



Bluestem NEWS

Bluestem Electric Cooperative

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Contact Us

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FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

Working with Local Legislators

"All politics is local." This observation by the late Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill, Jr., former Speaker of the House of Representatives, means that even national politics have a local impact, and people care most about issues that directly affect them. Indirectly, this famous adage underscores the importance and value of local politics.

At Bluestem Electric we think it's critical to develop and cultivate relationships with local legislators because they craft, introduce and vote on legislation that impacts the local business climate, the environment and quality of life for our communities. That's why we work closely with our local elected officials. After all, our purpose is to provide safe, reliable energy, but our mission is to help our communities thrive.

Bluestem Electric is a local busi-

ness that powers economic development and prosperity for our region. As a cooperative, we have deep roots here, and we listen closely to our members to better understand the needs of the communities. Our leadership, board members and employees live and work right here in the communities we serve.

We strive to be an advocate for our communities, ensuring that local legislators know, understand and act on the issues that are important to our area.

Providing Industry Guidance and Expertise

As a practical matter, we recognize that most legislators are "generalists," yet they vote on a wide range of issues. Their



Mike Morton

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ANNUAL MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

The Bluestem Electric Cooperative, Inc. Annual Meeting will be held on March 28, 2022, at the United Methodist Church Family Life Center in Clay Center, Kansas. The meeting will begin at 7 p.m. The Annual Meeting Notice will be included in the March issue of *Kansas Country Living* magazine this year. Please look for this issue as there will not be a separate booklet mailing. Official Notice of the Annual Meeting will be mailed prior to the meeting. Again, this will be included in the March *Kansas Country Living* magazine. We hope you will plan to attend the annual meeting and take part in the business of the cooperative.



Statement of Nondiscrimination

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer. If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call 866-632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter by mail to U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax 202-690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

Keep Your ACH Payment Information Current



If you are signed up for automatic bank draft or recurring credit/debit card payments for your Bluestem Electric account(s), please update your information if you change bank accounts or get new credit/debit cards. This will ensure that your account will be paid on time and you will avoid any penalty charges.

2022 Holiday Office Closings

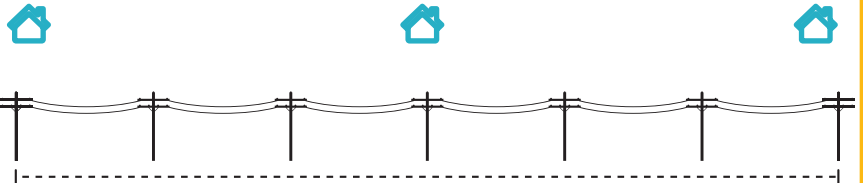
April 15.....Good Friday
 May 30.....Memorial Day
 July 4.....Independence Day
 Sept. 5.....Labor Day
 Nov. 24 & 25.....Thanksgiving
 Dec. 26.....Christmas

GOING THE EXTRA MILE

Electric co-ops maintain more miles of power lines per consumer than other electric utilities.

Even though we power fewer consumers on our lines compared to other utilities, we'll always go the extra mile for you, the consumer-members we proudly serve.

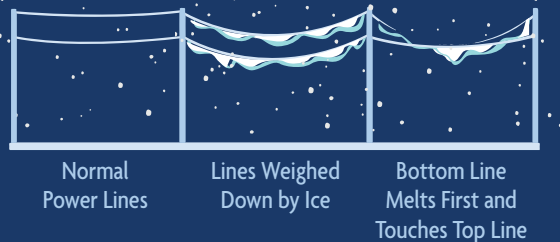
KANSAS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES serve 3 consumer-members per mile of line.



OTHER ELECTRIC UTILITIES serve 32 consumers per mile of line.



ICE ON POWER LINES A WEIGHTY SUBJECT



Ice is a force to be reckoned with when moving electricity across power lines and into your home or business.

ICE ON DISTRIBUTION LINES

Ice can quickly lead to broken power poles and other pole equipment. Ice can also make falling tree branches 30 times heavier and much more likely to break power lines.

ON A 300-FOOT SPAN OF 1-INCH THICK POWER LINES

- ▶ 1/2 inch of ice adds 281 pounds of weight
- ▶ 1 inch of ice adds 749 pounds of weight
- ▶ 2 inches of ice adds 2,248 pounds of weight

WHEN ICE MELTS

Melting ice can cause power outages. If ice on the bottom (neutral) line melts before the lines above, it can cause the lines to touch and cause power outages.

OTHER ICE FACTS

- ▶ Damage can begin when ice exceeds 1/4 inch
- ▶ 1/2 inch of ice can cause a line to sag up to 12 inches
- ▶ Pressure can be caused by a broken tree limb
- ▶ Both ice and melting ice can cause power outages

Sources: Weather.gov, Severe-wx.pbworks.com and Victory Electric Cooperative Engineering

Working with Local Legislators *Continued from page 12A* ▶

expertise may not include the changing energy industry, which is why Bluestem Electric provides guidance and expertise from subject matter experts who've been in the energy industry for many years.

One way we do this is through the Co-ops Vote program. Partnering with Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. we bring together co-op trustees and key staff, local officials and our legislators to discuss energy-industry topics and their affects on the quality of life in our communities.

Today's energy landscape is an increasingly complex topic covering not only the traditional engineering and vegetation management aspects of the industry, but also encompasses technology, cybersecurity, the electrification of the transportation sector and more.

Our experts provide briefings and background to legislators, committees and staff, often at Co-ops Vote events, and we offer expert testimony for hearings and other legislative or regulatory meetings or gatherings. Because we're involved in economic development and we know local community leaders, we can provide insight on how issues and policies under discussion might impact our region.

