



August 2023

## THE WHEAT BELT CONNECTION

# Avoid Unnecessary Fees

**Wheat Belt Offers Customers Options To Receive and Pay Bills**



**LACEY GULBRANSON**  
*General Manager/CEO*

Did you know collectively our customers could have saved \$26,485 in the last year, just by paying their Wheat Belt bill on time? Your bill is due by the end of our business day (4:00 PM Mountain

Time) on the 16th day of each month. If payment has not been received by 4:00 p.m. on the 16th, Wheat Belt assesses a \$5 late fee per metered service.

We have just over 5,000 services and over the course of the last year 9% were assessed a late fee each month. This accumulated to \$26,485 of late fees we collected from our customers in the last year. There are multiple ways you can pay your bill to help avoid late fees (especially if you are relying on the USPS); these include bank drafts, electronic check, debit or credit cards. You can sign up for electronic statements and pay your bills on our payment portal which can be accessed on our website. Lastly, we know life happens...money isn't coming in as fast as you

hoped, the statement got misplaced, it simply was forgotten, or something else. Contact our office if you want help getting signed up for electronic statements or recurring bank drafts. We would rather you spend your late fees on something else, rather than sending it to us.



## LUCKY DRAWING



Congratulations to Lapaseotes Land LLC, our June "Lucky Draw Winner"!

Lapaseotes Land LLC is owned by Nick and Pete Lapaseotes and their children Nicholas and Cassie. They have been a customer of Wheat Belt for many years in Morrill County.

Following in their dad, Connie Lapaseotes' footsteps, Nick and Pete are third generation farmers working along side of their children Nicholas and Cassie. All while inspiring the future of the fifth generation (Nicholas' children) to keep the Lapaseotes Family Farms continuing on.

The Lapaseotes family is very supportive and proud of their community, and say it is a great place to live and raise a family.

Lapaseotes Land LLC 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](http://wheatbelt.com), and select the Customer Engagement page for more information.



## IN THIS ISSUE



*Editor - Kelli Chaon*

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## Two New Employees Join the Wheat Belt Team



**Patrick Hansen**  
Apprentice Lineman

Patrick Hansen joined our team as an intern in January of this year. In May, he was hired as a permanent full-time apprentice lineman. Patrick attended the Western Nebraska Community College Powerline Construction and Maintenance Technology Program in Alliance. He stated his favorite part of the job this far is being outdoors every day, learning new things constantly and getting to work in the area I grew up in.

Patrick graduated from Creek Valley High School in Chappell. Prior to attending WNCC he was a farm hand on the family farm, and a fabricator at Freedom Yurt Cabins in Sidney. Patrick's parents, Mike and Joan Hansen reside in the Chappell area. He has two brothers Zach Hansen and his wife Jen (two kids Ladd and June), and Ben Hansen and his wife Sarah.

In his spare time, Patrick enjoys fishing, playing recreational league sports and playing cards.



**Levi Berndt**  
Line Equipment Tech

Levi Berndt joined our team in May of this year as a Line Equipment Technician. His favorite part of the job is working outdoors and being able to do something that plays an important role in almost everyone's lives on a daily basis and provides a necessary service.

Levi graduated from Gilbert High School in Arizona and then attended Arizona State University. While going to school he worked as a meat cutter and butcher for about six years. He decided to make a career change into the line industry a year and a half ago and he stated it's been the best decision he ever made.

Levi's dad's side of the family is from the panhandle, and they own a cattle ranch about 45 miles northeast of Alliance, NE. His mom's family is from Alliance as well, so he technically is not new to the area. When asked what he likes to do with his free time, he said, "I've always loved cooking and gardening which I picked up from my grandma and I've always had a passion for learning about just about anything from mathematics to history."



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## Wheat Belt Public Power District Director Achieves Credential Cooperative Director

Wheat Belt Public Power District President, Brian Zimmerman, presented the NRECA (National Rural Electric Cooperative Association) Credential Cooperative Director certificate to Toni Blomenkamp of Broadwater during the May Board Meeting.

