



# Bluestem NEWS

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## Annual Meeting Announcement

The Bluestem Electric Cooperative, Inc., Annual Meeting will be held on March 8, 2010, at the Riley County High School just north of Riley.

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 on attending the Annual Meeting and take part in the business of the cooperative.

## Trustee Elections This Month

In the next few days you will be receiving a voting packet for the Trustee Elections at

### Trustee Nominees

- ▶ **District 1 & 2, Position—At-Large**  
Robert Ohlde—Linn
- ▶ **District 3, Position—2**  
Dean Blanka—Wamego
- ▶ **District 3 & 4, Position—At-Large**  
Charles William Pence—Alta Vista  
Richard A. Ridder—St. George

Bluestem Electric Cooperative. Please be sure to follow directions and return your marked ballot in the envelopes supplied.

**Ballots must be postmarked or received at the cooperative office in Wamego or Clay Center prior to January 1, 2010.** The teller committee will meet on January, 6, 2010, 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.

## Cap & Trade: A Very Bad Plan

BY STEPHEN E. PARR

When the good folks at Enron first cooked up the idea for a cap-and-trade scheme, the appeal was that they could make a fortune running the financial markets to trade the emissions permits and the huge variety of exotic derivatives that would grow up around them. It should be no surprise that Wall Street's foremost wizards have jumped on board the latest cap-and-trade effort.

AIG's former Chief Executive Martin Sullivan said, "AIG can help shape a broad-based cap-and-trade legislative proposal, bringing to this critical endeavor a unique business perspective on the business opportunities and risks that climate change poses for our industry." Translation: We're going to get rich on this.

Warren Buffet, Berkshire Hathaway, Inc.'s Chairman, a renowned investor and supporter of President Barack Obama, acknowledged the reality of cap-and-trade by conceding that utilities must pass the additional costs down to consumers.

"In the utility business, it's going to be borne by customers," Buffet argued. "And it's a tax like anything else."

Additionally, Buffet pointed out that the "tax is probably going to be pretty regressive." A regressive tax is generally defined as a tax that takes a larger percentage of the income from low-income people than of high-

income people.

Generally, the base objective of a cap-and-trade system is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In reality, cap-and-trade is an unproven approach proffered as a means to control emissions by providing companies economic incentives for achieving reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Under a cap-and-trade system, companies are given a limit (cap) on the extent to which they can emit greenhouse gases. Companies that need to increase their emission allowance must purchase credits from others who emit less, creating the trade portion of the policy.

However, there is sentiment across the U.S. that the reason for implementing a cap-and-trade program is to increase revenue to pay for a myriad of programs desired by the current administration and Congress. Revenue will be raised by the annual auctioning of allowances that are needed by industry to cover carbon emissions. This aspect is opposite from the emissions program already in effect for sulfur dioxide and nitrous oxide, where there is not an annual auction to raise revenue for the government. The environmental issues



Stephen Parr

*Continued on page 16-B ▶*



## ATTENTION High School Seniors Scholarship Deadline is December 18

The Trustees of Bluestem Electric Cooperative, Inc., will be awarding six \$500 scholarships and four \$250 scholarships to high school seniors whose parents are members of Bluestem Electric Cooperative.

The scholarships will be awarded to the top 10 candidates who complete a two-stage process.

The first stage will include an application and test that must be completed and returned to one of the Bluestem Electric Cooperative offices (in either Wamego or Clay Center) by December 18, 2009.

In the second stage, a panel of judges will interview the finalists in January 2010.

For more information and to obtain an application contact your high school counselor or the Bluestem Electric Cooperative, Inc., at 785-456-2212 or 785-632-3111.

**You could be eligible  
to win a \$250 or \$500  
educational scholarship!**



## Cap & Trade: A Very Bad Plan Continued from page 16-A ►

are truly secondary and the need for the program is becoming increasingly questionable. Notice the dialogue has changed from "global warming" to "climate change". This change is because many scientists now believe the earth has been cooling, not warming, since 1997.

