

December 2025



Wheat Belt Board Approves 2026 Rate Adjustment to Offset Rising Power Costs



LACEY GULBRANSON
General Manager/CEO

At the October board meeting the Wheat Belt Public Power District board of directors approved a rate increase for 2026. This rate increase is expected to bring in an additional 6.6% revenue increase for 2026. This increase in revenue was approved to offset the rising wholesale power costs we have from Tri-State Generation & Transmission. Wheat Belt's wholesale power costs have increased 10% in the past two years and unfortunately, we are expecting a large increase in wholesale power costs again for 2027.

What does Wheat Belt's 2026 rate increase mean to you if you don't change energy consumption habits? Residential customers on average will see an increase of roughly \$7.50/month. Irrigation customers will see \$300-\$800 increase per irrigation season, depending on if you are operating using time of use rate signals.

Continued on 3-C



LUCKY DRAWING



Congratulations to Ben and Cindy Barnhart, our October "Lucky Draw Winner"!

The Barnharts have been valued Wheat Belt customers on the South Divide since 1993. Ben and Cindy have five children and six grandchildren ranging in age from 4 to 20. Their son Tyler Barnhart and son-in-law Sean Fehringer work alongside Ben on the family operation, B&S Farms. Ben, who previously worked at Haas Hops Products until it closed, is now a full-time farmer and raises butcher hogs for sale. Cindy enjoyed a long career with the City of Sidney, where she worked for 38 years before retiring in 2021.

In their free time, the Barnharts love spending time with family and taking occasional getaways to Lake McConaughy and Blackhawk, Colorado.

The Barnharts 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.



IN THIS ISSUE



Editor - Kelli Chaon

Wheat Belt Board Approves 2026 Rate Adjustment

Page 3-A/C

Take Control and Save with

Time-of-Use Rates

Page 3-B

October Board Meeting Update

Page 3-C

Strategic Plan Update

Page 3-C

Energy Efficiency Tips

Page 3-D

**Wheat Belt
PPD**

RATES

Scan QR code or visit
wheatbelt.com/rates to
view current rates.



Scan for
current rates

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

P 308.254.5871 | T 800.261.7114 | wheatbelt@wheatbelt.com | www.wheatbelt.com

Take Control and Save

With Wheat Belt's Time-of-Use Rates

BY: KELLI CHAON, Customer Engagement Manager

Wheat Belt Public Power District customers now have more power than ever to manage their energy costs! All of our rate schedules now include Time-of-Use (TOU) pricing, giving residential, irrigation, and commercial customers the ability to save money by shifting when they use electricity.

Here's how it works:

Energy costs vary depending on when you use it. During times of high demand—called on-peak hours—energy costs more. When demand is lower, off-peak hours offer reduced rates. By moving some of your energy use to off-peak times, you can lower your monthly bill.

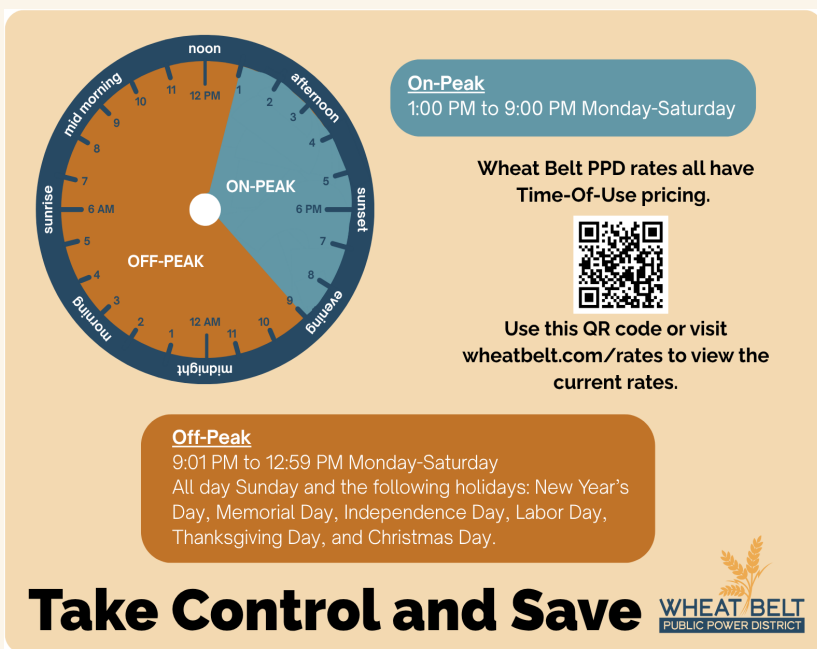
Peak Hours: Monday through Saturday, 1:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Off-Peak Hours: All other times, including all day Sunday and the following holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day.

That means tasks like running large equipment, charging vehicles, doing laundry, or irrigating can cost less when done during off-peak hours. Even small adjustments—like pre-cooling your home before 1 p.m. or running sprinklers later in the evening—can add up to real savings over time.

Your power, your choice.

By taking advantage of TOU rates, you can make smart energy decisions that benefit your household, your operation, and the entire electric system. Together, we can reduce strain during peak hours, use energy more efficiently, and keep costs stable for everyone.



