

June 2025



Wheat Belt Sets Strategic Priorities for Growth, Reliability and Safety

New plan focuses on financial strength, governance, infrastructure, customer relationships and safety culture through 2027

BY: LACEY GULBRANSON, General Manager/CEO

Every three years the Board of Directors and senior staff members meet for a strategic planning session. Since December marked the end of the previous strategic plan, the strategic planning session was held at Tri-State Generation and Transmission's headquarters in Westminster, CO the last week of January. One of the financial institutions, Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC), we are a member of offers strategic planning facilitation as a benefit of membership and we were able to take advantage of this service. As the Board and employees interacted, discussing District-wide issues and industry-wide issues the following focus areas surfaced: Leverage Financial Strength, Strengthen Governance, Strengthen Distribution System, Strengthen Customer Relationships and Strengthen Safety Culture. Over the next two and a half years, Wheat Belt will be focusing efforts on these initiatives.

Each of these initiatives has two or three key bodies of work to consider and work through over the next few years. Leverage Financial Growth: consider and analyze various power supply options, adopt a financial planning process, and develop long-term rate strategy. Strengthen Governance: identify educational opportunities for board members, consider options for board assessment and continuous improvement, and develop succession planning structures and practices. Strengthen Distribution System: implement a work plan to modernize infrastructure, keep up with the pace of technology and complete 2024 storm conductor damage work. Strengthen Customer Relation-

Continued on 3-D

IN THIS ISSUE

Editor - Kelli Chaon

Wheat Belt Sets Strategic Priorities	Page 3-A/D
Wheat Belt Hours are Changing	Page 3-B
April Board Meeting Update	Page 3-B
Lucky Draw Winner	Page 3-B
Go Above and Beyond for Harvest	
Safety	Page 3-C
Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month	Page 3-D

STRATEGIC PLAN



LEVERAGE FINANCIAL STRENGTH

- Consider and analyze various power supply options
- Adopt a financial planning process
- Develop long-term rate strategy



STRENGTHEN GOVERNANCE

- Identify educational opportunities for board members
- Consider options for board assessment and continuous improvement
- Develop succession planning structures and practices



STRENGTHEN DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

- Implement a work plan to modernize infrastructure
- Keep up with the pace of technology
- Complete 2024 storm conductor damage work



STRENGTHEN CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

- Increase customer involvement
- Explore grant opportunities available



STRENGTHEN SAFETY CULTURE

- Build a culture of safety awareness and continuous improvement
- Strengthen safety programs

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

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



Wheat Belt PPD's Hours are Changing

**Beginning June 2, 2025 &
Ending October 31, 2025**

**Office Hours:
6:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Monday-Thursday**

*Closed Friday-Sunday & Wheat Belt
Recognized Holidays*

New Schedule, Same Service



LUCKY DRAWING



Congratulations to Kent and Bobbi Wright our April "Lucky Draw Winner"!

Kent and Bobbie live south of Bridgeport. Wheat Belt serves their farming operation.

Kent is a custom harvester at heart, leaving for his 54th year this May. He has continued to carry on his parents' legacy for harvesting grain. His passions are his dogs, grandkids and grilling.

Bobbi is a farmer's daughter at heart, being a steward of the land. She works on her family farm where beef is their business. Bobbie is a traditionalist, proud of her Swiss heritage. Besides being family oriented, she likes to garden and work the soil, as it's her therapy. She has a particular fondness for pumpkins.

Together they are blessed with five kids and 14 grandchildren.

Kent and Bobbi received a \$50 credit on their account for their prompt payment. 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 at 308-254-5871, or visit wheatbelt.com, and select the Customer Engagement page for more information.

APRIL BOARD MEETING UPDATE



- The Board reviewed and amended Policies: A-3, Employment of Relatives; A-4, Harassment; A-5, Information Use & Cybersecurity; and D-1, Director Compensation.
- Dustin Kizzire with Dana F. Cole reviewed the annual audit with the Board. The board tabled the audit approval until next month when they can have more time to review since the final report was received from the audit firm only one day prior to the meeting.
- The Wheat Belt Board has been evaluating their options for power supply. Nebraska Public Power District was in attendance to give an overview of their generation and transmission capabilities in regard to Wheat Belt's needs.
- Discussion was held regarding the current contract with Tri-State G&T. At this time, the board voted to sign the contract with Tri-State G&T, but not to extend the contract term to 2066. The current contract is valid through 2050. The Board still has the option to buy out of the contract.
- General Manager, Lacey Gulbranson, notified the board of her resignation prior to the regular board meeting. The board has elected to use an executive search firm to navigate the process of hiring a new manager.

Go Above and Beyond for a Safe Harvest

BY: **KELLI CHAON** *Customer Engagement Manager*

Modern farming often relies on data and equipment with GPS and auto-guidance systems. However, even with these modern conveniences, farm workers must remain vigilant. That's because farming is considered one of the most dangerous jobs.

