

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Bluestem NEWS

World's Most Expensive Dirt Dust Dollars Off Your Energy Bill By Regularly Changing Filters

The most expensive dirt in the world may lurk in your home's heating and cooling system. If neglected, dust collecting on the equipment's air filter could increase your energy bills hundreds of dollars every year and result in costly repair or replacement costs.

Dirty filters cause a system to work harder and break down faster. That's because unfiltered dust and grime work into critical parts, creating friction that causes unnecessary wear and, eventually, failure.

As you move around your home you drive dust into the air from carpets, drapes, and furniture. Pets generate dust particles by shedding, grooming,

and tracking in dirt from outside.

Regardless of where it comes from, dust trapped in a heating and cooling system air filter leads to several problems, including:

- ▶ Reduced air flow in the home and up to 15 percent higher operating costs.
- ▶ Costly duct cleaning or replacement.
- ▶ Lowered system efficiency.

Every time a system with a dirty filter kicks on, the day of reckoning—total replacement—draws closer. To avoid this expense, change filters monthly when a system's in regular use. Discuss cleaning the unit and

ductwork with your heating and cooling service professional.

While most types of filters must be replaced, a few filters are reusable. They're available in a variety of types and efficiencies, rated by a Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (MERV). MERV, a method developed by the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers, tests filter effectiveness. The higher the MERV number, the higher the filter's effectiveness at keeping dust out of your system.

To learn more about how to save energy around your home, visit www.energysavers.gov, or go to www.TogetherWeSave.com.



Are you wasting your money on DIRT?

Dirty air filters cause a heating and cooling system to work harder and break down faster. That's because unfiltered dust and grime work into critical parts, creating friction that causes unnecessary wear and, eventually, failure.

How does a dirty air filter cost you?

- Reduces air flow in the home, leading to up to 15 percent higher operating costs
- Leads to costly duct cleaning or replacement
- Lowers system efficiency

To avoid these expenses, change filters monthly when your heating and cooling system's in regular use. Discuss cleaning the unit and ductwork with your heating and cooling service professional.

Learn more ways to save at www.energysavers.gov.

Source: High Performance HVAC, U.S. Department of Energy

Offices to Close for Labor Day

The Bluestem offices will be closed Monday, September 6, 2010, in observance of Labor Day. In case of an outage problem, call Bluestem East-785-456-2212 or 800-558-1580; Bluestem West-785-632-3111 or 800-297-8725.

Why Keep Power Lines in Harm's Way?

High winds and icy conditions can cause tree limbs to fall on power lines, triggering outages. Although Bluestem's linemen are on call around the clock and respond quickly to problems, some folks ask a simple question: Why keep power lines in harm's way?

There are two ways electricity can be delivered to a home: through overhead or underground power lines. Although underground lines may seem attractive during storms since the lines are not exposed to extreme weather, the technology doesn't always make sense for Bluestem whose focus is on affordability.

In Georgia, for example, installing power lines underground costs double the amount per foot compared to overhead. In Iowa, building underground lines averages between \$85,000 to \$100,000 per mile while overhead line construction runs about \$60,000 per mile. In mountainous or rocky areas, where linemen sometimes resort to using dynamite to install utility poles, the price tag may be even higher.

Most underground lines nationally are found in subdivisions where developers request and pay for the option for aesthetic reasons or to comply with local statutes. A high concentration of homes in these areas helps spread out the expense. According to Hi-Line Engineering, a Georgia-based utility consulting firm, nine out of 10 new subdivisions are served by underground cable.

