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Bluestem **NEWS**

Bluestem Introduces Our Summer Interns

Bluestem Electric would like to welcome Dustin Duhr, Dylan Havenstein, Mike Irvine, Justin Barnes, Josh Laflin and Ryan Thomas to the cooperative family for this summer.

Bluestem East

DUSTIN DUHR is the son of Craig Duhr and Leslie Willits of Salina. He has three younger brothers and four younger sisters.

He graduated from Ell-Saline High School in 2004. He moved to Manhattan in 2008 and enrolled in Manhattan Area Technical College's Electric Power and Distribution Program in September.

In his spare time, he enjoys riding motocross, hunting, wakeboarding and water skiing at the lake.

DYLAN HAVENSTEIN, 19, is the son of Steve and Sherry Havenstein of Wamego. He graduated from Rock High School in 2008, where he played football and baseball for four years and was in FFA.

He will graduate from the Manhattan Area Technical College's Electric Power and Distribution Program in December. His hobbies are fishing and riding four-wheelers.

MIKE IRVINE is the son of Jim Irvine, Manhattan and Bonnie Hull, Andover. He was born in Wichita and moved to Andover when he was in third grade. He graduated from Andover Central High School in 2007.

He moved to Manhattan after being accepted in the Manhattan Area Technical College's Electric Power and Distribution Program.

When he is not at school or work he likes to fish, hunt and hang out with friends.

Bluestem West

JUSTIN BARNES is the son of Greg and Deneen Barnes of Clifton. He has two older sisters. He is a 2008 graduate of the Clifton/Clyde High School. In mid-August he will



return to the Manhattan Area Technical College's Electric Power and Distribution Program to finish his degree.

In his spare time he likes fishing and hunting and building derby cars.

JOSH LAFLIN is the son of RD and Shellie Laflin; and Matt and Barb Ohlde of Linn. He graduated from the Linn High School in 2008. He will complete his degree in Manhattan Area Technical College's Electric Power and Distribution Program in December.

In his spare time he likes to show cattle, coon hunt and fish.

RYAN THOMAS is the son of Larry and Susan Thomas of Clay Center and has one older sister. He was raised on a farm just north of Clay Center and graduated from the Clay Center Community High School in 2008.

He plans to complete his degree in the Manhattan Area Technical College's Electric Power and Distribution Program in December. He enjoys fishing and hunting in his free time.

Hunting Down Vampire Electronics



Most homes these days never quite shut down for the night. Although lamps may be off, dark rooms are typically spotted with tiny red and green lights of appliances and the glow of digital clocks.

All of those little lights, clocks, and seemingly “sleeping” appliances, however, are using more electricity than most would think. Sometimes called vampire electronics, these devices suck up 5 percent of all energy used in the United States and cost consumers more than \$3 billion every year.

For the average homeowner, vampire electronics can add 20 percent to monthly electric bills, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. To trim this excess energy use, you need to know where these vampires reside and keep them in check.

Take a closer look at appliances around your home. Those that use remote controls such as TVs, DVD players, ceiling fans and stereos are suspect. Any digital displays, such as microwave and coffee machine clocks, are working against your electric bill. And many of those chargers around the house—those that keep cell phones, power tools and MP3 players at the ready—constantly draw power when plugged in.

Unplugging these vampires effectively drives a stake into their energy-consuming hearts. Power strips provide another way to thwart them. Simply plug appliances into a power strip, and switch it off when those appliances aren't being used.

In addition, unplug any battery-operated electronic

device once charged. You wouldn't walk away from a flowing water hose, after all, and you certainly don't want to keep feeding those vampires.

When to Turn Off Personal Computers

If you're wondering when to turn off personal computers for energy savings, here are some general guidelines.

While a small surge in energy consumption occurs when a computer starts up, this hardly compares to the amount used when a computer runs for a long time. For energy savings and convenience, consider turning off the monitor if you aren't going to use your PC for more than 20 minutes, and switch off both the CPU and monitor if you're not going to use your PC for more than two hours.

Make sure monitors, printers, and other accessories are plugged in to a power strip/surge protector. When not using equipment for extended periods, turn off the switch on the power strip to prevent any power drain. If you don't use a power strip, unplug extra equipment when it's not in use.

Most PCs today reach the end of their useful life due to advances in technology long before any negative effects of being switched on and off multiple times can be seen. But as a general rule of thumb, the less time a PC is on, the longer it will “last.” PCs also produce heat, so turning them off reduces the need for air conditioning.

