



February 2026

THE WHEAT BELT CONNECTION

Strategic Plan Update Progressing Toward Our Priorities

At the beginning of the current strategic plan cycle, Wheat Belt Public Power District's Board of Directors and senior staff met for a three-day strategic planning session at Tri-State Generation and Transmission's headquarters in Westminster, Colorado. With facilitation provided by Co-operative Finance Corporation (CFC), the group identified five key focus areas to guide the District over the next three years: Leverage Financial Strength, Strengthen Governance, Strengthen the Distribution System, Strengthen Customer Relationships, and Strengthen Safety Culture. As we move into the plan's second year, meaningful progress is being made across all focus areas.

Leverage Financial Strength

Wheat Belt continues to analyze various long-term power supply options and develop alternative scenarios to ensure the best power supplier for our customers in the future. Financial planning improvements are underway, including

redefining the annual budget cycle, developing and implementing a board-approved three-year rolling budget, and annually updating the Long-Term Financial Forecast. Work is also progressing toward developing a long-term rate strategy and building in-house expertise in cost-of-service studies.

Continued on 3-B

LUCKY DRAWING

Our monthly Lucky Drawing is held January through November. All customers who pay before 4:00 p.m. the 16th of each month are automatically entered and the winner receives a \$50 credit on their account.

We offer the following payment options:

- *Mobile Customer Access, iOS and Android, search for Wheat Belt Public Power in your app store
- *Online, using our secure Auto-Pay system
- *Automatic Bank Draft: Checking or Savings
- *Automatic Credit Card Draft: Visa, Mastercard, or Discover
- *Future Scheduled Payments
- *Phone payments, one-time drafts: e-check/savings or credit card
- *Mail: PO Box 177 (please do not send cash)
- *Drop box: 11306 Road 32 (please do not leave cash, checked daily except during office closures)
- *Pay at the office: cash, check or credit card

For more information or questions, contact us at (308) 254-5871. Visit wheatbelt.com, select "Pay Your Bill Online" or select the Customer Engagement menu to download our automatic bank draft and credit card authorization forms.

IN THIS ISSUE

Editor - Kelli Chaon

Strategic Plan Update: Progressing Toward Our Priorities	Page 3-A/B
Cory Lundgren Earns Journeyman Lineman Certification	Page 3-B
Building for the Future: Wheat Belt Upgrades Critical Six-Mile Line	Page 3-C
December Board Meeting Update	Page 3-C
Energy Efficiency/Energy Scams Tips	Page 3-D

Cory Lundgren Earns Journeyman Lineman Certification



Wheat Belt Public Power District congratulates Cory Lundgren on earning his Journeyman Lineman certification. Cory was hired in December of 2022 after transferring from the City of Sidney Electric Department, where he began his apprenticeship.

Cory completed his required coursework through Northwest Lineman College and successfully logged 8,000 on-the-job training hours to achieve journeyman status. He is currently based out of Wheat Belt's Dalton outpost, where he supports the district's mission of providing safe and reliable electric service.

We commend Cory for his commitment, hard work, and dedication to his profession and to Wheat Belt's customers.

Strategic Plan Update cont'd from 3-A

Strengthen Governance

Efforts to strengthen governance include researching educational opportunities for board members, developing recommended educational paths, and reporting on current certifications and coursework. Wheat Belt is also evaluating options for improving board assessments and CEO appraisals, while developing succession plans for board members, senior managers, and the CEO.

Strengthen the Distribution System

Modernizing the electric system remains a priority. Wheat Belt is implementing project-based procurement, contracting staking services for major projects, and clearly identifying work best performed by District crews versus contractors. Completion of the 2024 storm conductor damage repairs is ongoing, with FEMA funding coordination underway. Engineering firms are being leveraged for staking and bidding, with District staff inspecting and overseeing construction to ensure quality.

Strengthen Customer Relationships

To make Wheat Belt more real and personal, efforts are underway to define communication methods and messaging, while collecting customer email addresses to improve outreach. The District is also exploring grant opportunities, including hazard mitigation funding through NEMA and potential REDLG (Rural Economic Development Loan & Grant program) projects that support local communities.