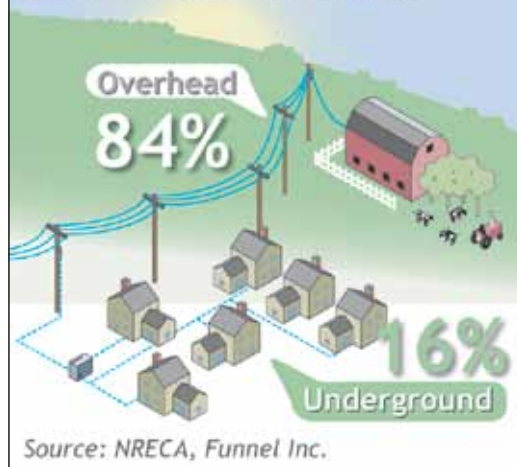
The bulk of the nation's cooperative energy (including that provided to subdivisions) continues to be delivered via overhead lines—16 percent of the 2.5 million miles of distribution lines owned and maintained by electric co-ops across the nation are found underground (although the amount grows by approximately one percent annually). Cooperatives are not-for-profit, selecting distribution methods with two goals in mind: keeping electricity affordable and reliable for members.

There are pros and cons to both forms of power distribution. For instance, underground facilities are more reliable during storms and generally require less right-of-way maintenance because there are no trees, brush, and other vegetation to clear away.

However, faults in underground power lines are not easy to track down and fix. A North Carolina study found that outage restoration times averaged 92 minutes for overhead lines versus 145 minutes for underground lines. In 2005, Hi-Line Engineering compared the

How is your power delivered?

Electric cooperatives own and maintain 2.5 million miles of distribution lines across America. The majority are overhead lines, while 16 percent are underground.



increased cost of underground lines against their benefits in Virginia. The results: underground savings did not outweigh the heavy initial cost of installation.

"If a tree falls on a line, you can normally drive down the line, see the problem, and get to work restoring power," explains Don Johnson, Assistant Operations Superintendent. "The same holds for repairing broken insulators and crossarms - if you see it, you can fix it. But underground lines are tough to troubleshoot. You can't find a problem with your eyes - you have to search harder for it, tracking it down based on where the power flow stops. Then a line crew has to dig a hole to reach the spot before repairs can be made."

For most cooperative members, affordable overhead lines will remain the norm, at least for now. To find out more about how Bluestem Electric Cooperative, Inc. is looking out for you, visit www.bluestemelectric.com.

Reminder: School Starts in August

The school year is coming up. Please make sure to remember to drive carefully and watch for school buses stopped for children on the roadway!



Trucks and Generator For Sale By Sealed Bid



Chevy Digger Derrick comes with pole claws and the bucket attachment, but no bucket.

Bids must be submitted to the Bluestem office by 4:30 p.m. on or before Friday, September 10, 2010.

Bids will be opened at the September Bluestem Board Meeting on September 13, 2010. These items will be sold as is. Bluestem has the right to refuse any and all bids.

2001 Dodge Ram 2500 4X4

- ▶ Diesel
 - ▶ Approximately 160,000 miles
 - ▶ Standard five-speed transmission
 - ▶ Has been serviced every 5,000 miles!
- To view this vehicle, call the Clay Center office at 785-632-3111.

1990 Chevy Digger Derrick

- ▶ 3208 Caterpillar Engine
- ▶ 42 foot boom reach
- ▶ Pole claws and bucket attachment No bucket supplied

To view this vehicle, call the Clay Center office at 785-632-3111.

150 KW/ 480 Volt Diesel Powered Generator

- ▶ Skid mounted
- ▶ D337 Caterpillar Engine with electric start



The diesel powered generator is believed to be a 1937 model. The purchaser is responsible for loading and hauling the generator.

- ▶ Engine runs, but is reported that the engine is blowing coolant.
- ▶ Our employees think the engine is a 1937 model.
- ▶ The purchaser will be responsible for loading and hauling.

You may view this generator at the Wamego facility located at 614 East Highway 24. Please call 785-456-2212 for details.



The Dodge Ram has approximately 160,000 miles.

“Blinks” Can Signal a Properly Working Electrical System

We often hear the question from members “What causes my lights to blink?” The utility network is subject to certain short-term losses of power, and Bluestem Electric Cooperative takes all possible measures to prevent these occurrences and minimize the effects to our members. Blinking lights are a result of momentary outages that occur when some type of disturbance exists on the line. This could be a lightning strike, an automobile striking a pole, or when a squirrel or tree branch comes into contact with an energized power line.