Power-Down or Sleep Mode Features

Many PCs come with a power-down or sleep mode feature for the CPU and monitor. ENERGY STAR® computers consume 15 watts or less in this mode—around 70 percent less electricity than a computer without power management features. ENERGY STAR monitors also have the

capability to power down into two successive sleep modes, first to 15 watts and then to 8 watts—less than 10 percent of its operating power consumption.

Keep in mind that screen savers are not energy savers. Using a screen saver may in fact require more energy than not using one, and your power-down feature may not work if you have a screen saver activated. In fact, modern LCD color monitors do not need screen savers.

Using Energy on Standby

Product	Wattage per hour When On	Wattage per hour in Standby Mode	Monthly Standby Cost	Number of Lightbulbs Powered by Daily Standby Wattage
Digital Cable Box	25	18	\$1.45	33
Computer	130	15	\$1.21	28
Modem	14	14	\$1.13	26
Computer Monitor	70	11	\$.088	20

New 'Red Flag' Requirements for Businesses

Identity thieves use personally identifying information to open new accounts and misuse existing accounts, creating havoc for consumers and businesses. Financial institutions and creditors soon will be required to implement a program to detect, prevent, and mitigate instances of identity theft.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the federal bank regulatory agencies, and the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA) have issued regulations (Red Flag Rules) requiring financial institutions and creditors to develop and implement written identity theft prevention programs, as part of the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions (FACT) Act of 2003. The programs must be in place by August 1, 2009, and must provide for the identification, detection, and response to patterns, practices, or specific activities—known as “red flags”—that could indicate identity theft.

Will Bluestem Need to Comply with the Red Flag Rules?

The Red Flag Rules apply to an entity that holds a “transaction account” belonging to a consumer. Most of these institutions are regulated by the federal bank regulatory agencies and businesses that hold consumer transaction accounts.

A transaction account is a deposit or other account from which the owner makes payments or transfers. Transaction accounts include checking accounts, negotiable order of withdrawal accounts, savings deposits subject to automatic transfers, and share draft accounts.

A covered account is an account used mostly for personal, family, or household purposes, and that involves multiple payments

or transactions. Covered accounts include credit card accounts, mortgage loans, automobile loans, margin accounts, cell phone accounts, utility accounts, checking accounts, and savings accounts. A covered account is also an account for which there is a foreseeable risk of identity theft—for example, small business or sole proprietorship accounts.

How Flexible are the Red Flag Rules?

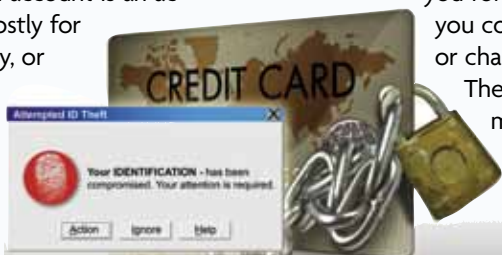
These red flags will be used by businesses and fall into five categories:

- ▶ alerts, notifications, or warnings from a consumer reporting agency;
- ▶ suspicious documents;
- ▶ suspicious personally identifying information, such as a suspicious address;
- ▶ unusual use of—or suspicious activity relating to—a covered account; and
- ▶ notices from customers, victims of identity theft, law enforcement authorities, or other businesses about possible identity theft in connection with covered accounts.

How will Bluestem Help Protect Your Identity with “Red Flags”?

Bluestem Electric is going the extra mile to prevent identity theft. As of August 1, 2009, Bluestem and all utilities, must comply with the Federal Trade Commission “Red Flag” rule. A red flag is a pattern, practice or activity that indicates the possible existence of identity theft.

For Bluestem members this means we will take more time to authenticate your identification. Perhaps we will ask you to verify some additional information when you call or ask you for photo ID when you come in to start or change an account. These extra steps may take a few more minutes, but protecting your identity is worth it.



Consumers Talk and Congress Listens

All across America, electric co-op members are sitting in front of handheld video cameras and talking frankly and honestly about electric rates.



Our Energy, Our Future™ consumer videos are posted on YouTube at www.youtube.com/ourenergyourfuture.

Their audience? Lawmakers on Capitol Hill.

For the past several months, electric co-ops across the nation have supported the Our Energy, Our Future™ campaign by filming consumers as they share stories about how affordable electricity is important to them. These videos are posted online, on YouTube and www.ourenergy.coop, so policymakers can hear and see first-hand how high prices hit their constituents.