The Energy Information Agency (EIA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) recently conducted an independent analysis and concluded that energy costs will dramatically increase. Specifically, the group estimates that the proposed budget's cap-and-trade system will directly cause an estimated \$1.27 per gallon increase for the cost of gasoline and a 68 percent increase in electricity costs. The George C. Marshall Institute issued a report that states the average household would be subject to a permanent carbon tax increase "over time in real terms from about \$1,400 to \$2,000 during 2015-2030 and approximately \$2,000 to \$3,000 in 2030-2050.

The deputy director of the White House National Economic Council, Jason Furman, told Senate staff in March that the energy tax scheme would actually raise "two to three times" the budget's official \$646 billion revenue estimate. That would mean the actual revenues raised by selling emissions allowances would run well into the trillions, roughly between \$1.3 trillion and \$1.9 trillion between 2012 and 2016 by Furman's estimate. The cost to Kansans, if the price per allowance is \$20 per metric ton, will equate to \$1.4 billion annually. If the price per allowance is greater, the cost will be greater as well.

Does this sound like a plan that our trusted leaders in Congress would even consider passing? Well, on June 26th, that's exactly what the House of Representatives did. By a vote of 219 to 212, the House approved the

cap-and-trade program, better known as the Waxman-Markey bill.

There are two critical points that need to be highlighted. First, the cap-and-trade program is intended to make fossil fuel generation, primarily coal and natural gas, more expensive through taxation. Subsequently, this will raise costs to consumers and make alternative energy sources appear more economical in comparison. Using alternative energy to avoid the tax will not save any money. It will only appear so compared to the higher costs of carbon-based energy created by the tax. The bill artificially raises the cost of living to all consumers in our country for entirely questionable reasons. Second, the tax is not assessed worldwide. Therefore, the additional costs assessed upon U.S. businesses simply make those businesses less competitive in world markets. Cap-and-trade may cause U.S. businesses to close U.S. operations in favor of overseas operations that will operate without this onerous program.

Currently, the bill is in the hands of the Senate. A vote by the Senate is expected this fall. The Senate will put their mark on the bill through various amendments. Amended for better or for worse is anyone's guess. Perhaps the only way electric cooperatives can avoid this new "tax" is to push for a small utility exemption, the same exemption electric cooperatives were granted under the Renewable Energy Standard. However, one thing is for certain. If enacted into law, Congress will be responsible for increasing not only your electric bill by unheard of proportions, but every other product or commodity that is produced with a fossil fuel as well.

**STEPHEN E. PARR** is the Executive Vice President and CEO of Kansas Electric Power Cooperatives, Inc. Reprinted from the September 2009 edition of the *News-maker*, by permission.

# A Watt is a Watt, No Matter What— And Watts Add Up to kWh's!

There is so much false advertising these days that *Consumer Reports Magazine* says that the heavily advertised name brand models have proven disappointing in their tests.

You should always educate yourself before purchasing any product. If you truly want to know how much one of these or a similar electric space heater will cost you to operate, please call Bluestem before you purchase any type of electric space heater.

If you have just one or two spots that tend to be cold most of the time and you spend a lot of time in those spots, using space heaters probably makes more sense than turning up the thermostat for the whole house or apartment.

Turning up the thermostat might make the cold spots more comfortable, but you're wasting energy, making the rest of the home warmer than it



needs to be.

Another use for a space heater is to keep one area warm when the rest of the house is cool. For instance, you might use a programmable thermostat to turn the temperature down at night, but one family member doesn't like to sleep in a cold room. Putting an appropriate space heater in that room and shutting the door is a reasonable compromise.

What you don't want to do is rely on electric space heaters to provide the bulk of heat in your residence. Generally, you get a lot more heat per dollar from an efficient furnace than from a space heater when you're heating large areas.

Bluestem Electric is here to help you save on your electric bill, as well as helping you maintain a comfort level in your home.

## Merry Christmas & Happy New Year



Bluestem's offices will be closed on December 25 and January 1.

Clip and Save

## 2010 Bluestem Holiday Closings

- ▶ January 1.....New Years Day
- ▶ April 2.....Good Friday
- ▶ May 31.....Memorial Day
- ▶ July 5.....Independence Day
- ▶ September 6.....Labor Day
- ▶ November 25 & 26.....Thanksgiving
- ▶ December 24.....Christmas

## Trucks for Sale by Sealed Bid

Bluestem Electric is selling the following trucks by sealed bid.

