



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

Bluestem NEWS

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Nominating Committee Selected

Each year the Board of Trustees of the cooperative shall appoint a nominating committee(s) whose function is to nominate one or more candidates for trustee positions with expiring terms. The Bluestem Board of Trustees has appointed the following members to serve on the respective nominating committees:

Districts 1 & 2 (to meet in Clay Center on October 10th)

District 1

- Rod Stewart* - Washington
- Gene Henderson* - Palmer
- William Burger* - Palmer

District 2

- Carl Fengel* - Oak Hill
- Richard Renz* - Riley

Districts 3 & 4 (to meet in Wamego on October 9th)

District 3

- Harold Trick* - Olsburg
- James Eichman* - Westmoreland
- Janice Goehring* - Westmoreland
- Larry Cordell* - Havensville

District 4

- Alan Gnad* - Alma
- Harold Bailey* - Manhattan

The following is a list of Trustee positions with expiring terms:

- Districts 1 & 2: Position – At Large**
Robert Ohlde - Linn
- District 3: Position – 2**
Dean Blanka - Wamego
- Districts 3 & 4: Position – At Large**
Delbert Eichman - St. George

Brett Haden Receives Award

Brett Haden, summer intern at Bluestem, recently competed in the Skills USA Championships in Kansas City, MO.

Brett had previously taken first place in the State competition that was held in Beloit at the North Central Kansas Technical College (NCKTC).

Skills USA is a national organization that annually serves over 280,000 trade, technical, industrial and health occupation students in public high schools and two-year technical colleges.

At nationals, Brett placed second, earning a silver medal in the Residential Wiring competition. The competition for residential wiring consisted of a written test, an oral interview and the wiring of a 4' x 8' wall complete with switches, outlets, lights, conduit, a panel and the fishing of wires behind an already sheet rocked section. Brett competed against 24 other Vo-Tech students, each from a different state.

The Skills USA Championships as a whole had several thousand contestants that competed in categories such as residential wiring, auto mechanics, diesel mechanics, brick-laying and over a hundred more.



Brett Haden earned first place at state and second place at nationals in the Skills USA competition.

Brett is grateful for the opportunity to compete against some of the nation's best students. Prizes included several hundred dollars worth of tools, clothes and work related gear.

Brett is the son of Mike and Tami Haden of rural Clay Center. He is enrolled in his second year at NCKTC at Beloit this fall and plans to get his Associates Degree in residential wiring.

New Arrival at Bluestem

Tim Wolf, BEC Journeyman Lineman, along with his wife, Katie, announce the birth of their son, Ryker Wayne Wolf.

Ryker was born July 25, 2006. He weighed 8 lbs, 8 oz, and measured 20 inches long. Ryker is welcomed home by big sister, Hadleigh Jo.



The Cooperative Way Keeps Rising Electricity Rates in Check

Many Americans do business with a cooperative every day. They exist in almost every industry from energy to news reporting to health-care. Cooperatives are a huge part of the economy in the United States and serve some 120 million members, or four in 10 Americans.

While cooperatives may resemble most companies in some ways, they are very different in others. One of the most important differences is that cooperatives are not driven by profit. For-profit companies aim to return a profit to their shareholders. After all, these shareholders have invested their money in the business.

A cooperative's mission, on the other hand, is meeting its members' needs for goods or services. Electric cooperatives are part of this tradition of doing business, one that has a long history going back to 1752 when Ben Franklin started the first cooperative in Philadelphia. Franklin persuaded his neighbors to share a common risk by forming the Philadelphia Contributorship for the Insurance of Homes from Loss of Fire.

During the 100 years following Franklin's insurance cooperative, a scattering of membership associations began to pop up across the country. These cooperatives were primarily focused on farm production, such as hogs, wool, butter, cheese, and grains.

Bluestem Electric Cooperative, Inc., is also a non-profit, member-owned cooperative. In 1999, two cooperatives, P R & W Electric Cooperative and C & W Electric Cooperative, consolidated to form Bluestem. These cooperatives had been incorporated over 60 years ago by groups of rural citizens. Bluestem Electric exists today to provide its members with quality electric service at the lowest reasonable cost consistent with good business practices.

Over the years, the cooperative has added valuable programs and services so that our members can fully enjoy the many benefits that rural living has to offer. Remember, we are here to help you take advantage of these services. Give us

a call or stop by whenever you have a need or want additional information on these special programs.

Rural Americans turned to cooperatives in the 1930s and 1940s because they could find no other way to obtain central station power. Only about 10% of the nation's farms had electricity in 1935 when President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued an executive order making federal funds available to provide rural electric service and creating the Rural Electrification Administration (REA), now the Rural Utilities Service (RUS). The idea was not to own electric utilities for profit, but to obtain the service that would make those living in rural areas a part of the electrified 20th Century.

Despite being non-profit organizations, cooperatives are still seeing operating costs rise as the price of doing business goes up. There's no better example of this than right now

when the cost of fuel to run power plants is at a record high. We work everyday to achieve operating efficiencies as we face these cost increases. We will work with you to make sure you have the information and help your need to use energy wisely. But if we find it necessary to pass along power supply increases, you can trust that the decision was based on keeping the business financially strong on behalf of all members. We are not driven by the profit motive to make money for outside investors.

At a time when Americans' electric bills are going up around the country—in some places by as much as 40 percent—the cooperative way of doing business is an important way to keep costs manageable.

We are not profit-driven and we don't have to impress Wall Street every quarter. Rather, we are service-driven and operate at cost. You can bank on the cooperative difference.

Water Heating Tips: Where Your Money Goes

By Chris Dorsi

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, water heating accounts for up to 20 percent of the total utility expense for many U.S. households. You can save energy and money by learning how this energy is used.

Your energy consumption for water heating is divided among three types of use: heating efficiency, standby loss, and hot water consumption. You should apply different conservation measures to reduce each use.

Heating efficiency describes how well your water heater converts electricity or gas into hot water. When you next buy a water heater, study the yellow Energy Guide label that is required on all appliances, and compare the listed Energy Factor (EF) that is used to rate water heaters. Find the highest EF available to identify the most efficient appliances. Better yet, buy an ENERGY STAR rated appliance and you'll get the most efficient appliance of all.

Standby losses include the heat that goes through the walls of your water heater tank even when no one

is using hot water. The best defense against standby loss is a heavily-insulated tank. If you buy a tank with a high EF, you're getting the best built-in tank insulation available. If you have an existing water heater that is more than a few years old, the best way to reduce standby loss is by installing an external water heater blanket. If you install a blanket, be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions to avoid safety hazards.

Hot water consumption is the water you use at appliances and faucets. Every gallon of hot water you use is replaced by a gallon of cold water in your water heater that must be heated. If you reduce your hot water consumption, you'll reduce the amount of electricity or gas your water heater consumes. You can reduce your hot water consumption by installing low-flow showerheads, for a savings of five to 10 gallons per shower. You'll also use less hot water by using the cold-water wash-cycle on your washing machine. Modern soaps do a great job of cleaning clothes without hot water, and you'll save up to 10 gallons of hot water per cycle.