“I know I’m working hard, and I know our electric co-op board is working very hard,” stresses Jackie Jung, a member of Flathead Electric Co-op in Kalispell, MT, in one segment. “I guess what I would ask all of you is to really give very serious consideration to helping us here and keeping those prices down, because everybody else is trying to do their part.”

Electric co-op consumers are facing a power crunch. More power is needed to keep the lights on as demand increases. But uncertainty over the impact of climate change policy, a lack of affordable low-emissions technology options, and rising costs for labor and construction materials have hobbled efforts to meet this future demand. This threatens to not only increase electricity costs across the board, but could lead to power shortages.

We need our representatives in Congress to step in with a long-term, politically and economically sustainable energy and climate change plan—one that takes the interests of consumers and monthly electric bills into consideration.

Unplug for Dollars: Stop 'Vampire Power' Waste

BY JR RAPHAEL, PC WORLD

You can save a few hundred bucks a year by unplugging electronics that aren't in use. Get the lowdown on costs, plus some products to help you cut back on kilowatt consumption.

Here's an offer too good to refuse: Score an extra couple hundred bucks, help save the environment and barely lift a finger in the process. Interested?

The secret lies in an often overlooked but easily corrected problem. Simply put, you're paying electric bills for stuff you aren't using. As long as they're plugged in, your computers, peripherals, and home electronics are eating up energy when you think they're off—and in no small amount, either.

Meet Your In-House Dracula

In industry parlance, this phenomenon is often called "vampire energy loss," and it's easy to see why. Like the blood-drinking creatures of the night, your devices are sucking down power while you sleep—albeit without the bite marks.

"Anything that's plugged in pretty much these days is drawing some current," says Mark Bernstein, managing director of the University of Southern California's Energy Institute.

Experts estimate that standby energy drain accounts for anywhere from 5 to 10 percent of an average home's annual power usage. Convert that percentage into dollars, and you've got around \$4 billion in wasted spending across America every year, the Department of Energy estimates. For most families, that means a minimum of \$130 a year—more than some people spend on a typical month's electric bill.

The Vampire Hunt

I'll be the first to admit I'm an energy hog when it comes to electronics. So I enlisted the best energy gurus—and, yes, the best energy gadgets—to help uncover my home's energy vampires. The first challenge: finding the culprits.

"There's no way for consumers to even know which devices draw a lot of power while off," says Alan Meier, a senior scientist with the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory's Energy Analysis (LBNL) developed and supports the useful Home Energy Saver Web site). "They look entirely the same."

That's where P3 International's Kill A Watt EZ can help. Available online or in home repair stores

for \$30 to \$50, the device shows how much energy an item is using and how much it's costing you. We started with remote controls. I have ten, no less, and that was the first sign of trouble. "Any time you see a remote that means there's some standby power consumption [by the device or devices it controls]," Meier says.

More: "Save Money by Watching the Watts"

I lucked out in avoiding the worst offender: A plasma TV, which the Department of Energy says, costs a whopping \$165 a year for its standby power consumption alone. However, I did identify several other remote-controlled power wasters, including my cable box (\$10.33 a year), my CRT TV (\$5.16 a year), and my VCR (\$3.10 a year).

And they were only the first culprits. Here's a list of other energy drainers we discovered in my home, and the annual cost of their standby energy consumption (based on applying the national average electricity cost of 11.8 cents per kilowatt-hour to the electricity consumption of each device, as measured by the Kill a Watt EZ):

- ▶ Desktop computer: \$6.20
- ▶ Laptop (fully charged): \$2.06
- ▶ LCD computer monitor: \$1.03
- ▶ Wireless router: \$4.13
- ▶ DSL modem: \$5.16
- ▶ External USB hard drive: \$2.06
- ▶ Computer speaker system: \$5.16
- ▶ Inkjet printer: \$4.28
- ▶ DVD player: \$3.60
- ▶ Powered subwoofer: \$15.50
- ▶ Microwave oven: \$2.48

Even things like cell-phone chargers tack on an extra couple bucks when left plugged in, with nothing attached. Factor in other always-on appliances such as DVRs (\$27.90 a year) and stereo receivers (\$41.34 a year), and the total rises quickly. (Again, these calculations are based on my specific devices and the national average rate of 11.8 cents per kilowatt-hour; your rate may vary.)

The wasted cash is bad enough, but the toll on Mother Nature is worse. Vampire energy accounts for 1 percent of the world's carbon dioxide emissions. In the U.S. alone, that's equal to the combined annual production of dozens of power plants.



A Kill a Watt EZ can measure the electric consumption of any device plugged into it.