



BLUESTEM
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
www.bluestemelectric.com
July 2006

614 E Hwy 24
P.O. Box 5
Wamego, Kansas 66547
Phone (785) 456-2212

524 Dexter
P.O. Box 513
Clay Center, KS 67432
(785) 632-3111

Meet Bluestem's Summer Interns

Bryan Balch, summer intern at Bluestem East, is working with the line crews at Wamego.



Bryan Balch

Bryan is from Rossville where he graduated from Rossville High School in 1998. He is currently enrolled at the Manhattan Area Technical College in the Electric Power and Distribution Program. He is the youngest son of Phil and Jolene Balch, Topeka.

When not working, Bryan enjoys fishing and restoring old

vehicles.

Ben Easterberg, summer intern at Bluestem West, is working with the Clay Center line crews.



Ben Easterberg

Ben graduated from Clay Center Community High School in 2002. In December 2006, he plans on completing his associate's degree in Electric Power & Distribution Program and also Building and Trades at Manhattan Technical College.

In his spare time he enjoys hunting, fishing, playing golf and riding

four-wheelers.

Brett Haden is a summer intern at Bluestem West and is working with the wiring department.



Brett Haden

Brett is a 2005 graduate of Clay Center Community High School.

Brett is currently enrolled in the North Central Kansas Technical College's Electrical Technology Program and plans to graduate in 2007. He intends to use his internship to gain more knowledge in the field of electrical wiring.

New Energy Efficiency Tax Credits Take Effect

U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.

The energy efficiency tax credits signed into law by President George W. Bush have gone into effect, making it easier for American families and businesses to reduce energy costs at home, work and on the road. The various tax credits designed to improve America's energy efficiency went into effect on January 1, 2006 and are available for the purchase and installation of energy efficient appliances and products, as well as the purchase of fuel efficient vehicles such as hybrids.

"While there are easy, immediate steps that families can take to reduce their energy bills – like turning down the thermostat or weather stripping doors and windows - these tax credits will help with the purchase of bigger ticket items," said Energy Secretary Samuel W. Bodman. "By reducing overall energy demand one family or business at a time we are also increasing America's energy security."

The energy efficiency tax credits will allow consumers to reduce their 2006 tax bills on a dollar-for-dollar basis up to the amount allowed under the law. For example, consumers who purchase the most fuel-efficient ve-

hicles could reduce their tax liability by up to \$3,400, while those who install certain products such as energy-efficient windows, insulation, doors, roofs and heating / cooling equipment in the home can receive up to \$500 off of their federal tax bills.

Specific tax benefits for the home include:

- \$50 for purchasing an advanced main air circulating fan;
- \$150 for installing a highly efficient furnace or boiler;
- \$200 for installing energy efficient windows;
- \$300 for purchasing a highly efficient central air conditioner, heat pump or water heater;
- 30 percent, or up to \$2,000, for the purchase of solar water-heating equipment (this does not apply to equipment used to heat swimming pools or hot tubs).

Businesses may be eligible for credits such as:

- 30 percent tax credit for the installation of qualifying solar equipment on buildings;
- Business tax credits for companies that build highly energy efficient

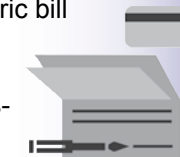
homes;

- Credits for companies that manufacture energy-efficient appliances such as dishwashers, clothes washers and refrigerators.

The energy efficiency tax credits were signed into law in August, 2005 as part of the first comprehensive energy legislation in over a decade. The landmark energy bill contains provisions to promote greater energy efficiency and conservation, improve the reliability of electricity delivery, and encourage increased domestic energy production, including energy from renewable sources such as biomass and wind.

Save a Check, Save a Stamp

Pay your electric bill with a credit card! Bluestem will accept Visa and MasterCard for those that like to use their credit card to pay their bills.



Call BEC at 1-800-558-1580 Wamego or 1-800-297-8725 Clay Center.

Department Of Energy Issues New Air Conditioner Standards for 2006

New air conditioner SEER standards went into effect January 23, 2006. What does this mean for consumers?

- New air conditioners manufactured after January 23, 2006 will be more energy-efficient and save money.

- Existing air conditioners are not affected and homeowners do not have to replace them.

SEER stands for Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio, the Department of Energy's measure of energy efficiency for the seasonal cooling performance of central air conditioners and central air conditioning heat pumps.

The 2006 standards will essentially raise the energy efficiency standards to 13 SEER for new

central air conditioners and to 13 SEER/7.7 HSPF for new central air conditioning heat pumps. The standards will apply to products manufactured for sale in the United States as of January 23, 2006. HSPF stands for Heating Seasonal Performance Factor, the Department of Energy's measure of energy efficiency for the seasonal heating performance of central air conditioning heat pumps.

The standards, however, will not require homeowners to change their existing central air conditioning units, nor will it mean that replacement parts and services will no longer be available for their home's systems.

Air conditioners manufactured after January 23 must meet a higher minimum standard, achieving a

Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (SEER) of 13 or higher; the current standard is 10. (A SEER rating of 13 is 30% more efficient than 10.) Manufacturers after January 23 will have to meet the new efficiency standards. The last time the government increased minimum efficiency standards for air conditioners was almost 10 years ago. The average homeowner will remain unaffected by this standard change for some time to come.

The "lifespan" of a central air conditioner is about 15-20 years. Manufacturers typically continue to support existing equipment by making replacement parts available and honoring maintenance contracts after the new standard goes into effect. A change in the standard

does not require replacement of equipment. Nor does a change in the standard mean that an existing system will be obsolete or impossible to maintain.

The new standards do not require homeowners to change their existing central air conditioning units. Replacement parts and services will still be available to maintain current home air conditioners.

From January 23, 2006, all central air conditioners manufactured will meet this standard. Central air conditioners already in the marketplace that meet the old standard can still be sold, so be aware of the SEER Rating when purchasing a new air conditioner.

The 13 SEER is forecasted to

save the nation 4.2 quads (quadrillion British Thermal Units) of energy over 25 years (2006 through 2030). This is equivalent to the energy consumed by nearly 26 million American households in one year. The standards are also expected to save consumers \$1 billion over the same period.

DOE encourages consumers to replace the entire system, outside unit as well as the inside coil. The standards, however, apply to new systems, i.e., indoor and outdoor combinations, so consumers are able to replace the outdoor unit without replacing the indoor coil.

Homebuilders can still purchase and install any existing units at the old standard level, but all products manufactured after January 23,

2006 will be more energy-efficient.

The standard for split-system air conditioners, the most common type of residential air conditioning equipment, represents a 30% improvement in energy efficiency. For split-system heat pumps, the new standard would represent a 30% improvement in cooling efficiency and a 13% improvement in heating efficiency.

The standard will also increase the cooling efficiency of single-package air conditioners and single-package heat pumps by 34% and the heating efficiency of single-package heat pumps by 17%.

For more information, visit this website: www.eere.energy.gov/buildings/appliance_standards/residential/central_ac_hp.html