Massive machinery is indispensable to farming, but the same impressive size, height and extensions make them particularly vulnerable to contacting power lines. That's why staying alert, focused and knowledgeable about potential hazards and safety procedures is crucial.

During a busy harvest season, the familiar sights around the farm can easily fade into the background, and farm workers can overlook the power lines overhead. However, failing to notice them can lead to deadly accidents.

360 Awareness

Awareness of your surroundings, around, above and below, and planning safe equipment routes can significantly reduce the risk of accidents. Even with GPS and auto-steering, it's imperative that farm workers keep a close eye on the equipment's location and are ready to take action if necessary.

Exposed underground powerlines, defective wiring in farm buildings and extension cords are also hazards. Grain bins can pose a potential danger as well. The National Electrical Safety Code requires power lines to be at least 18 feet above the highest point on any grain bin with which portable augers or other portable filling equipment are used. If you plan to install new grain bins or you're concerned about the proximity of power lines to existing grain bins, contact Wheat Belt Public Power District

Smart Harvest Safety Tips

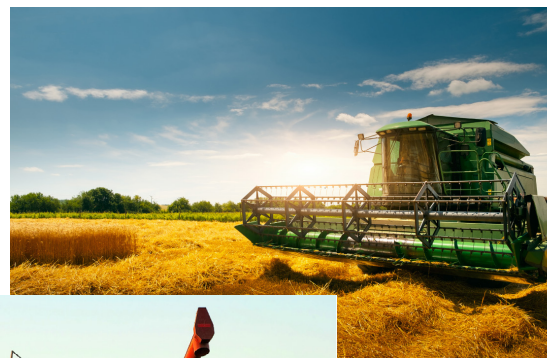
To ensure a safer harvest season, SafeElectricity.org recommends the following tips to avoid electrical accidents on the farm:

- **Exercise caution near power lines.** Be careful when raising augers or the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- **Use spotters when operating large machinery near power lines.** Ensure the spotters do not touch the machinery while it is moving near power lines.
- **Lower equipment extensions, portable augers or elevators before moving or transporting equipment.** Do

not raise equipment, such as ladders, poles or rods into power lines. Remember that non-metallic materials like lumber, tree limbs, ropes and hay can conduct electricity, especially when damp, dusty or dirty.

- **Never attempt to raise or move power lines to clear a path.** Doing so could result in electric shock or death.
- **Avoid using metal poles inside bins.** Don't use metal poles to break up bridged grain inside or around bins.
- **Hire qualified electricians.** Ensure that qualified electricians handle work on drying equipment and other farm electrical systems.

While rare, the only reason to exit equipment that has come into contact with overhead lines is if the equipment is on fire. However, if it happens, jump off the equipment with your feet together and without touching the machinery and the ground at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, hop to safety as you leave the area.



Wheat Belt Sets Strategic Priorities cont'd from 3-A

ships: increase customer involvement and explore grant opportunities available. Strengthen Safety Culture: build a culture of safety awareness and continuous improvement and strengthen safety programs. Some of these bodies of work are already in place while others will begin over the coming months.

Each employee has a connection with the strategic plan which will help deliver on our mission and values: Wheat Belt Public Power District is committed to delivering electricity safely, reliably and efficiently by focusing on respecting individuals, producing quality work and valuing integrity for the greater good of our customers and employees. We look forward to seeing the outcomes of these initiatives over the next few years.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Take advantage of the warmer weather to reduce home energy use. Avoid using your oven and use a grill instead. Not only will cooking outdoors eliminate the energy used to power the oven or stove, but it will also avoid raising the temperature inside your home, reducing the need for additional air conditioning.

You can also avoid using the oven with tasty no-bake recipes. Get creative in the kitchen and explore new ways to save energy!

Source: *energy.gov*



BOARD OF DIRECTORS



PRESIDENT

Brian Zimmerman, *Big Springs*

VICE PRESIDENT

Stuart Morgan, *Dalton*

SECRETARY

Brian "Moe" Moffat, *Oshkosh*

TREASURER

Marcus Milanuk, *Oshkosh*

ASSISTANT SECRETARY

Toni Blomenkamp, *Broadwater*

DIRECTOR

Jennifer Eckhardt, *Dalton*

DIRECTOR

Collin Anderson, *Dalton*



MANAGERS



GENERAL MANAGER / CEO

Lacey Gulbranson

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES MANAGER

Tim Jones

OPERATIONS MANAGER

Rollie Waite

FIELD ENGINEER

Mark Cape

MANAGER OF TECHNOLOGIES

Jim Weeda

CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

Kelli Chaon

OFFICE HOURS:

7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

P 308.254.5871 | **T** 800.261.7114 | **F** 308.254.2384

wheatbelt@wheatbelt.com

Our Mission

**Deliver electricity safely, reliably and
efficiently.**