The NRECA Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) program requires attendance and demonstrated understanding of the basic competencies contained in five core courses:

- Director Duties and Liabilities
- Understanding the Electric Business
- Board Operating and Process
- Strategic Planning
- Financial Decision Making

An ever-changing business environment has imposed new demands on electric cooperative and public power district



directors, requiring increased knowledge of changes in the electric utility business, new governance skills and solid knowledge of the cooperative principles and business model. Public power districts have a commitment to work through NRECA and the statewide organization

(Nebraska Rural Electric Association) to sharpen this body of knowledge for the benefit of their customers.

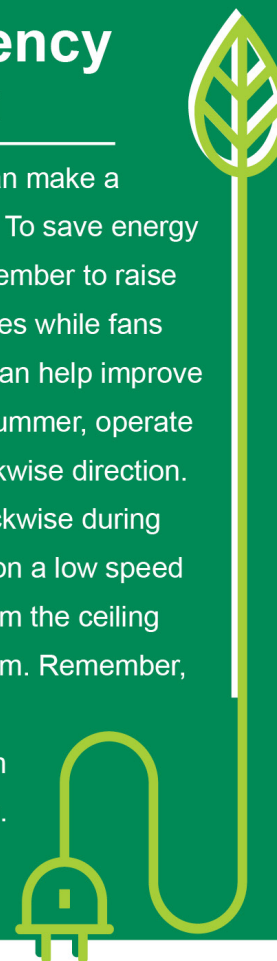
Toni has been on the Wheat Belt board since January 2021. Toni said "it is an important asset for our directors to receive education through NRECA because it provides specific context to help us with the new challenges and opportunities that the public power industry faces. You get a chance to network with other fellow directors and this knowledge has

helped me to analyze the boardroom information more efficiently and help make more informed decisions for my local public power district and to better serve our customers."

### Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Did you know ceiling fans can make a room feel 4 degrees cooler? To save energy through ceiling fan use, remember to raise your thermostat a few degrees while fans are turned on. Ceiling fans can help improve comfort year-round. In the summer, operate ceiling fans in a counterclockwise direction. Reverse the direction to clockwise during winter months and set fans on a low speed so warm air can circulate from the ceiling to the lower levels of the room. Remember, ceiling fans cool people, not spaces. Be sure to turn them off when you leave the room.

Source: Dept. of Energy



# Moe's

**Brian (Moe) Moffat**



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## 4 KEY FACTORS That Impact Energy Bills

You pay for the electricity you consume each month, but there are additional factors that impact your energy bills.



### Fuel Costs

Before electricity can be delivered to your home, it must first be generated at a power plant or from a renewable source. The cost of fuels used to generate electricity fluctuates, which is why you see a power or fuel charge on your monthly bill. This monthly charge covers cost fluctuations without having to continually restructure electricity rates.



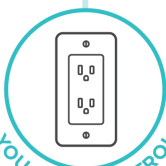
### Service Costs

Your bill includes a monthly service charge, which recovers part of the co-op's ongoing investments in poles, wire, meters, system maintenance and additional costs necessary to provide electric service.



### Weather

When temperatures soar or dip, your cooling or heating equipment must run longer and at maximum capacity, which can greatly increase your energy use. Extreme temperatures can also affect electricity market prices. When the need for electricity increases due to extreme heat or cold, the price of power typically rises.



### Energy Consumption

This is the amount of electricity you use each month to power your home's cooling/heating system, appliances, lighting, electronics and more. The amount of electricity you consume is measured in kilowatt-hours, or kWh. You have control over how much energy you use, which can ultimately help manage your monthly costs.

YOU HAVE CONTROL

## 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

### MANAGER OF CORPORATE SERVICES / CFO

Sharrell Keane

### 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.

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wheatbelt@wheatbelt.com

## Our Mission

Deliver electricity safely, reliably and efficiently.