

# CURRENT

Summer 2022

*For Our Member Systems, Employees and Friends*

## Sunflower prepares for summer peak conditions



A BNSF train delivers coal to Holcomb Station in southwest Kansas. Sunflower purchases sub-bituminous coal mined in the Powder River Basin near Gillette, Wyoming. The coal can only be economically delivered one way: rail.

seven member distribution utilities but also the energy demand in energy-peaking situations, such as very hot summer days.

The spring reports underscore the importance of Sunflower’s balanced generation resource portfolio and calculated operating strategies. Sunflower’s fuel-diverse generation fleet—which includes coal and natural gas units, as well as energy contracts for wind, solar and hydro—serves as a hedge against rising prices of a particular fuel resource. For example, the price of coal is stable compared to the volatility of natural gas pricing and is an effective hedge against the price of market energy, which is usually correlated to the price of natural gas. Coal-based Holcomb Station was certainly a shining star during the Winter Storm Uri event in 2021.

As previously mentioned, however, current coal deliveries are impacted by railroad staffing issues. Therefore, Sunflower is re-evaluating how to deploy the unit to capitalize on its benefits during summer peak conditions. Sunflower has also proactively purchased more market energy products to guard against possible exceptionally high prices this summer in order to continue our mission of providing reliable energy to our member-owners at the lowest possible price.

“There are a lot of variables intrinsic to supplying reliable energy as economically as possible,” said Corey Linville, Sunflower’s vice president of power supply and delivery, “but we are analyzing future scenarios to best prepare for possible unusual summer conditions. We believe we have a strong operating and financial hedging plan in place to help guard against electric interruptions and high cost spikes.”

SPP is also modifying its strategies to fortify the electric grid during extreme conditions. The SPP requires its member utilities to have fuel resources that equate to 12 percent more than their annual peak load requirements, but Winter Storm Uri revealed potential issues with available capacity during such events. Some of these issues are associated with forced outages—along with electric generating resources having fuel supply

issues, such as lack of availability to natural gas—during these times. The lack of availability of energy from renewable resources is also an issue. Last summer there were several periods when the reliability margin (difference between available capacity and load + contingency reserve requirements) in SPP dropped below 20 percent.

It will take several years to fully implement SPP’s new supply

adequacy rules and for load-serving entities to firm up existing capacity and procure any needed new capacity to comply with the new rules. In the meantime, SPP will, at times, continue to operate with a relatively low reliability margin.

“The electric industry is ever evolving,” said Stuart Lowry, Sunflower’s president and CEO. “The regional energy market brings many benefits but also many new challenges, including the risk of generation resource and operational decisions made by other utilities. Our members and those they serve can have confidence we will analyze and respond to these risks with their best interests in mind.”

### Summer did not officially arrive until June 21,

but we all know Mother Nature doesn’t adhere to the calendar in Kansas. We have already seen a wide range of temperatures, with some areas of the state reaching at or near 100 degrees as early as May.

High temperatures increase electric demand when electric consumers crank air conditioners to stay cool. In spring reports, the North American Electric Reliability Corp. (NERC) and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) said high temperatures, combined with other conditions, could lead to an unstable electric supply during peak summer conditions. Other conditions include widespread droughts, which increase electricity demand for irrigation; the growing possibilities of extreme weather events; naturally diminished wind energy output during hot days; and rail shipping interruptions and export issues for coal deliveries to power plants.

The reports by NERC and FERC indicate the Southwest Power Pool (SPP), the regional grid operator that manages the transmission grid in 14 states including Kansas, is included in the areas of elevated risk for summer reliability issues.