Wheat Belt Board Approves 2026 Rates cont'd from 3-A

Changing energy consumption habits...beginning in 2026 nearly all rates have a time of use component meaning energy costs more during peak periods and costs less when energy demand is lower. Meaning you can consume energy at night, in the morning and on Sundays for a lower cost than you can in the middle of the day and in the evening. Check out our rates on our website for more information. And be looking for additional information in your mailbox and on our Facebook page.

Happy Holidays: During this time of year, we reflect on the things we are thankful for, and we tend to spend more time with family and eating too much. For those of you who have suffered tragedy or loss in the last year, we understand this may be a difficult time for you and your family, know our hearts go out to all of you in this situation.



- John Krajewski from JK Energy Consulting, LLC, presented the updated Cost of Service proposal to the Board during the budget hearing. The proposal is to increase our overall rates by 6.6% to cover the cost-of-service increase from Tri-State.
- The Board unanimously voted to approve the 6.6% rate increase for 2026.
- Tim Jones presented the updated budget during the budget hearing for the Board. The final approval of the 2026 Budget will take place at the November Board Meeting.
- The Large Item Budget was presented to the Board for approval by Jones. The 2026-2029 Large Item Budget was approved unanimously by the board.
- Basin Electric Power Cooperative was in attendance to present power supply information and options to the board. Wheat Belt is in the process of evaluating our options for power supply to best serve our customers.
- A strategic plan initiative update was presented to the board regarding; Strengthen Governance. (See update on page 3-C)

STRATEGIC PLAN

|  LEVERAGE FINANCIAL STRENGTH |  STRENGTHEN GOVERNANCE |  STRENGTHEN DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM |  STRENGTHEN CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS |  STRENGTHEN SAFETY CULTURE |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider and analyze various power supply options• Adopt a financial planning process• Develop long-term rate strategy | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify educational opportunities for board members• Consider options for board assessment and continuous improvement• Develop succession planning structures and practices | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement a work plan to modernize infrastructure• Keep up with the pace of technology• Complete 2024 storm conductor damage work | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase customer involvement• Explore grant opportunities available | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build a culture of safety awareness and continuous improvement• Strengthen safety programs |

Strategic Plan Update



1
Identify Educational Opportunities for Board Members

Since the last report, NRECA educational program information has been reviewed, and updated materials on their board certification programs have been provided. The next step is to recommend forming a sub-committee to develop guidelines for Board member continuing education. Because this effort impacts all board members, it is important that the work be done collaboratively rather than in isolation.



2
Options for Board Assessment & continuous Improvement

Since the last report, research has been conducted on Board Assessment and CEO Performance Appraisal options. Next steps include recommending the creation of a sub-committee to develop guidelines for Board member continuing education, bringing the Board Assessment approach to a vote in November for implementation in February 2026, and determining whether the CEO Performance Appraisal will be included in the Executive Search scope of work. As this work impacts all board members, it should be approached collaboratively rather than in isolation.



3
Develop Succession Planning Structures & Practices

There has been no new progress on board succession planning since the last report. The CEO already has a succession planning process in place. Next steps include forming a sub-committee to discuss the topic further and continuing to address succession planning through the CEO and policy review process, with discussions potentially incorporated into the CEO's annual review. As this work impacts all board members, it should be approached collaboratively rather than independently.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

To maximize your fireplace's efficiency, always keep the damper closed when the fireplace is not in use. An open damper is like an open window, allowing warm indoor air to escape and cold air to enter. Consider installing a fireplace insert, which improves heat output by circulating warm air into the room rather than letting it escape up the chimney. Also, burn only seasoned hardwood to ensure a hotter, cleaner burn. Regularly clean and inspect your chimney to maintain safe and efficient operation.

Source: *energy.gov*



SCHOLARSHIPS AWAIT!



Scholarships Available:

- Wheat Belt PPD
 - One - \$2,000 Lineman or
 - Two - \$500 Vocational/Technical
- Basin Electric Power Cooperative
 - One - \$1,000
- Tri-State Generation & Transmission Assoc.
 - Two - \$500
- Arbor Wealth Management, Inc.
 - One - \$500s

HOW TO APPLY

Visit www.wheatbelt.com for application forms.
 Deliver - 11306 Road 32, Sidney NE 69162
 Mail - PO Box 177, Sidney NE 69162
 Email - wheatbelt@wheatbelt.com

More Information
 ☎ 308-254-5871
 🌐 www.wheatbelt.com

Don't Miss This Opportunity to Fund Your Education!

APPLY
NOW!

COLLEGE
APPLICATION

APPROVED

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

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES MANAGER

Tim Jones

OPERATIONS MANAGER

Rollie Waite

TECHNOLOGY & SYSTEMS DESIGN MANAGER

Jim Weeda

CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

Kelli Chaon

OFFICE HOURS:

M-TH 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

P 308.254.5871 | **T** 800.261.7114 | **F** 308.254.2384

wheatbelt@wheatbelt.com

Our Mission

Deliver electricity safely, reliably and
efficiently.