



## To the Members of Bluestem Electric Cooperative Notice of Special Board Meeting

The Board of Trustees of Bluestem Electric Cooperative, Inc., will meet Monday, January 19, 2009, at 2 p.m. at the cooperative's headquarters, 614 E. Hwy 24 in Wamego to discuss and vote upon a proposal to make changes to the Energy Cost Adjustment (ECA) rate structure.

The proposal is to modify the ECA clause to better track future changes in the wholesale cost of power. Our cost of purchased power includes charges for delivery points, demand (capacity), energy (fuel) and transmission service. The current ECA is used to pass through changes in the cost of generating electricity. The Kansas Corporation Commission recently approved a change in our power supplier's rate structure. The new rate design includes changes to the rates along with a new demand-related cost adjustment clause. In order to allow the cooperative to recover these charges in a timely manner, the board will consider including all of these charges, except for the base and excess demand charges, in the base cost of power used in the ECA calculation. When the monthly wholesale cost of power exceeds this base, the ECA will be a charge and when the monthly wholesale cost of power is less than this, the ECA will be a credit.

This meeting is open to the membership. If you are unable to attend and still have questions, you may call the cooperative office at 785-456-2212.

## From the General Manager...

### December 2007 Ice Storm Recovery Process

As we begin a new year we would like to bring you up to date on an issue that has been pending for all of the year 2008. Bluestem Electric Cooperative (BEC) along with several electric cooperatives and Kansas Electric Municipal systems had discussions with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) representatives throughout the year 2008. At issue was how FEMA would be handling their assistance to the electric cooperatives and electric municipal systems that were impacted by the December 2007 ice storm. The December 2007 ice storm was a federally declared disaster making certain restoration, repair and replacement costs recoverable through FEMA. Until recently, differences existed between FEMA representatives and cooperative/municipal representatives regarding the criteria that needed to be used to determine when an electric power line conductor was damaged beyond the point where it could be repaired. If the line conductor is not repairable it would need to be replaced. Solving these differences defines whether FEMA assistance is primary in covering the costs related to conductor repair/replacement or whether that



Ken Maginley

responsibility falls to the cooperative and ultimately the members through increased rates.

Last month joint meetings were held where through discussions FEMA, electric cooperative and municipal repre-

sentatives were able to come to agreement regarding the criteria that could be used to determine when a conductor was damaged to the point where it would no longer be repairable and would be eligible for replacement. Settlement of this issue allows for the December 2007 ice storm recovery process to continue. The settlement will allow the electric cooperatives and the municipal electric systems to move forward working with FEMA and the Kansas Department of Emergency Management (KDEM) to finalize system line repair and line replacement projects that were identified and provided to FEMA following the December 2007 ice storm.

BEC representatives will be meeting with FEMA and KDEM representatives in January to review the previous line damage assessments to determine the level of support that will be available from FEMA. The criteria that was established and agreed upon will be used to assist in the new review of the damage assessments. We are op-

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## Bluestem Electric Teller Committee Selected

Each year the Board of Trustees of the Cooperative shall appoint a teller committee whose function is to count and verify the ballots for the election of trustees. The Bluestem Board of Trustees met on December 15, 2008, and appointed the following members to serve on the teller committee:

Dist 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Larry Sawin</li> <li>• Mr. Gene Henderson</li> <li>• Mr. Marlon Walter</li> <li>• Mr. Kevin Stuenkel</li> </ul>
Dist 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Ron Jackson</li> <li>• Mr. Eldo Heller</li> </ul>
Dist 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Gary D. Jeffrey</li> <li>• Mr. Larry Matzke</li> <li>• Mr. Julian Siebert</li> <li>• Mr. Darold Brunkow</li> </ul>
Dist 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. James Palenske</li> <li>• Mr. Scott Berroth</li> </ul>

The teller committee will meet on January 7, 2009, at the Riley County High School at 7 p.m. to tabulate and certify the election results. The results of the election of trustees will be printed in the February edition of the *Bluestem NEWS* located in the *Kansas Country Living* magazine.

## Happy New Year

*Bluestem Electric  
Cooperative wishes  
you a safe, happy and  
prosperous New Year.*

# Bluestem Electric Annual Meeting Announcement

Bluestem Electric Cooperative's Annual Meeting will be held on March 9, 2009, at the Wamego Middle School at 1701 Kaw Valley Road in Wamego. The meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m.

Official Notice of the Annual

Meeting will be mailed approximately 10 days prior to the meeting.

We hope that you will plan to attend the Annual Meeting and take part in the business of your electric cooperative.

