

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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

Wamego:
614 E Hwy-24, P.O. Box 5
Wamego, KS 66547
785-456-2212

www.bluestemelectric.com



Bluestem **NEWS**

Bluestem Annual Meeting 2010

Bluestem held its Annual Meeting on March 8, 2010, at the Riley County High School.

Approximately 200 members, Trustees, nine scholarship winners and employees attended the meeting and the vendor-products fair held prior to the meeting.

Trustee elections were conducted by mail ballot last December. Re-elected to the board were Robert Ohlde and Dean Blanka along with newly elected Trustee Richard Ridder.



Approximately 200 members and staff attended the BEC Annual Meeting at the Riley County High School on March 8.



Steve Parr, KEPCo, updated members on the new latan plant.



Bruce Meyer, Secretary, reads the annual meeting notice.



Doug Shepherd, KEC, discussed the services KEC provides for cooperatives.



Monty Peterson, St. George, won the KEPCo \$50 electric bill credit.



Ken Maginley, General Manager BEC introduces the 2010 scholarship winners.



BEC Board Vice President, Gary Buss, (right) presents Fred Klucas, Leonardville, with the \$300 master door prize.

Notice to Lightning & Surge Protection Subscribers

If you lease the lightning and surge suppression ring from Bluestem, we are requesting that after each and every lightning and thunderstorm that you check your electric meter to insure that the ring is still working properly.

When Bluestem had meter readers, they would report to us when one had failed and then the cooperative would replace the ring. Since the implementation of our new metering system it would be impossible for our employees to check each suppression ring after a storm.

There are two types of lightning and surge rings that have been installed over the years—EFI's and TESCO. Each ring should have an identifying name sticker located on it.

EFI—When an EFI has failed, it will make a loud buzzing/humming sound. When you inspect the device after a storm and you hear an unfamiliar sound, please call the cooperative to

have it replaced at no expense to you.

TESCO—The TESCO lightning and surge ring has two red lights located on the bottom side of the device that should be lit at all times.

When you inspect after a storm, if one or both of the lights are not lit, please call the cooperative. The ring will be replaced by the cooperative at no expense to you.

We appreciate your assistance with this matter and thank you for inspecting these devices after lightning and thunderstorms.

In addition, Bluestem's linemen will continue to inspect these devices while maintaining and improving our system when they are on your property.



EFI surge ring.



TESCO surge ring.

Eichman Retires from Bluestem Board After 20 Years of Service

Bluestem Board member, **DELBERT EICHMAN**, was recognized at the Bluestem annual meeting for 20 years of service to the cooperative.

Eichman served as a Trustee for the P.R.&W. Electric Cooperative Association, Inc. from July 1989 through December 1998 and for his continued service as a member of the first Board of Trustees of Bluestem Electric Cooperative, Inc., from January 1999 to January 2010.



Bluestem Board Vice President Gary Buss (right) recognizes Board member, Delbert Eichman, at the Annual Meeting for 20 years of service to the cooperative.

Moon Wins Door Prize at Home Show



DEB MOON, a Bluestem customer from rural Clay Center, was the lucky winner of a door prize given by Bluestem Electric at the Flint Hills Home Show in Manhattan.

Congratulations, Deb hope you enjoy your new grill!

Deb Moon, Clay Center, winner of an indoor/outdoor electric grill.

Tired of Writing a Check for Your Electric Bill?

To save you time, we have a program available where your bill will be automatically deducted from your checking account monthly! Clip this ad, return it to Bluestem, and we will send a Debit Authorization form to you. Once your application has been approved and processing completed, your bill will say, "Do Not Pay, Paid by Bank Draft Plan."

If you have any questions please call the Wamego office at 785-456-2212 or 800-558-1580, or the Clay Center office at 785-632-3111 or 800-297-8725.

Name _____ Account # _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____ Phone # _____

How Much is too Much?

Learn how to estimate your home appliances' energy use to see if it's time for an upgrade

You've had your fridge forever. With the exception of some crumbling parts of the seal, it's in pretty good shape and keeps your food cool. Why worry about budgeting for an upgrade?

Some homeowners forget the impact inefficient appliances have on a home's monthly power bill. Replacing a refrigerator made before 1993 with a new, Energy Star-rated model could knock between \$65-\$100 off your electricity bill each year.

This leaves consumers with a question when evaluating older appliances: how much energy use is too much? To estimate the energy use of an appliance, use this formula:

$$\text{Wattage} \times \text{hours used per day} \times \text{Days used per year} \div 1,000 = \text{kilowatt-hour (kWh) used annually}$$

For example: standard, large-screen television (214 Watts)

$$214 \text{ watts} \times 4 \text{ hours per day} \times$$

$$365 \text{ days per year} \div 1000 = 312 \text{ kWh}$$

Then calculate the annual cost to use an appliance by multiplying the kWh per year by

$$312 \text{ kWh} \times \$0.118 \text{ (the national average per kWh)} = \$36.82 \text{ per year}$$

In contrast, an Energy Star-rated standard, large-screen TV (151.5 Watts) costs \$25 to power annually.

You can usually find the wattage of most appliances stamped on the bottom or back of the appliance, or on its nameplate. The wattage listed is the maximum power drawn by the appliance. Since some appliances have a range of settings (i.e. hairdryers), the actual amount of power consumed

depends on the setting used at any one time.

Here are examples of the range of wattages for common household appliances:

- ▶ **Clothes washer:** 350–500 Watts
- ▶ **Clothes dryer:** 1,800–5,000 Watts
- ▶ **Dishwasher:** 1,200–2,400 Watts (heat drying feature increases energy use)

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Don't want the hassle of adding up the potential savings? Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives' Web site, www.TogetherWeSave.com, demonstrates how small changes like replacing an appliance or unplugging electronics lead to big energy savings.

