



MAY 2022

THE WHEAT BELT CONNECTION

CONGRATULATIONS!

2022 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Wheat Belt PPD and our partners, Basin Electric Power Cooperative, Tri-State Generation and Transmission and Arbor Wealth Management are pleased to recognize the following recipients of our 2022 Scholarship Program. We congratulate and wish ALL graduates success in their future endeavors!



Mason Reimers

A \$2,000 Wheat Belt Lineman Scholarship was awarded to Mason. He will be a Freshman at Mitchell Technical College, Major Course of Study: Powerline Construction and Maintenance. Mason is the son of Eric and Kelly Reimers of Dalton, Nebraska.



Lorien DeMasters

A \$1,000 Basin Scholarship was awarded to Lorien. She will be a Freshman at Chadron State College, Major Course of Study: Biology and Minor: Chemistry. Lorien is the daughter of Derk and Chanda DeMasters of Sidney, Nebraska.

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Editor - Kelli Chaon

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YOUTH ENERGY LEADERSHIP CAMP JULY 18 - 22, 2022

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: MAY 13, 2022

Our camp is an opportunity to meet new people and gain first-hand knowledge about the dynamic electric industry, and it's FREE and FUN! We invite 9th, 10th or 11th grade students to be a part of our summer camp. For more information, contact our office 308-254-5871.

LUCKY DRAWING

Congratulations to JX Ranch, our March "Lucky Winner"! For their prompt payment, they received a \$50 credit.

If you would like to be included in our next drawing, and avoid a \$5 delinquent fee, please send your payment before the 16th of the month.

For your convenience, we offer several payment options. Please give us a call, 308-254-5871, or visit wheatbelt.com. Select the Customer Engagement page for information.

P.O. BOX 177, 11306 RD 32, SIDNEY, NE 69162

P 308.254.5871 | T 800.261.7114 | wheatbelt@wheatbelt.com | www.wheatbelt.com



Elijah Schmid

A \$500 Tri-State Scholarship was awarded to Eli. He will be a Freshman at Concordia University, Major Course of Study: Public Health & Fitness. Eli is the son of Dan and Michelle Schmid of Oshkosh, Nebraska.



Jonathan Borges

A \$500 Tri-State Scholarship was awarded to Jonathan. He will be a Freshman at Doane University, Major Course of Study: Agribusiness.

Jonathan is the son of Ryan and Krystal Borges of Dalton, Nebraska.



Madelyn Watchorn

A \$500 Arbor Wealth Scholarship was awarded to Madelyn. She will be a Junior at Concordia University, Major Course of Study: Biology/Nursing and Minor: Business. Madelyn is the daughter of Ryan and Becky Watchorn of Sidney, Nebraska.



Touchstone Energy®
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CONGRATULATIONS! 2022 TOUCHSTONE ENERGY® AWARDS

OUTSTANDING SCHOLASTIC & ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE

Each year, schools within our service territory are invited to select two high school students for outstanding performance in alignment with Touchstone values of integrity, accountability, innovation and community. One is awarded for scholastic achievements and the other is awarded for athletic achievements.

On behalf of Wheat Belt and the students, the schools receive \$400 (\$200 per award) to be used at the school's discretion.

Recipients receive a certificate and a \$50 gift card; also, an engraved nameplate is added to the Touchstone plaque displayed at their school. We are pleased to announce this year's recipients.

Bridgeport

Paige Schmunk (S) and Braxten Swires (A)

Creek Valley

Grace Timm (S) and Eli Schmid (A)

Garden County

Trey Kirch (S) and Dillon Christiansen (A)

Leyton

Cortney Holt (S) and Brenton Abbott (A)

Sidney

Daniel Bashtovoi (S) and Brynna Ross (A)

South Platte

Kerstin Brown (S) and Taylyn Bauer (A)

Moe's

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WHEAT BELT PPD FOCUSES ON RELIABILITY

LACEY GULBRANSON *General Manager/CEO*

Every four to five years Wheat Belt hires an engineering firm to develop our construction work plan. This is a financial plan and a work plan for the line crews. Historically, the work plan has focused on areas of growth to the system. In our current plan, 2020-2023, we took a different approach and chose to focus on strengthening the system and certain problem areas and, subsequently, more funds were allocated to increase work plan dollars from roughly \$2,000,000/year to \$3,000,000/year. This was due to inflation and allows us to hire a contract crew to help get the work done at a faster pace. Prior to 2020 the work plan dollars had stayed steady for the prior ten plus years. Recently, the crews have been working on replacing rotten and/or vermin damaged poles south of Sidney. By mid summer, we anticipate having a contract crew working on a line rebuild northeast of Sidney. Lastly, each year we hire a contract crew to test poles, we test roughly 10% of our poles each year for damage/rote, this crew will probably start back up in mid summer and will be working largely north of the river in the Lewellen and Oshkosh areas. When the time comes for developing a new work plan our focus will remain on strengthening the system and focusing on problem areas for our continued focus on delivering electricity safely, reliably and efficiently.

RESTORING POWER SAFELY & EFFICIENTLY

By Abby Berry

We do our best to avoid them, but there's no way around it: power outages occasionally happen.

For most Wheat Belt PPD customers, outages are rare and only last a few hours. But when major storms, impact our area, extended outages are unavoidable.

So when the power goes out, how do our crews know where to start working? How do you know if your outage has been reported? We've got answers to these questions and more, and it all starts with a safe, efficient plan for power restoration.

When the lights go out and it's safe for our crews to begin the restoration process, they start by repairing power lines and equipment that will restore power to the greatest number of people in the shortest time possible.

This process typically begins with repairs to the larger main distribution lines that service a great number of homes and businesses. After those repairs are made, crews work on tap lines, which deliver power to transformers, either mounted on utility poles (for above-ground service) or placed on pads (for underground service). Finally, individual service lines that run between the transformer and the home are repaired.

Continued on 12-D



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Restoring Power cont'd from 12-C

We can't control the weather, but we can prepare for it. We keep a supply of extra utility poles, transformers and other equipment on hand so we can quickly get



to work in the event of an outage. When widespread outages occur, multiple crews will be out in the field simultaneously working to repair damage at multiple locations. We also coordinate with nearby ppds/co-ops to bring in additional crews when necessary.

A proactive approach to maintenance helps minimize the chance of prolonged outages; this is why you see WBPPD crews periodically trimming trees and clearing vegetation near rights-of-way. We love trees too, but it only takes one overgrown limb to knock out power for an entire neighborhood. Trimming improves power reliability for our entire system. In addition to managing vegetation, we regularly inspect utility poles, power lines and other critical equipment to maintain a more reliable system.

If you experience a power outage, don't assume a neighbor reported it. It's best to report the outage yourself, and we make it easy to do. The quickest way to report an outage is to call 308-254-5871.

If you have a medical condition that requires electrical equipment, please let us know, and always have a backup plan in place. This plan could include a portable generator, extra medical supplies or moving to an alternate location until power is restored. If you plan to use a generator for backup power, read all safety information and instructions before use.

Mother Nature can be unpredictable, but as a Wheat Belt customer, you can feel confident knowing we're standing by, ready to restore power as quickly and safely as possible.

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