## From the General Manager... Continued from page 16-A

timistic that the results of the January meetings will allow us to restore the BEC system to the level that existed prior to the December 2007 ice storm and that restoration can be accomplished with a minimal cost burden on the BEC members.

### Energy Cost Adjustment Change To Be Considered

Bluestem Electric Cooperative purchases power each month from our power supplier – Kansas Electric Power Cooperative, Inc. (KEPCo) – to meet the electric energy needs of our members. This cost of wholesale power is a significant cost of providing electric service to our members. Currently, approximately 50 percent of the wholesale power costs are subject to the provisions of the Energy Cost Adjustment (ECA) clause. Any differences to these costs are passed through on monthly bills, while differences in the other 50 percent of costs are absorbed by the cooperative.

We have explained previously in the *Bluestem News* how the ECA is designed and how it works. The retail rates, established in 2004, include a base amount of wholesale power cost. The ECA provides for a monthly adjustment dependent on any differences in the average cost from the base cost of wholesale power. When the average cost to the cooperative is lower than the base cost, there is a credit on the bill. When the average cost to the cooperative is higher than the base cost, there is an adder on the bill.

As we reported in the October

*Bluestem News*, the wholesale rate from KEPCo increased effective September 1, 2008. The rate increase was primarily due to increases in KEPCo's own purchased power costs along with increased operating costs associated with the generation and delivery of electricity.

As noted above, monthly differences in a portion of the wholesale power cost are currently absorbed by the cooperative as a part of operating expenses. Unfortunately, the new wholesale rate includes changes to the portion that is absorbed by the cooperative. After evaluating the cooperative's financial condition and the impact of changes in wholesale power costs, it has become necessary to consider changing the amount of wholesale power costs that are passed through each month.

On the previous page, you will find a Notice to the Members regarding a Board of Trustees meeting on January 19. At this meeting, the board will consider changing the ECA to increase the amount of wholesale power that will be passed through each month in the ECA. If the board approves the revised ECA tariff, approximately 75-80 percent of the monthly power cost will be subject to the ECA with monthly differences passed through on your electric bill. It is estimated that adjusting the ECA as discussed amounts to an increase of approximately 6.4 percent, but will postpone the need for a larger general adjustment in rates for several years.

*Ken Maginley, General Manager*

# Bluestem Electric Statement of Non-Discrimination

Bluestem Electric Cooperative, Inc. is the recipient of federal financial assistance from the Rural Utilities Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and is subject to the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, and the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture which provide that no person in the United State on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, or disability shall be excluded from participation in, admission or access to, denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any of this organization's programs or activities.

The person responsible for coordinating this organiza-

tion's nondiscrimination compliance efforts is Kenneth J. Maginley, General Manager. Any individual, or specific class of individuals, who feels that this organization has subjected them to discrimination may obtain further information about the statutes and regulations listed above from and/or file a written complaint with this organization; or the Administrator, Rural Utilities Service, Stop 1510, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC, 20250-1510; or the Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC, 20250-9410; or call (202) 720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Complaints must be filed within 180 days after the alleged discrimination. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible.

## Use Caution When Using Back-Up Generators

During long-term power outages many rely on portable generators for emergency power. The growing popularity of portable electric generators has resulted in millions being placed in homes and small businesses across the nation. But it's estimated only a small percentage are hooked up correctly. Bluestem Electric urges members to understand the proper safety steps that must be taken.

Professional installation is an important safety step when using a back-up generator system. A qualified vendor or electrical professional can help you select the best equipment for your situation or needs.

Installed and operated correctly the use of a standby or portable electric generator poses little danger, but improper installation or use could be dangerous to you and threaten the lives of your family, friends, neighbors and electric utility crews trying to restore power.

Properly connecting the generator into the system is a critical step for safe and effective use. A licensed professional should install a permanent, standby electric generator and can help with proper equipment for safely using a generator.

Have a qualified electrician or Bluestem Electric install a double pole-double throw transfer switch. The transfer switch breaks the path of electricity between the power lines and your main electrical panel. This is the best way to protect you, your neighbors and repair crews from "back feed". Back feed occurs when an improperly connected generator begins feeding electricity "back" through the power lines.

It is your responsibility to take necessary steps to prevent the injury of anyone near lines, especially crews working to restore power.

Safety for the operators and users of a generating system in the home and utility crews cannot be over-emphasized.

