kill-A-Watt EZ is now available for checkout at your local library.

You must have a valid library card to borrow a Kill-A-Watt through this program.

Get to Know Your Co-op Staff

Mario Diaz

Geographical Information System Coordinator
 2.5 Years at Wheatland

TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAMILY.

My wife, Rita, and I have a daughter, Ruby, 9, who is a third grade Honor Roll student. We also have our Chihuahua, Peanut, 63 years old in dog years; our cat, Harrison; the fish, Squidward; and Sugar Bell and Lemon Pie our parakeets.



Mario Diaz

WHERE ARE YOU FROM ORIGINALLY?

Aurora, IL. I moved here in 1991, went to Garden City High School, then moved back to Illinois in 1995. Then moved back to Garden City in 2000 and have been here since.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME?

I like to work on cars, fix things here and there—the typical honey dos. There is no such thing as spare time.

WHAT SPORT OR TEAM IS YOUR FAVORITE?

Well, Cowboys of course! Even when they are down, I root for them all the way.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE VACATION?

Trip to San Diego, CA, in 2013. I took my family to Disneyland, and rode the Amtrak from here all the way. My daughter and I enjoyed the viewing car.

WHAT ACCOMPLISHMENT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

Getting my bachelor's degree in accounting. WHAT IS YOUR IDEAL JOB? I'm in mine now. I love what I do! It is a new challenge every day; nothing is the same in what I do and there are always new things to learn.

WHO HAS INSPIRED YOU IN YOUR LIFE AND WHY?

My mother. She has gone through a lot in life, but she has never given up. She has fallen many times, but manages to get up and walk with her head up.