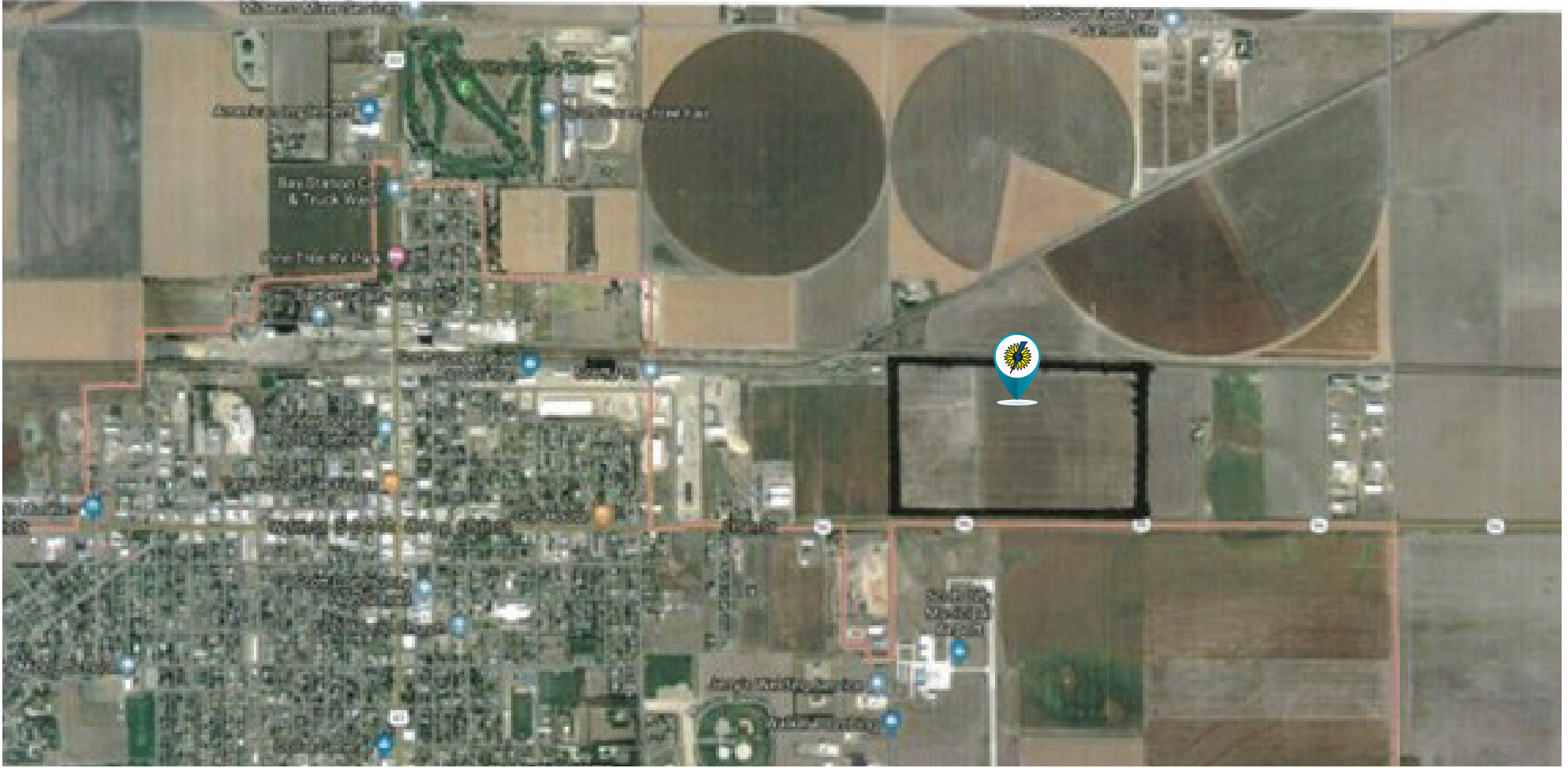
While the recent reports by NERC and FERC were not optimistic news for electric utilities, meeting electricity demand is always at the forefront of operational and financial strategies. Sunflower continually evaluates anticipated electric demand and takes strategic steps to meet not only the typical energy demand of electricity consumers served by our

“There are a lot of variables intrinsic to supplying reliable energy as economically as possible, but we are analyzing future scenarios to best prepare for possible unusual summer conditions.”- C. Linville

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Scott City Industrial Site Certified.... 2
- Spotlight on Careers..... 2
- Prairie Land Gets Grant ..... 3
- Powerline Safety..... 3
- Wheatland Project Wins Gold..... 4

# Scott County Development Committee completes industrial park site certification



The rural, western Kansas community of Scott City is offering incentives or in-kind site infrastructure improvements to attract potential occupants to its Scott City Industrial Park (SCIP) - North Lawrence Addition.

The latest community to attain certification for its industrial business development site through the Sunflower Certified Sites Program, Scott City aims to be proactive about facilitating growth in their community by marketing land and property availability. The program's three certified sites total 365 acres with the Dodge City Business Park and Unified Greeley County's site in Tribune.

"A certified site gets attention from business developers because the endorsement means due diligence has been completed, saving the developer both time and money," said Nikki Pfannenstiel, Sunflower's manager of member services. "We are always excited to work with our member cooperatives and their communities, like Scott City, through the Sunflower Certified Sites Program to help showcase western Kansas and its potential for business development and expansion."

Certification of the SCIP North Lawrence Addition in Scott City verifies the 97-acre tract of land meets rigorous criteria for industrial development. It is located within the Scott City limits, 1.2 miles east of U.S. Highway 83 and immediately north of K-96. Adjacent to rail, highway, and the airport, the property is readily available to industrial companies seeking relocation or expansion.

