



June 2022

THE WHEAT BELT CONNECTION



Three-Year Strategic Plan Approved

Lacey Gulbranson ~ General Manager

Historically Wheat Belt establishes a three-year strategic plan. The previous plan wrapped up in 2021 and in January of this year the Board, along with the management team, worked through a two-day facilitated session to set the path for the new three-year plan. The 2022-2024 Strategic Plan was officially approved at the April Board Meeting. In the plan, there are four main initiatives 1) Culture, 2) Operational Efficiency, 3) Safety, 4) Customer Experience. The Culture initiative has three main components: define core values, implement performance development, and continue to focus on employee engagement. Operational Efficiency consists of four main areas of focus: financials, data integrity, aging to resilient infrastructure and policies and processes. The key areas for the Safety initiative are to keep safety important and embrace a safety improvement plan. And lastly, the Customer Experience focus area consists of the development and implementation of a customer experience methodology including several subcomponents. Many of these focus areas are in the works and we com-

mit to keeping you informed over time. Yet other items in the strategic plan won't begin for several months or even until 2023 or 2024. You can expect to get updated on one of these initiatives, or the full plan, each month. I look forward to what the 2022-2024 Strategic Plan can offer to our customers and our employees. More to come!



LUCKY DRAWING



Congratulations to Paul and Julie Milewski, our April "Lucky Winner"! For their prompt payment, they received a \$50 credit.

Paul and Julie have lived southwest of Broadwater and have been Wheat Belt customers for the past five years. One of the first people they met here was Wheat Belt employee, Mark Cape, who remains their neighbor and great friend. They have four children and four grandchildren. Their youngest child, Keegan, will be a senior at Bridgeport High School next year. Currently Paul & Julie do property management, a small farming and ranching operation, and conservation. Paul formerly owned an asphalt company and Julie was a junior high/high school English and reading teacher. In their spare time the Milewski's enjoy anything in the outdoors; hunting, fishing, hiking, and working on conservation (trees and habitat) on their property. They also enjoy reading and learning new things, socializing, as well as living a healthy lifestyle.

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.



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Beat the Peak This Summer

According to the Department of Energy, a typical home uses a whopping 48 percent of energy expenditures just on the heating, ventilation and air conditioning system (HVAC) system. Although a majority of that 48 percent is spent on heating expenses, Americans still spend \$29 billion every year to power their air conditioners.

Aside from replacing your central air conditioner with a newer, higher-efficiency model, there are some things you can do to increase efficiency, which can help reduce your energy bills.

Besides weather stripping and caulking around windows and doors in your home (always a good idea regardless of the time of year), Safe Electricity offers the following:

- Close curtains, blinds and shades during the hottest part of the day. Not only is about one-third of a home's energy lost around windows, but about 76 percent of sunlight that falls on standard double-pane windows enters the home to become heat, according to energy.gov.
- If you don't already have one, install a programmable or smart thermostat. You can save up to 10 percent a year on heating and cooling by adjusting your thermostat 7 to 10 degrees from its normal setting for 8 hours a day, according to Energy.gov.
- Clean the filter and get your unit inspected by a HVAC professional.
- Consider changes to your landscaping. Greenery that includes shade trees and those that insulate the foundation can reduce energy costs.
- Ventilate the attic and check insulation. Adequately sized vents and an attic fan can help hot air from building. If your attic has less than 6 to 8 inches of insulation, consider adding more. By addressing air leaks around your home and adding insulation, homeowners can save around 10 percent annually on energy bills, according to energystar.gov.
- Get a pre-season checkup by a professional HVAC technician, which could help your air conditioner run more efficiently.
- Make sure your outdoor condenser unit is clean and free from debris. Ideally, the unit should be in the shade.
- Use your clothes dryer and oven during the cooler parts of the day

Increased summer electric demand not only affects the monthly budget, but it can also seriously strain your home's electrical system, which can create dangerous shock and fire hazards. Flickering or dimming lights or frequent circuit breaker trips are signs of an overloaded electrical system or faulty wiring that should be checked immediately by a qualified electrician.

For more information on electrical safety, go to SafeElectricity.org.

FREE AND EASY WAYS TO SAVE ENERGY

Here are 10 easy, no-cost ways to save energy this summer:

1. Close or lower window coverings during the heat of the day
2. Set your thermostat a few degrees higher
3. Take cooler showers (this feels better in the summer, anyway)
4. Use countertop appliances or a microwave instead of your oven
5. Better yet, grill or smoke food outdoors
6. Unplug that extra fridge, especially older, inefficient models (they have to work even harder in a hot garage)
7. Optimize your programmable thermostat's features (around 40% of homeowners never program them)
8. Check the airflow around windows and doors (add weather stripping if needed)
9. Unplug all chargers and electronics before leaving the house
10. SHUT THE FRONT DOOR (don't air condition the outdoors)

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2022 Wheat Belt PPD Safety Fair

Since the late 1990's, every three years, Wheat Belt holds a Safety Fair for Fourth, Fifth and Sixth grade students in our service territory. We feel the need for safety education never goes away, and presenting safety in a fun, fair-like atmosphere, provides students an opportunity to enjoy the learning experience while retaining the lessons. This year's fair was held at the Cheyenne County Fair Grounds on Friday, May 6, 2022, from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Approximately 375 students from Bridgeport, Creek Valley, the Homeschool Co-op, Sidney, and South Platte attended the fair.

The fair involves a coordinated effort from several organizations throughout the area. Nine,

15-minute safety-related sessions were presented, lunch was served, and the Story Behind the Switch presentation from Tri-State G & T rounded out the day. Each student was sent home with many safety related handouts and a bag of cotton candy to finish out the fair.

If your school or organization would like us to do a presentation on electrical safety, please feel free to contact our office.



Wheat Belt cares about safety and reminds you to

BE SAFE

We would like to thank these partners for participating in our Safety Fair

1. Sidney Police Department
2. Black Hills Corporation
3. Sidney Veterinary Hospital (Dr. Cook)
4. South Platte Natural Resource District
5. Regional West Emergency Medical Services (Sidney) & the SVFD
6. City of Sidney Electric Dept.
7. Nebraska State Patrol
8. 21st Century Equipment
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2022 Safety Fair Photos

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