- ▶ **Dodge Ram 2500**—1994, 3/4-ton, 4x4, bed not included, gas, 360, V-8, five-speed standard transmission, with approx. 160,000 miles.
- ▶ **Chevrolet C-60**—1966, two-ton, dual wheels, 327, V-8, four-speed standard transmission, two-speed trans-axle, with approx. 68,000 miles. This truck has a pulling winch included with a fifth wheel pole trailer.

The deadline for bids is January 14, 2010. To schedule a time at the Clay Center office to see the trucks, call 785-632-3111.



Dodge Ram 2500—1994, 3/4-ton, 4x4, V-8, five-speed, with approx. 160,000 miles.



Chevrolet C-60—1966, two-ton, V-8, four-speed with approx. 68,000 miles.



## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIPS

### Energy Commandment No. 5

# Thou Shalt Use the “Better Way”

BY DOUG RYE

A few mornings ago my wife said to me, “This would be a perfect morning to go to the farmers market. It is CLOUDY, about 70 degrees and NO WIND.” Even if we don’t buy anything, it would be a nice morning together. (Men, no comment about spending).

Well, I agreed and proceeded to get dressed for the market. There were about 20 vendors at the market

she said “It wouldn’t work very well today, would it?”

I responded that it would not. She asked, “How about wind?”

Yep, you guessed it, I looked toward the sky and the trees, turned 360 degrees and she started laughing as she said, “It wouldn’t work very well today, would it?”

I encouraged her to read the November issue of *Kansas Country Living* to learn the “Better Way.”

Why do so many ask about solar and wind? It is because they care about the world, our nation and their own houses. That is just like me and most of you folks. Part of that concern is about the carbon “footprint” created as a result of energy generation. I don’t know of any person who objects to reducing the footprint. On most days, however, generating electricity at your house with solar doesn’t even reduce a “toe-print.”

In my opinion, sealing the duct work and adding attic insulation would reduce more “toe-prints” than solar. Now, caulk and install a geothermal heat pump and you might reduce the print by five toes and a half foot. You simply get better results for less money, even when the sun is not shining and the wind isn’t blowing.

Folks, I care as much about this country and the environment as anyone else. It is none of my business what you do, I just want you to know the “Better Way.”

**DOUG RYE, is a licensed architect and the popular host of the “Home Remedies” radio show. You can contact Doug at 888-Doug-Rye. Source: Arkansas Electric Cooperatives Corporation.**

“On most days, generating electricity with solar doesn’t even reduce a “toe-print.””



and I like to talk to all of them. I want to know if they actually grew or made the products that they were selling.

The first person I met was a lady who had small bouquets of wildflowers. I told her that I would buy my wife flowers if she didn’t act up or spend any money. We proceeded around the square and purchased fresh blackberries, tomatoes, peaches, greens, grapes and two bluebird houses. We ended up at the flower lady’s table. She smiled and said, “You are back.” I said, “My name is Doug Rye. Have you ever heard of Doug Rye?”

“Yes, you are the man that writes in the cooperative magazine. What do you think of solar?” she asked.

I looked straight up toward the sky and turned 360 degrees, not saying a word. Several seconds passed as I continued to look at the sky. Finally,

## Practice Holiday Electrical Safety This Season

Bluestem Electric reminds you to keep electrical safety in mind when decorating for the holiday season:

- ▶ **Before decorating**, read and follow the manufacturers’ instructions concerning installation and maintenance of all decorative electrical products.
- ▶ **Use lights** and other electrical decorations certified by a recognized independent testing laboratory such as CSA, UL, or ETL.
- ▶ **When decorating outdoors**, be sure to use lights and other electrical decorations certified for outdoor use.
- ▶ **Inspect each decoration** before plugging into an outlet. Cracked, frayed, loose or bare wires, as well as loose connections may cause electrical shock or start a fire. Replace damaged items.
- ▶ **Unplug electrical** decorations before replacing light bulbs or fuses.
- ▶ **Never nail** or staple light strings or extension cords.
- ▶ **Do not connect** more than three light string sets together.
- ▶ **Do not overload** extension cords – they can overheat and start a fire. Keep all outdoor extension cords and light strings clear of snow and standing water.
- ▶ **Never use electric lights** on a metallic tree. The tree can become charged with electricity from faulty lights.