"When the City of Scott City acquired this property in 2019, it seemed logical to certify such a large tract," said Katie Eisenhour, executive director of Scott County Development Committee. "Having this site readily available to industrial companies seeking relocation or expansion fills a high-priority need for us."

An additional benefit of the Sunflower Certified Sites Program is the independent third-party review of a site's potential for industrial opportunities. Allstate Consultants performed the independent review.

"Working with the Sunflower economic development team and Allstate Consultants was critical during this endeavor," Eisenhour said. "Their knowledge, expertise, and encouragement guided us through the process. Thank you, Sunflower. You are so much more than the supplier of our electricity; you are our partner in Scott City's growth and vibrancy."

Sunflower developed its certified sites program to create greater awareness of industrial opportunities within its members' service territories spanning central and western Kansas. Sunflower continues to work with communities to certify sites for industrial opportunities.

If you are a community served by one of Sunflower's members and have an interest in learning more about the certification program, contact your local distribution electric cooperative for more information.

## Sunflower is proud to support emerging professionals in gaining hands-on experience through internships

See internship opportunities at [sunflower.net](https://sunflower.net) on careers page



### TECHNOLOGY SERVICES INTERN

*"I really enjoy working here at Sunflower because I have the opportunity to do what I love and the people here are great to work with," said Ethan Klausmeyer, a summer intern student from Fort Hays State University.*

Klausmeyer sets up a new computer system for an employee during his summer internship in Hays. A variety of internships opportunities in many fields of interest are offered at Sunflower.

## Our Mission:

To provide reliable, long-term power supply and transmission services to our members and the people they serve at the lowest possible cost consistent with sound business and cooperative principles.

# HELPING BUSINESS GROW

## Prairie Land “lands” large grant for electrical infrastructure near Phillipsburg

The Kansas Department of Commerce had \$100 million to disperse in its Building a Stronger Economy (BASE) grant program and just over \$1 million went to Prairie Land Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Prairie Land applied for the grant to help fund Project Summit, an electrical infrastructure expansion project to support the electrical distribution needs of the Prairie Horizon Ethanol Plant east of Phillipsburg, Kan. Prairie Horizon is transforming the existing corn ethanol plant (Prairie Horizon Agri-Energy) into an expanded wheat processing, vital wheat gluten extraction, and low carbon fuel production business. The expansion will add approximately 50 jobs.

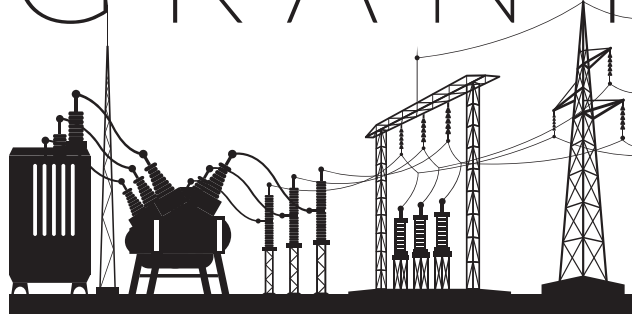
Project Summit will require about four times more energy capacity than is currently available. As such, Prairie Land will invest in additional electrical infrastructure to provide sufficient power capacity for the expansion project.

“While these upgrades are required for Project Summit, they will also provide excess load capacity for other growth and economic development in the area,” said Prairie Land CEO Kirk Girard. “This capacity will allow Prairie Land Electric to connect other 34.5 kV circuits, which will provide redundancy and increased reliability to Phillipsburg and nearby communities, positioning them nicely for future growth.”

Applicants eligible to the BASE Grant Program included local governments, economic development organizations, local chambers of commerce and other stakeholders. The Department of Commerce received 446 applications requesting a total of \$1.8 billion. Prairie Land was one of just 35 applicants awarded grants. Investments creating long-term systemic impacts were given priority.

The total cost for Project Summit is estimated at \$1,536,816. Prairie Land will provide a \$406,326 match to the \$1.1 million awarded grant.

# \$1 Million+ GRANT



# ALWAYS ASSUME ALL DOWNED LINES ARE **LIVE**

Downed power lines can be **deadly**. Always assume a downed power line is **live** and avoid approaching them or anything near them.

## Use Precaution



Downed power lines can energize the ground up to **35 feet away**. Even more in wet conditions.



If you see a downed power line, **call 911**.



**Never drive over** downed power lines or anything in contact with them.



**Never try to move** a downed power line.

If a vehicle contacts a **power line** or **utility pole**...

## STAY AWAY AND CALL 911



Consider **all lines** to be live and dangerous.



