



March 2024

THE WHEAT BELT CONNECTION

Storm Resilient Infrastructure

BY: LACEY GULBRANSON
General Manager/CEO

Over the past couple of years, we have completed a few projects to harden our system to be more resilient to harsh weather. Notable projects include:

- Rebuilt five miles of three phase line northeast of Sidney going from our Colton substation back to the west.
- Reconductored (changed out wire) seven miles of three phase line south of Dalton going east from our Dalton Rural substation.
- Reconductored one mile of three phase sub transmission line going north from the Chappell substation.

These projects consisted of changing to T-2 conductor, also known as twisted pair. The design of this wire helps to shed ice during freezing fog and other winter storm conditions to reduce or prevent swaying or galloping lines. Galloping lines are very dangerous as they can collide with other lines causing outages, line equipment damage and in some cases damage to customer equipment. Additionally, when outages occur during these types of weather events it poses additional risk and hazards during restoration efforts.

We have other upcoming projects to increase the resilience of the electric system. More to come on that next month.



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Editor - Kelli Chaon

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LUCKY DRAWING



Congratulations to Greg and Megan Steward, our January "Lucky Draw Winner"!

Greg and Megan have two children and have lived in the Lewellen area for over eight years.

In their spare time the Steward's enjoy spending time on Lake McConaughy.

Greg and Megan 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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Wheat Belt Reveals New Logo in 2024

What's with a logo anyway?

A logo is how customers, suppliers, employees and really anyone interacting with a business recognizes the brand. I was once told children as young as 18 months old can recognize a logo, I was sort of blown away at that comment and I didn't know if I believed it. Within the week, I was driving with my almost two-year old son at the time when we passed a Cabela's sign and he said "elk"!

Over the years Wheat Belt has had multiple logos we have associated with, from Willey Wire Hand (a popular figure in the Rural Electric Association) to the three Touchstone Energy guys, to a sprig of wheat, to wheat with a blue halo, and a few more.

To bring consistency to the Wheat Belt name, we have developed a new logo. It turns out that it is difficult to tie electricity to wheat, but we made it happen. Last fall we asked

our Board of Directors and our employees to weigh in on a few options. The new logo won by leaps and bounds. This month we will be transitioning to the new logo, be on the lookout.

Over the next couple of months, if you see a lingering logo out in our territory or on new correspondence please let the office know. We would appreciate your help.

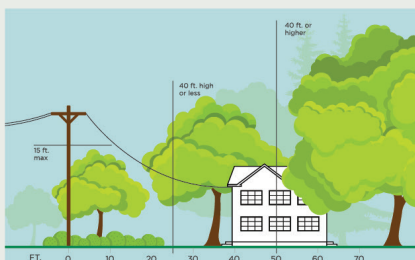
~Lacey Gulbranson, General Manager



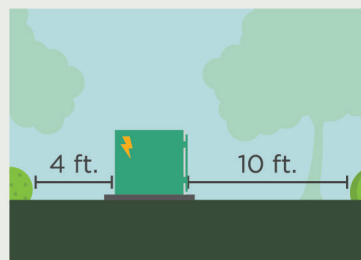
3 Ways to Help Limit Tree Trimming

Did you know electric utilities are required to trim trees and other types of vegetation that grow too close to overhead power lines? We know you love your trees, and we will do everything we can to avoid trimming them. Here's how you can help:

1. Plant trees in the right place. Trees that will be <40 ft. should be planted at least 25 ft. away from power lines (>40ft. should be at least 50 ft. away).



2. Don't block pad-mounted transformers. Plant shrubs at least 10 ft. away from transformer doors and 4 ft. from transformer sides.



3. Report dangerous branches. If you spot a tree or branch that is dangerously close to power lines, please let us know.



**Trimming improves safety for all.
Let's work together to enjoy the beauty of trees and reliable electricity.**

Wheat Belt PPD Employee Feature

ROLLIE WAITE - Operations Manager



How did you hear about Wheat Belt?

I was raised in the Dalton area, so I was aware that Wheat Belt provided service to rural customers, as well as the Villages of Dalton and Gurley.

Why did you decide to go to work at Wheat Belt?

Some pretty influential people helped me decide to start a career at Wheat Belt PPD. Steve Groshans, the Dalton Fore-

man, approached me about working with him on a couple of occasions. He was very instrumental in helping me make a life changing decision to start as a lineman. Steve trained me and opened my eyes to a whole new world, learning how to maintain a distribution system at a Public Power District. Don Winkelman was the Operations Manager at the time. I had grown up knowing Don as well as Mark Cape, who was a Construction Lineman. Knowing all these men, helped reassure it was the right choice for me to start a career at Wheat Belt.

What do you like most about working at Wheat Belt?

I enjoy communicating with customers and trying to ensure that they have a reliable source of electricity. It is always very rewarding to know that we are providing a very essential part of our customers' lives.

Is there any special training or education needed for your job/career?

As with any job, there is always a great deal of training and education to make your career successful. There is a vast amount of integral parts involved with building and maintaining an electrical system. Technology is always changing and continuing education is pertinent to meeting industry standards and compliance for system reliability.

Do you need to have continuing education for your type of work/career?

From the time I entered as an apprentice lineman, continuing education has been an important factor. Continually, we strive to learn new tasks, from hot line schools, to metering classes, to optimization of our distribution system. Each year we send employees to multiple schools to learn new procedures that will enhance their knowledge and skills.

Tell us about your family:

I have a wonderful family, starting with my wife Kate. We have been married 37 years, and together, have three daughters. Our oldest is Shelby. She and her husband Keith have two children, Riker and Rowyn. Our middle daughter, Kelsey, lives in Wisconsin with her husband Garrett, and four children, Phoenix, Declan, Reiden, and Judah. They range in age from one year to six years old and are a fabulous bunch. Our youngest daughter, Diedra, lives in Omaha with her husband Evan and dog Artemis. Diedra has an EDS Degree and is a school psychologist at Omaha Public Schools.

What do you like to do in your free time?

I have a few hobbies to take up my spare time, including farming and ranching. Oh, I guess I don't have any spare time, but it is enjoyable, nevertheless. I do like to travel with my wife and enjoy going to Las Vegas to the National Finals Rodeo.

In your position you deal with the reliability of our electric system. Tell us your thoughts about reliability and how Wheat Belt is working to a more reliable system.

Reliability is part of Wheat Belt's mission statement. We have recently started our new four year work plan. With this comes a new sectionalizing study. This allows engineering to determine which protective devices work best in certain locations, to limit the extent of an outage. We are continually working to install new reclosers with updated technologies. This can help mitigate outage areas, and time required to locate a problem. We have recently reconducted several



miles of line, with a twisted wire configuration. This helps alleviate ice from accumulating on the wire, and helps prevent lines slapping together.

er. As we look to the future, we are trying to improve areas of Wheat Belt's System that need updating. We have hired contractors to help rebuild at a faster pace. Our crews continue to change out rotten poles, improving structural integrity. With new demand for electricity, we strive to upgrade our system to meet the ongoing needs of our customers.



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