When lights blink, it is an indication that the cooperative’s equipment is operating properly. If a fault or short circuit happens on a power line, a device called an “oil circuit re-closer” (OCR) opens to stop it, then quickly closes back in. Although the process is quick—and usually temporary—it may cause your lights to blink, making it necessary to reset digital clocks and appliances with digital displays.

The OCR is essentially a breaker, functioning much like a breaker in the electrical panel in your home. It permits power to continue flowing through the line with only a brief interruption of service—rather than causing an extended power outage. If the short circuit continues, the OCR will operate or “trip” three times before eventually stopping the flow of electricity and causing a power outage. This process protects the lines from damage, cutting off power to the affected section of the line and isolating the problem until it can be repaired.

Although the weather and nature’s creatures are beyond our control, cooperative members can lessen the effects and inconvenience of “blinks” when they occur. When purchasing small appliances and digital clocks, consider a model with battery backup. You may also want to install meter-base surge protection for the major appliances in your home and surge protection with built-in uninterrupted power supply (UPS) for your computer or other electronic devices whose “memory” would be lost with a power interruption.

How Are We Doing?

Customer Service Questionnaire

Bluestem Electric Cooperative, Inc. wants to provide all of its customers with the best electric service possible at the least practical cost. Customer service is an important aspect of your cooperative's business. To improve upon this, your electric cooperative needs your input. Therefore, we ask that you please complete the questions below and return it to your local Bluestem office.



In your contacts with your electric cooperative during the past year:

1. Did you find your cooperative's representatives friendly and courteous?	Yes	No	N/A
2. Were your service/bill complaints promptly handled and explained to your satisfaction?	Yes	No	N/A
3. If service outages occurred, did you feel that service was restored in an efficient and timely manner?	Yes	No	N/A
4. What is your assessment of the quality of electric service provided by your electric cooperative?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement

Additional Comments: _____

_____ **Name (optional):** _____

Nomination & Election Process from the Bluestem Cooperative Bylaws

SECTION 4.05 Nomination of Trustees. The Board shall appoint a nominating committee, on or before the first of October of each year, consisting of no less than one, nor more than five members from each district for whom a Trustee is to be elected. Board members may not serve on the nominating committee.

Only committee members from each district will nominate their own candidate. Committee members from districts one and two will meet together at Clay Center and committee members from districts three and four will meet together at Wamego. Nominating committees shall meet during the month of October.

On, or before, the first day of November, the nominating committee shall prepare and post a list of nominations for Trustee at the Wamego office if a Trustee is to be elected from districts three or four, and at the Clay Center office if a

Trustee is to be elected from districts one or two.

The committee shall nominate one or more candidates for each position. Nominations may be made by petition filed on or before the close of business on December 1 at the Wamego office, for Trustees to be elected from districts three and four, and at the Clay Center office, for Trustees to be elected from districts one or two. The petition must be signed by no less than 5 percent of the membership of the district for whom the Trustee is to be elected. The secretary shall immediately post such nominations at the same place where the list of nominations by the committee is posted. Nominations made by the petition shall appear on the ballot in the order received

SECTION 4.06 Election of Trustees. The election of Trustees shall be by mail ballot. Only those nominees selected by the nominating commit-

tee or nominated by petition shall appear on the ballot. There may be write-in votes for a qualified member not named on the ballot. The ballot shall first list the name(s) nominated by the committee, then the name(s) nominated by petition in the order received and at the end, a place to write in a name. Failure of strict compliance with provisions of this section shall not affect the validity of any election of Trustees.

The secretary shall mail the ballots to the respective members on or before the tenth day of December of each year. On or before the first day of January of each year, ballots must be postmarked or received at the Wamego office or the Clay Center office.

Those members who have been appointed to serve on each district's respective nominating committee will be listed here in next month's *Kansas Country Living Magazine*.