



THE WHEAT BELT CONNECTION

JULY 2022

Make The Switch to E-Statements

We are aware that some of you may not be getting your monthly statement in a timely fashion. It can be very frustrating when you do not receive your mail on time. One way to ensure you receive your statement promptly is by utilizing e-statements. At the beginning of each month, once billing is completed, you will be emailed or texted a notification that your statement is available to view through your online account or Wheat Belt App. You no longer need to wait by your mailbox and hope that your bill will arrive in time for you to get your payment returned. You can make the switch through your current online account or by calling the Wheat Belt office and speaking with one of our friendly customer service representatives. As always, if you have questions regarding e-statements or any other questions, we are here to help.



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LUCKY DRAWING

Congratulations to Lloyd and Johnadene Winkelman, our May "Lucky Winner"! For their prompt payment, they received a \$50 credit.

The Winkelmans have resided in the Dalton area since they were married. Lloyd has been a farmer all of his life and Johnadene worked in retail and accounting for 39 years. They have three children; son Jeff and his wife Deana (who live right across the road), daughters Lisa and husband Greg Varner (Alaska), and Michele and husband Steve Winkelman Odell (Fort Collins, CO). Lloyd and Johnadene also have six grandchildren and five great children. Their hobbies include any activities with their children and grandchildren and Husker sports.

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.



ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Tip of the Month

Even in summer months, adding insulation to your attic can keep your home more comfortable and save energy used by your cooling system. If your attic insulation is level with or below your floor joists (meaning you can easily see your joists), you should add more. If you can't see any of the floor joists because the insulation is well above them, you likely have enough insulation.

Attic insulation should be evenly distributed with no low spots. Make sure the areas along the eaves are adequately covered.

Source: energystar.gov

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

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Wheat Belt Board Members Receive Education Certificates

Three of our board members recently received certificates for board training from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). NRECA is a nationwide organization consisting of over 900 electric cooperatives and public power districts, which provide electric service to more than 42 million people in 47 states. This organization provides multiple services for Wheat Belt including board and employee educational programs and opportunities, political and policy advocacy, legal resources, safety programs, and employee benefits.

An ever-changing business environment has imposed new demands on power district directors, requiring increased knowledge of changes in the electric utility business, new governance skills and a solid knowledge of the cooperative principles and business model. Public Power Districts in Nebraska have a commitment to work through NRECA to sharpen this body of knowledge for the benefit of our customers.



L to R: Toni Blomenkamp, Sean Blackburn and Brian Zimmerman (Board President).

In May, Toni Blomenkamp and Sean Blackburn who have been board members since 2021, attended the New Director Orientation in the Washington, D.C. area. This program provides information about critical issues affecting the energy industry. Sponsors included representatives from the research and development, finance, and insurance sectors. Additionally, Toni and Sean met other board members from around the country to build an invaluable peer network. This orientation program is really the first steppingstone to continuous learning in the role of a board member.

Marcus Milanuk has also been on the path of continuous learning in his seven years as a Wheat Belt board member. At Wheat Belt's May board meeting Marcus received his Board Leadership Certificate (BLC). The NRECA BLC recognizes individuals who continue their professional development after becoming Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD), which Marcus completed several years ago. Directors who have attained BLC have completed 10 credits in advanced, issues-oriented courses.



L to R: Marcus Milanuk and Brian Zimmerman (Board President).

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Brian (Moe) Moffat

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EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Wesley Christensen Apprentice Maintenance Lineman

We are happy to introduce Wesley Christensen. Wesley started as an intern last June and joined us as a permanent employee in September. He was raised in the Bridgeport area, so lucky for him, home is just down the road. Wesley has also lived in Gering, Nebraska and Camp Pendleton, California.



Wesley graduated from Bridgeport High School and joined the United States Marine Corp a few months later. He attended the ITB - School of Infantry to become an Infantry Rifleman. When he returned to this area, Wesley worked as a roofer at Twin City Roofing and Sheet Metal and was a forklift driver and warehouse laborer at Trinidad Benham. He then decided to enroll in the Powerline Construction and Maintenance program at Western Nebraska Community College to become a lineman. Right after graduating from WNCC, Wesley joined our team at Wheat Belt. He stated his favorite part of the job this far is getting to work outside everyday.

Wesley's parents Howard and Robin Christensen still reside in Bridgeport and his sister, Stephani Copen, lives in Gering. In his spare time, Wesley enjoys hunting, fishing, shooting, reloading/casting, camping and woodworking.

Know the Signs of a Scam

By Anne Prince

It's no secret that consumers with a water, gas or electricity connection have long been targets for utility scams, but fraudsters have changed their tactics since the Covid-19 pandemic. As consumers became more reliant on technology for work, school and commerce, scammers noted these shifts and adapted their tactics to this changed environment.

Impostor scams are the number one type of fraud reported to the Federal Trade Commission. While scam artists may come to your door posing as a utility worker who works for the "power company," in today's more connected world, attempts are more likely to come through an electronic device, via email, phone or text.

Common Types of Scams

A scammer may claim you are overdue on your electric bill and threaten to disconnect your service if you don't pay immediately. Whether this is done in-person, by phone, text or email, the scammers want to scare you into immediate payment, so you don't have time think clearly.

If this happens over the phone, simply hang up. If you're concerned about your bill, call us at (308) 254-5871. Our phone number can also be found on your monthly bill and on our website, www.wheatbelt.com. If the scam is by email or text, delete it before taking any action. If you're unsure, you can always contact us at wheatbelt@wheatbelt.com or use the Wheat Belt Public Power Dist. App or the online portal to check the status of your account. Remember, Wheat Belt will never attempt to demand immediate payment after just one notice.

Some scammers may falsely claim you have been overcharged on your bill and say they want to give a refund. It sounds easy. All you have to do is click or press a button to initiate the process. If you proceed, you will be prompt-

Continued on 12-D



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308-254-6127 or 800-303-6127



Know the Signs of a Scam cont'd from 12-C



ed to provide banking or other personal information. Instead of money going into your bank account, the scammers can drain your account and use personal in-

formation such as a social security number for identity theft.

If this "refund" scam happens over the phone, just hang up and block the phone number to prevent future robo-calls. If this scam attempt occurs via email (known as a "phishing" attempt) or by text ("smishing"), do not click any links. Instead, delete it, and if possible, block the sender. If you do overpay on your energy bill, Wheat Belt will automatically apply the credit to your next billing cycle. When in doubt, contact us.

Defend Yourself Against Scams

Be wary of call or texts from unknown numbers. Be suspicious of an unknown person claiming to be a utility worker who requests banking or other personal information.

Never let anyone into your home that you don't know unless you have a scheduled appointment or reported a problem. Wheat Belt employees will always arrive in a vehicle with our logo on the side. When we perform work on our customers' property or come into your home, our employees are professionals and will always identify themselves.

We want to help protect our community against utility scams, and you can help create the first line of defense. Please report any potential scams to us so we can spread the word to prevent others in the community from falling victim.

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