## Generator Safety Tips

- Read and follow all manufacturer operating instructions to properly ground the generator.
- Maintain adequate ventilation. Generators emit carbon monoxide. It is against fire code to operate a generator in your home, garage, or other enclosed building. Place it in a dry, outside location.
- Turn off generator and allow cooling before refueling. Gasoline and its vapors may ignite if they come in contact with hot components or an electrical spark.
- Always have a fully charged, approved fire extinguisher located nearby.

## Need a Ride? Free Annual Meeting Transportation

Do you need a ride to the Annual Meeting this year? Bluestem Electric will be offering rides to the Bluestem Annual Meeting held at the Wamego Middle School on March 9, 2009.

If you live in Bluestem Districts 1 or 2 (previously known as C&W) and would like a ride to your Annual Meeting, please fill out the information sheet below and return to our office by March 2, 2009.

The vehicles will leave at approximately 6 p.m. from the Bluestem office in Clay Center located at 524 Dexter and return shortly after the completion of the Annual Meeting.

### Bluestem Electric Cooperative, Inc. Attention: Annual Meeting Planning Committee

P.O. Box 5  
Wamego, KS 66547

P.O. Box 513  
Clay Center, KS 67432

**YES, I would like a free ride to the  
BEC Annual Meeting!**

Indicate number of seats needed \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

# Why Don't I Have Power?

There is nothing more aggravating than a power outage. Just when you've settled in to watch your favorite television show or decide to read a book... the lights go out. "What's going on?" you ask yourself.

Most people immediately assume that it is a problem at the electric cooperative, but, believe it or not, it may not be the cooperative's fault. The source of the power failure could be right in your home.

Many times linemen have been called to a residence to discover that the power failure was attributed to breakers under the meter, or breakers or fuses in the residence.

When you experience a power outage, the first step you should take would be to look out your window. If the lights inside neighboring homes are on, chances are a fuse or circuit breaker in your home's main electric panel has been blown or tripped. If you live in a rural area and can't immediately see your neighbor's lights, you should pick up the phone and give them a call and inquire, to see if they have power.

Before you call the electric cooperative, take a second or two to call neighbors and check the breakers and fuse panels. The solution to your power problem could be as simple as a flick of the breaker switch.

In general, when a fuse is blown by a short circuit, it will result in a blackened or discolored mica window. By contrast, a fuse blown due to overloading will result in a clear window and a break in the flat metal strip inside the fuse.

A circuit breaker tripped to the off position can be caused by either an overload or a short circuit. This can be detected by a red strip showing and or a loose breaker lever.

To remove the damaged fuse inside the fuse box, turn it counter-clockwise. Be sure when replacing it with a new one that the fuse has the same capacity and style. One style of screw in fuse is similar to a light bulb and its metal strip shows through the mica window.

Another style that is similar is the cartridge fuse used primarily for washing machines, dryers, air conditioners, and large power tool circuits. It resembles the other, but has a spring-loaded metal strip that allows for a temporary overload.



Single Pole Breaker



Double Pole Breaker



Screw-in Fuse



Cartridge Fuse



Reset-able Screw-in Fuse

Some panel boxes use cartridge fuses and require a fuse puller to remove safely. These are long and cylindrical and can not be readily distinguished as blown, so sometimes, one will need to keep extras of all fuses to replace the questionable fuse.

If you would rather not replace fuses, replace them with screw in breakers. When blown, a button pops out that needs to be pushed in to reset. Circuit breakers do the same job as fuses, but they do not have to be replaced, but simply pushed to reset or flipped back to the "on" position.

Located in the panel box are single circuits and double circuits, with one or two breakers in the space of one, or a main circuit with a connecting bar used to protect 240 volt circuits. These breakers will trip due to short circuits or overloads many times, but as with any apparatus if the problem continues the breakers will burn up and will need to be replaced. So if they continue to trip, it is best to find the problem and correct it.

Whether it is a cooperative outage or an outage in your own home, be sure that you are prepared, because outages sometimes occur. Keep a flashlight or two on hand, preferably one with working batteries. Know where your electric panel is located and make sure that it is easily accessible.

Identify each section with labels and notes marking which breaker controls which appliance.

Do an annual visual inspection of the fuse or breaker box, and check by touching all breakers to determine if one is warmer than the others. A warm breaker could indicate an overload situation or possible wiring defect. If you notice any potential problems, call an electrician.

Remember, whenever you experience a power outage, please check your panel first.

Turn the breakers off and then back on. If the lights do not come back on, then call your neighbors. If they don't have power, then call the cooperative immediately to get the power restored.

To report a power outage, call your appropriate Bluestem office. We will continue to serve you and do our best to keep the lights on.