Stay in place or inside your vehicle unless you see **fire** or **smoke**.

**35ft**

Warn others to stay at least **35 feet away**.



**Tell others** not to approach vehicle, downed lines, or anything that may be in contact with downed lines.



Call **911**.



## Wheatland earns gold recognition for food drive campaign

“YES, WE CAN!” The hard work, dedication and passion to their mission earned Wheatland Electric’s member services team a Spotlight on Excellence Gold Award in the Best Total Communication Program category for their 2021 Cram the Van “Yes, WE Can!” annual food drive campaign.

The Spotlight on Excellence Awards program, sponsored by the Council of Rural Electric Communicators and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), recognizes outstanding work produced by electric cooperative communication and marketing professionals across the country.

Wheatland created Cram the Van in 2014 as an innovative way to expand member engagement in the seventh cooperative principle, Concern for the Community. Through the years, the program grew, both in popularity and in member participation—even during difficult times. The COVID pandemic in 2020 severely restricted how and where the cooperative hosted Cram the Van events that year, thus the introduction of the “Yes, WE Can!” theme in 2021.

To reach their goal of raising cash and food donations for a dozen local food banks across southwest and central Kansas, Wheatland’s 2021 Cram the Van food drive included 13 in-person events, an

online fundraising campaign, and six school competitions across five local school districts. They achieved record-breaking results with cash and food donations totaling 44,576 pounds (\$1 = 1 pound of food), which smashed the previous record of 32,206 pounds. That is more than 22 tons of food collected to directly benefit the neediest members in their communities.

“Our communities showed us ‘Yes, WE Can’ Cram the Van,” said Alli Conine, Wheatland’s director of member services and corporate communications. “It was an especially positive and meaningful rallying cry, following 2020, a year of resounding ‘NO’s” for many during the pandemic.”

During the Cram the Van season, Wheatland’s member services team spend many hours and miles on the road in their signature red van because “we are proud to belong to a cooperative working so hard to help our neighbors in need and put the last cooperative principle first.”



Above: The Cram the Van “Yes, WE Can!” food drive graphics were developed by the Wheatland team and features a comic book vibe to coordinate with the standard Cram the Van logo.

Left: Wheatland’s 2021 member services team from left are Heather Rufenacht, Mary Hoisington, Shajia Donecker, and Alli Conine.

Congratulations to the Wheatland team on their much-deserved success and the Spotlight on Excellence Gold Award. In addition to Conine, the award-winning team includes Heather Rufenacht, member services coordinator; Mary Hoisington, member services and key accounts manager; Shajia Donecker, social media specialist; and Sara

McClure, member services and key accounts manager.

“We’ve crammed the van for eight consecutive years because our cooperative cares,” Conine said. “And every year, our employees and members show us why the time, travel, and toil are worth all the effort: members helping members.”

## 2022 Annual Meeting Dates and Highlights

|  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <b>JULY</b><br><span style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">19</span>  | <b>LANE-SCOTT ELECTRIC</b><br>Lane County 4-H Building<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fairgrounds Rd., Dighton, KS</li> <li>• 6:30 p.m. Dinner &amp; 7:30 p.m. Meeting</li> </ul>  | <b>SEPTEMBER</b><br><span style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">15</span>   | <b>PIONEER ELECTRIC</b><br>Grant County Civic Center Shop<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1000 W. Patterson Ave., Ulysses, KS</li> <li>• Dinner and Meeting TBA</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Prairie Land Electric Cooperative, Inc.</b><br>April 12, 2022<br>116 members and 205 total attendees at the meeting, including special guest Senator Jerry Moran<br>General Manager Kirk Girard gave a cooperative update and announced Prairie Land was awarded a BASE grant for Project Summit. | <b>The Victory Electric Cooperative Assn., Inc.</b><br>April 12, 2022<br>107 members and approximately 122 total people in attendance<br>CEO Shane Laws provided an update on recent cooperative activities and current events.<br>Members re-elected three trustees. | <b>Western Cooperative Electric Association</b><br>May 11, 2022<br>200+ attendees; the meeting was also live-streamed to YouTube<br>Members heard presentations from General Manager Tom Ruth and Sunflower CEO Stuart Lowry and approved several bylaw changes including electronic voting. | <b>Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc.</b><br>April 27, 2022<br>Set attendance record with 501 total meeting attendees between the in-person meeting and the seven remote meeting locations<br>Members elected a new trustee, Dustin Stansbury of Harper and re-elected two incumbents. |

### Our Members



The Current is published three times per year for the member systems, friends and employees of Sunflower Electric Power Corporation.

The Current News  
 chertel@sunflower.net  
 PO Box 1020  
 Hays, KS 67601

