



May 2025



Wheat Belt Business Hours Changing

New Hours, Same Service

Starting June 2, 2025, Wheat Belt Public Power District will begin a pilot program transitioning to a 4-day work week. Our new office hours will be 6:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday, with our office closed on Fridays.

This change will run through October 31, 2025, and will give our customers extended hours during the days we are open to make payments, get assistance with their accounts or have our crews respond to issues in the field. This schedule is designed to enhance employee well-being, improve attendance and retention, and ultimately increase productivity. We believe this adjustment will benefit both our team and our customers, allowing us to provide even better service.



As part of this new schedule, our extended work-days will give our crews more sunlight hours on work sites. This means less drive for our crews working in our 3,600 square mile service territory, helping to shorten the time it

takes for power outages during maintenance and construction projects. Our on-call crews will be available to respond to outages and other issues after-hours, in the same manner they are currently.

We appreciate your understanding as we pilot this new schedule and look forward to continuing to serve you with the same commitment to quality and reliability.

LUCKY DRAWING

Congratulations to Mike and Dana Fischer our March “Lucky Draw Winner”!

Mike and Dana have three children Kimberly, Carrie and Chris, along with three grandchildren, Brinley, Kasey and Chase. Mike has farmed and ranched in the Lewellen area his whole life and Dana as been a cook at the Garden County Schools for 32 years.

In their spare time, the Fischer’s enjoy hunting, trapping and shooting. To quote Mike, “I like a good horse, smart dog and a well built gun.”

Mike and Dana 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.

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Editor - Kelli Chaon

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Be Ready for Storm Season

By: **KELLI CHAON** *Customer Engagement Manager*

Spring is on our doorstep and like many of you, I'm looking forward to more opportunities to be outdoors and enjoy warmer weather. Springtime brings many of my favorite activities like cooking out with family and friends, time spent working in the garden and simply slowing down a bit to enjoy life.

Unfortunately, spring and summer can also create the perfect conditions for severe storms.



- Discussion by the board was held regarding Nebraska State Statute 70-624.02, which establishes requirements for the board of director's compensation. The board compensation has not been changed since 2006. Policy D-1 will be brought back at next month's meeting to address increasing the board's compensation.
- The Board will be sending out Auditor RFP's (Request for Proposal). The proposals will be sent to auditing firms to get quotes for our annual audit.
- Our power supply contract with Tri-State has been the topic at the last few board meetings. The Board will be deciding in the near future on whether to stay with Tri-State G & T or explore other options.
- Waite reported to the board he sent two crews to Perennial PPD for mutual aid to help with storm damage they sustained in March. The board thanked the linemen for all their hard work and long hours.
- Gulbranson and a committee of employees presented a pilot 4/10-hour workday schedule to the board. Workdays would be Monday – Thursday 6:30 am to 4:30 p.m. beginning June 2, 2025, and ending October 31, 2025. The board asked questions and wanted to make sure this would not jeopardize employee safety. The board approved the pilot program.

Wheat Belt Public Power District crews are always prepared and standing by to respond should power outages occur in our area. When severe storms cause power disruptions, our line crews take all necessary precautions before they get to work on any downed lines.

I would encourage you to also practice safety and preparedness to protect your family during storms and outages. The Federal Emergency Management Agency recommends the items below as a starting point for storm and disaster preparedness, but you can visit www.ready.gov for additional resources.

- Stock your pantry with a three-day supply of non-perishable food, including canned goods, energy bars, peanut butter, powdered milk, instant coffee, water and other essentials (i.e., diapers and toiletries).

- Confirm that you have adequate sanitation and hygiene supplies including towelettes, soap and hand sanitizer.

- Ensure your First Aid kit is stocked with pain relievers, bandages and other medical essentials, and make sure your prescriptions are current.

- Set aside basic household items you will need, including flashlights, batteries, a manual can opener and portable, battery-powered radio or TV.

- Organize emergency supplies so they are easily accessible in one location.

In the event of a prolonged power outage, turn off major appliances, TVs, computers and other sensitive electronics. This will help avert damage from potential power surges and will also help prevent overloading circuits during power restoration. That said, do leave one light on so you will know when power is restored.



If you plan to use a portable generator, make sure it's rated to handle the amount of power you will need, and always review the manufacturer's instructions to operate it safely.

Severe storms can occasionally bring down power lines. If you see a downed line, always assume it's energized and never approach it. If flooding occurs,

Continued on 3-D

CONGRATULATIONS

SCHOLARSHIP

Recipients!

**\$2,000
Wheat Belt
Scholarship**



Owen Gillham

Owen plans to attend Northwest Lineman Center in Denton, Texas. Major Course of Study: Electrical Line Worker Program Certification. Owen is the son of Paul and Maria Gillham of Sidney, NE.

**\$1,000
Basin
Scholarship**



Connor Hurt

Conner plans to attend Western Nebraska Community College in Alliance, NE. Major Course of Study: Powerline Construction and Maintenance. Conner is the son of Whitney and the late Andrew Hurt of Sidney, NE.

Wheat Belt Public Power District and our partners, Basin Electric Power Cooperative, Tri-State Generation and Transmission, and Arbor Wealth Management awarded scholarships to five outstanding area students. Our scholarship program is designed to recognize achievements and provide financial assistance to students of our customers. We believe investing in the education of our youth is a shared responsibility and is in the best interest of our communities and businesses.

**\$500
Tri-State
Scholarship**



Jasmine Biel

Jasmine plans to attend the University of Wyoming in Laramie, WY. Major Course of Study: Business Administration/Accounting. Jasmine is the daughter of James and Misty Biel of Lewellen, NE.

**\$500
Tri-State
Scholarship**



Sadie Smith

Sadie plans to attend Western Nebraska Community College in Sidney, NE. Major Course of Study: Associates of Science in Aviation Maintenance. Sadie is the daughter of John and Sara Fehringer of Sidney, NE.

**\$500
Arbor Wealth
Scholarship**



Ely Olson

Ely is currently undecided as to where he will be attending college. Major Course of Study: Agriculture Business. Ely is the son of Pete Olson and Elizabeth Yost of Oshkosh, NE.

Be Ready for Storm Season cont'd from 3-B

never walk through areas where power lines could be submerged.

Advance planning for severe storms or other emergencies can reduce stress and anxiety caused by the weather event and lessen the impact of the storm's effects.

Listen to local news or a NOAA Weather Radio for storm and emergency information, and check Wheat Belt Public Power District's Facebook page for restoration updates. If you experience an outage, please do not report it on Facebook. Call our outage reporting number at (308) 254-5871, this is the fastest way to let us know if your power is out.

I hope we don't experience severe storms over the spring and summer months, but we can never predict Mother Nature's plans. At Wheat Belt PPD we recommend that you make a plan today—because storm preparedness is always our best defense.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

TIP OF THE MONTH

Routine maintenance is important to keep your refrigerator running efficiently. Lint and dirt should be cleaned from the refrigerator coils every six months to a year, and more often if there are pets in the home.

When coils are coated with lint, dust or pet hair, your refrigerator works harder than it's designed to, which can prevent the appliance from cooling properly and efficiently. The additional work can increase the energy costs of the refrigerator by as much as 35% and shorten the life of the appliance.

Source: *energy.gov*



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Jim Weeda

CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

Kelli Chaon

OFFICE HOURS:

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

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Our Mission

Deliver electricity safely, reliably and efficiently.