

****Banding delayed****

Falcon chicks to be banded May 30.

Falcons may be viewed on Westar Energy's website.

****Photo opportunity****

Because of a delay in receiving the bands, the falcon banding has been delayed. We tentatively plan to band the chicks Thursday morning. We will provide confirmation if all of the bands are received Wednesday.

TOPEKA, Kan., May 22, 2013 — Media are invited to Westar Energy's General Office, 818 S Kansas Ave., Topeka, on Thursday, May 30, to see the banding of this year's peregrine falcon chicks. Media are asked to meet in the lobby at that time for questions and answers about the banding and then the group will proceed to the roof for the procedure. A captive peregrine from Prairie Park Nature Center will be on hand in the lobby. Brad Loveless will be the contact the day of the banding. Brad's cell phone number is 785.633.2118.

The falcon couple, Nemaha and Boreas, produced offspring for the third consecutive year atop Westar's general office and the four chicks are doing well.

Last spring, Nemaha and Boreas produced two healthy chicks. Unfortunately, neither one survived. Both chicks were unsuccessful while trying to fledge the nest. One of the chicks fell from the box while trying to fledge the nest and was saved by the father, Boreas, before it hit the rooftop below the nest. "We retrieved the chick and put it back in the nest safely. Later on, however, it tried to fledge the nest again and fell," said Brad Loveless, director, biology & conservation programs. The second chick was unsuccessful on its first try.

"In order to help minimize the chances of the chicks falling, the standard peregrine nest box design was modified last winter by raising the front perching area, making it more difficult for the chicks to reach the front opening until they are larger and stronger," said Brad. "We're hoping all four chicks will fledge the nest successfully this year."

As part of banding, blood samples from the chicks will be taken for analysis by the Midwest Peregrine Project in Minnesota.

The sex of the bird is indicated by its band and may be determined by looking at the size of each chick's feet. Since adult female peregrines are about 50 percent larger than the males,

Westar Energy's peregrine falcon chicks to be banded

foot size at 18-21 days is, usually, a reliable indicator of sex. Brad said, "We'll do our best to determine the sex of each bird but at this early age we may not be certain at banding time."

Due to increases in the peregrine population, this species was removed from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife and Service's threatened species list in 1999 and its numbers continue to expand.

Westar asks that viewers keep in mind that the falcons are wild creatures and their success rate in the first year is less than fifty percent. Falcon cams may be viewed at WestarEnergy.com/GreenTeam.

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