Strengthen Safety Culture

Safety remains a core value at Wheat Belt. The District



is refining safety committee roles, executing the annual safety improvement plan, reviewing the full safety manual with employees, and providing safety awareness training for first responders. Additional reviews include safety-related benefits such as the FR (Flame Resistant) clothing allowance to ensure employee protection remains a priority.

Each employee plays an important role in carrying out this strategic plan as Wheat Belt remains committed to delivering electricity safely, reliably, and efficiently, while respecting individuals, producing quality work, and valuing integrity for the benefit of our customers and communities.

Building for the Future

Wheat Belt Upgrades Critical Six-Mile Power Line

BY: ROLLIE WAITE, *Operations Manager*

Wheat Belt Public Power District has recently completed the replacement of a six-mile section of double-circuit power line originally constructed in the early 1940s during World War II. While the line had served the district reliably for decades, plans for replacement had been underway for some time as part of Wheat Belt's ongoing commitment to maintaining a safe and dependable electric system.

The upper circuits of the line consist of 34.5 kV sub-transmission, which primarily serves the Vo-Tech Substation and also functions as a critical link for transferring load between substations. The new switch configuration provides multiple feeds to the Vo-Tech Substation, allowing continued service while maintenance is performed on other feeds, significantly improving operational flexibility and reliability.

The project was also designed with future system improvements in mind. The new construction will support the planned replacement of an additional five miles of aging infrastructure originating from the Sidney WAPA Substation. The underbuild portion of the line operates at 7,200/12,470 volts and serves the Vo-Tech East Circuit, enhancing reliability and enabling future expansion to better serve customers east of the substation.

Additionally, the upgraded line allows Wheat Belt to interconnect with existing feeds from both the Colton Substation and the South Sidney Substation, further strengthening system resilience. Wheat Belt Public Power District will continue investing in infrastructure upgrades to ensure the delivery of safe, reliable, and high-quality electric service to our customers.



DECEMBER BOARD MEETING UPDATE



- Tri-State G&T attended Wheat Belt's meeting to present to the board their financial forecasts, and member programs. Discussions were held regarding contract extensions and buy-outs that are occurring within the membership.
- Jason Gray, Wheat Belt's FERC attorney, was on the phone to give us an update on all FERC proceedings. He also covered a timeline of the filings that Wheat Belt has been involved in since 2019.
- The board approved a negative inventory adjustment in the amount of \$7517.60. Jim Weeda stated this was the difference after inventory was conducted and balanced for 2025.
- Jim Weeda asked the board for an approval of a change order that occurred for the Vo-Tech Sub-T job from the contractor in the amount of \$22,522. The board voted to approve the change order.
- The annual bad debt write-off in the amount of \$209.28 was approved by the board.
- A strategic plan initiative update was presented to the board regarding; Leverage Financial Strength. Gulbranson presented the financial analysis for continuing our contract with Tri-State G&T or buying out and going with another power supplier. Discussion was held and no action was taken.
- The board moved to appoint Joseph Michalewicz as the

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Mid-winter is a great time to ensure you're making the most of your home heating system. Replace or clean filters to keep your furnace or heat pump running efficiently. Listen for strange noises and check for uneven heating—these signs indicate that the system may need servicing. Ensure vents and radiators aren't blocked by furniture or rugs as proper airflow helps your system work less and saves energy. A little maintenance along the way can prevent costly repairs and keep your home cozy through winter.

TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS

Enrolling in autodraft payments with your utility provider can help prevent certain types of utility bill scams. If a scammer contacts you with fake disconnection threats, you can rest easy knowing your bill is paid automatically through a pre-arranged, secure channel. Autodraft payments also eliminate the risk of exposing checks and personal banking info through the mail. If your utility offers autodraft payments, consider enrolling to stay on track and avoid certain scams.

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OFFICE HOURS:

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

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Our Mission

Deliver electricity safely, reliably and efficiently.