Co-op as a Convener

In addition, we periodically invite legislators and their staff to the co-op for tours so they can see first-hand how we operate and can view our operations center, substations, solar fields, and EV charging station. We also help host an area legislator dinner with other co-ops to give the legislators a chance to get to know us.

Representing Your Best Interests

We strive to be a trusted resource on energy issues. Because of our deep roots in the communities, we have a firm understanding of local issues and needs. We will continue looking after the long-term interests of our consumer-members. This means we can cultivate and foster positive, productive relationships with legislators who know and trust us, because we're advocating on behalf of the communities we serve.

We're proud to power your life and bring good things to the communities we serve. We hope you'll continue to advise Bluestem Electric on matters of importance so we can continue to advocate on your behalf and improve the quality of life for all.

Swenson Celebrates 25 Years of Service

Journeyman Lineman **KEVIN SWENSON** celebrated his 25-year work anniversary with Bluestem Electric this year.

General Manager Michael Morton presented Swenson and his wife, Karla, with a framed lineman print at a breakfast held in his honor.

Bluestem would like to congratulate and thank Kevin for his work and dedication to the co-op over the past 25 years.



General Manager Michael Morton (left) presents Kevin Swenson and his wife, Karla, with a gift to commemorate his service.

Our Crews are Working to Serve You Help us keep them safe

- ▶ At a job site, don't ask crews what they are working on or when power will be restored. Crew members must give the repairs their full attention to ensure safety. Diverting their attention increases the amount of time it takes to resolve the issue.
- ▶ When driving by a utility truck (or any roadside vehicle with flashing lights), please move over and give them space. In a work zone, follow all signage, including speed limits. Drivers who travel through a work zone too fast endanger workers on the ground and up in the bucket.
- ▶ If one of our employees is in your yard or on an easement to address service issues, please secure your dogs. Also keep meters and pad mount transformers (green boxes) free from obstructions.
- ▶ Please be patient as we work on an outage or other issues. Safety is our top priority, for you and our employees.



2021 Teller Committee Selected

Each year, the Bluestem Electric Board of Trustees appoints a teller committee to count and verify the ballots for the election of trustees. The Bluestem Board of Trustees met on Dec. 20, 2021, and appointed the following members to serve on the teller committee:

- ▶ **DANIEL VATHAUER** – Barnes
- ▶ **TIM VOELKER** – Greenleaf
- ▶ **JERRY BURGER** – Palmer
- ▶ **DAVID PFIZENMAIER** – Clay Center
- ▶ **JAY PETERSON** – Leonardville
- ▶ **ARTHUR WINTERMAN** – Westmoreland
- ▶ **PATRICK BLANKA** – Wamego
- ▶ **MIKE EBERT** – St. George
- ▶ **LARRY MATZKE** – Wheaton
- ▶ **JAY STAMM** – Alma
- ▶ **KATHERINE PACHECO** – Alma
- ▶ **JERRY MOREHEAD** – Manhattan

The teller committee will meet on Jan. 5, 2022, at the Bluestem Electric Cooperative office located at 1000 South Wind Drive in Wamego, KS at 6 p.m. to tabulate and certify the election results.

The results of the election of trustees will be printed in the February edition of Bluestem NEWS located in *Kansas Country Living* magazine.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month

Maximize your heating system's performance by inspecting, cleaning or replacing air filters once a month or as needed to reduce energy costs and prevent potential damage to your system. Make sure radiators, baseboard heaters and warm-air registers aren't blocked so air can flow freely. **SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY**

Are Portable Space Heaters Efficient for My Home?

Small space heaters are meant to do exactly as their name says: heat a small space. But unfortunately, many people use portable space heaters to heat their entire home, which can really take a toll on your energy bills. The truth is, whether you should use space heaters really depends on your home's efficiency and energy needs.

If you're using a space heater to compensate for problems in your home, like inadequate insulation, drafty windows and exterior doors, or an inefficient heating system, space heaters are not a practical solution. Your best bet is to improve the overall efficiency of your home. If you're on a tight budget, caulking and weather stripping around windows and exterior doors is a low-cost, easy way to save energy. Depending on the size of your home, adding insulation can be a great next step. Loose fill insulation typically costs \$1 to \$1.50 per square foot. Taking these proactive energy-saving measures rather than relying on space heaters for supplemental warmth can reduce your heating and cooling bills for years to come.

Perhaps your home is energy efficient but you're cold-natured and want a specific room to be cozier than the rest. In this case, a space heater may work for your needs. A good comparison is ceiling fans; we use ceiling fans in the summer to cool people, not rooms. A space heater can be used in a similar way during winter months. Only use a space heater in small spaces that you're occupying and, if possible, try to shut off other rooms to contain the warmth provided by the space heater. If you decide to use a space heater to heat a small area in your home, make sure the heater is properly sized for the space; most heaters include a general sizing table.



A word about safety: the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates more than 25,000 residential fires are associated with the use of space heaters every year, resulting in more than 300 deaths. If you must use a space heater, purchase a newer model that includes the most current safety features and make sure it carries the Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) label. Choose a thermostatically controlled heater to avoid energy waste and overheating, and place the heater on a level surface away from foot traffic when in use. Always keep children and pets away from space heaters.

Consider alternative ways to stay warm like extra layers of clothing or UL-approved electric blankets. If you have hardwood or tile floors, lay down area rugs to provide additional insulation (and appeal!) and maintain warmth. We know it's cold out there, but remember in addition to safety concerns, space heaters can greatly increase your energy bills if used improperly. If you're looking for alternative ways to save energy and increase comfort in your home, contact Bluestem Electric Cooperative at 800-558-1580. We're here to help you manage your energy use.