Bluestem Electric Heat and Water Heater Rebate Program

Energy conservation and energy efficiency are initiatives that Bluestem supports. Through conservation and efficiency measures, less energy is consumed and, therefore, less energy is required to be produced. The reduction in the production and consumption of energy lowers the energy bill to your cooperative and ultimately to you, our member.

Conservation and efficiency are the emphasis of the rebate

program. To qualify for any of the rebates, the appliance must meet minimum energy efficiency performance standards detailed below. These standards are slightly higher than the required industry minimums.

If you have any questions, please give us a call at your appropriate office in Wamego—785-456-2212 or 800-558-1580 or in Clay Center—785-632-3111 or 800-297-8725.

Water Heaters

- ▶ Less than 60 gallons, must have a minimum Energy Factor (EF) of .93.
- ▶ 60 gallons or greater, must have a minimum EF of .91

Rebate Amounts

- ▶ \$75 for a electric-to-electric
- ▶ \$100 upgrade to electric lifetime
- ▶ \$125 for a non-lifetime water heater in new construction or replacing gas with electric
- ▶ \$175 lifetime water heater for new construction or replacing gas

Air Source Heat Pumps

- ▶ Minimum unit size of two tons.
- ▶ Must have a minimum Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (SEER) of 14.5.
- ▶ Must have a minimum Heating Seasonal Performance Factor (HSPF) of 8.2.

Rebate Amounts

- ▶ \$100 per ton for a 14.5 SEER
- ▶ \$150 per ton for a 15.5 SEER
- ▶ \$200 per ton for 16.5 SEER and above

Please note that electric resistance heat no longer qualifies for a rebate.

Ground Source Heat Pumps

- ▶ Minimum unit size of two tons.
- ▶ Open loop—Must have a minimum Coefficient of Performance (COP) of 3.6 and a minimum Energy Efficiency Rating (EER) of 16.2.
- ▶ Closed loop—Must have a minimum COP of 3.3 and a minimum EER of 14.1.

Rebate Amount

- ▶ \$125 per one-half ton

Lightning & Surge Protection Spring Special

When Lightning Strikes, Electronic Equipment Can be Damaged



Lightning and power surges can strike at any moment and can destroy or cause expensive damage to your sensitive electronics and appliances. Being prepared for these unexpected surges and spikes can make a big difference in protecting your appliances and equipment. Lightning is often the cause of power surges, but other factors such as birds, squirrels, and trees interfering with power lines can cause a power surge.

Construction work, demand fluctuations in your home, auto accidents involving utility poles, and even disturbances transmitted through telephone and cable lines can have the same effect. We want to help shield your electronics and appliances with our affordable surge protection program. Let us start protecting your home electronics and appliances today.

Bluestem is running a **SPRING SPECIAL** on the installation of the meter base lightning and surge protection ring. The ring will protect your home and specific major electrical appliances and equipment from lightning and power surges. The cooperative is offering you an invitation to sign up for the Lightning and Surge Protection Program. Here's how easily we can begin the service for you:

- ▶ The lightning and surge protection device, installed at your electric meter, will provide protection from lightning strikes and other power surges for your home appliances. **You lease the lightning and surge ring for only \$4.95 per month, added right on to your electric bill.** Our technicians do the installation for a one-time fee of \$69.95. **However, if you act before May 31, we'll drop the installation fee to \$34.95.**
- ▶ As part of the package, when you sign up you may also purchase in-home plug-in surge protection products for individual electronic equipment.
- ▶ The lease lightning and surge suppression ring comes with a warranty that has a total household coverage of \$50,000 and \$5,000 per appliance.

Bluestem Electric Cooperative can help you with residential surge protection products for your home as well as products for personal computers.

For more information on available products and prices or to sign up for the Lightning and Surge Protection Program, call member services at your appropriate Bluestem office.

Notice to Irrigators

The contract year for all irrigation services is June 1–May 31. If you need to change the rate for any of your irrigation services for any reason, please notify the business office by May 1.

The appropriate equipment must be installed for the load management rate by the beginning of the contract year. If you have any questions about the load management options, any current irrigation service, or any new irrigation service, please do not hesitate to contact your cooperative office.

How Much is too Much?

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Each time you make a change using the tools on www.TogetherWeSave.com you're shown how much money you could save on your annual electric bill!

- ▶ **Hair dryer:** 1,200–1,875 Watts
- ▶ **Microwave oven:** 750–1,100 Watts
- ▶ **Refrigerator (frost-free, 16 cubic feet):** 725 Watts

Once you calculate how much money you spend to run aging home appliances, compare this to what it would cost to use more efficient models. With federal incentives bringing down the price of an Energy Star-rated refrigerator or clothes washer, the annual energy savings could be worth an up-front investment. There are other benefits too. For example, not only have clothes washers become 64 percent more energy efficient since 2000—the tub size increased by nine percent. With a new model you can wash more clothes for less money every month!

Don't want the hassle of adding up the potential savings? Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives' Web site, www.TogetherWeSave.com, demonstrates how small changes like replacing an appliance or unplugging electronics lead to big energy savings. On the Web site under 'Add Up Your Savings,' you can walk through a typical home's kitchen, living room, and other common areas. Upgrade appliances and make other energy-smart choices in each room. Each time you make a change, you're shown how much money you could save on your annual electric bill!

The Web site www.TogetherWeSave.com demonstrates how small changes like replacing an appliance or unplugging electronics lead to big energy savings.