BLUESTEM ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Bluestem Electric Cooperative, Inc.
1000 South Wind Dr., P.O. Box 5
Wamego, KS 66547
800-558-1580
www.bluestemelectric.com

Bluestem NEWS

BLUESTEM ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Mark Diederich
President

Donald Classen
Vice President

Bruce Meyer
Secretary

Amanda Gnadt
Treasurer

Patricia Bloomdahl
Trustee

Gary Buss
Trustee

Brent McKeeman
Trustee

Steven Ohlde
Trustee

Stephen J. O'Shea
Trustee

Matthew Rezac
Trustee

Richard Ridder
Trustee

MANAGEMENT STAFF
Michael Leitch
Chief Executive Officer

Trisha Bradley
Manager of Accounting and Finance

Jerod Chaffee
Manager of Line Operations

Benjiman C. Easterberg
Manager of AMI and Mapping/OMS

Kevin Heptig
Manager of Member Services

CONTACT US
Bluestem Electric Cooperative, Inc.
P.O. Box 5, Wamego, KS 66547
800-558-1580

FROM THE CEO

Optimize Your HVAC System



Michael Leitch

As November settles in and temperatures begin to drop, your HVAC system will soon become one of the hardest-working appliances in your home. Before your system undergoes extra work this winter, now is a great time to ensure it is optimized and ready to go.

Start with something simple. One of the easiest and most effective measures you can take is checking filters. A clogged or dirty filter makes it harder for air to move through your system, which can make it run longer and work harder than necessary. Check filters regularly and replace them according to the manufacturer's recommendations. Vents matter too. Look around your home to make sure furniture, curtains, rugs and other household items aren't blocking any supply or return vents.

If you have a heat pump, your outdoor unit also deserves extra attention this time of year. Falling leaves, limbs and other debris can collect around the unit and restrict airflow. Clear any fallen vegetation near your unit and keep the area around your outdoor unit clear. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's cleaning recommendations. If you have a traditional central air conditioning system, your outdoor unit will likely remain idle during winter months, but it's still good practice to keep it clear of debris.

Don't overlook what you can't see. With forced air systems, ductwork plays an essential role in delivering heated air throughout your home. Leaks, gaps or disconnected sections can allow

Continued on page 12D ▶



NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

The nominating committee nominated the following individuals as candidates for the trustee positions whose three-year terms will be expiring:

DISTRICT 1, POSITION 2
BRYCE PORTER — Waterville

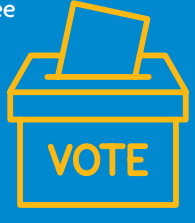
DISTRICT 2, POSITION 1
GARY BUSS — Leonardville

DISTRICT 3, POSITION 1
STEPHEN J. O'SHEA — Blaine

DISTRICT 4, POSITION 1
AMANDA GNADT — Alma

The election of all candidates will be open Dec. 1, 2026, through Jan. 1, 2027, by web, telephone and mail-in (member request only). Each member will vote for one candidate in their district. Votes must be cast or returned to the ballot election processing center by Jan. 1, 2027.

YOUR VOTE IS YOUR VOICE



Bluestem's trustee election opens Dec. 1, 2026, through Jan. 1, 2027. Bluestem will be offering online, telephone and mail-in (by member request only) voting for members. Look for the URL for online voting on our website, the QR code in December's *Kansas Country Living* magazine or on Bluestem's Facebook page.

Join Us for Bluestem's *Virtual* ANNUAL MEETING IN MARCH!

We invite you to take part in Bluestem Electric's 2027 Annual Meeting from the comfort of your home. A short video highlighting the cooperative's 2026 accomplishments and financial report will be available on Bluestem's YouTube channel March 1-31, 2027.

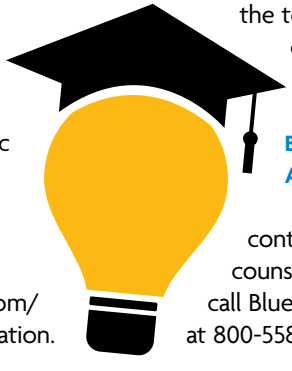
As a thank-you for participating, members who watch the video and obtain the code shown at the end can receive a $20 bill credit.

SIMPLY:

- **WATCH THE VIDEO** between March 1 and March 31, 2027.
- **WRITE DOWN THE CODE PHRASE** displayed at the end of the video.
- **CALL BLUESTEM** at 800-558-1580 and provide the code to register for your $20 bill credit.

Watch. Call. Earn a $20 bill credit. It's that easy!

Bluestem Offers 10 Scholarships

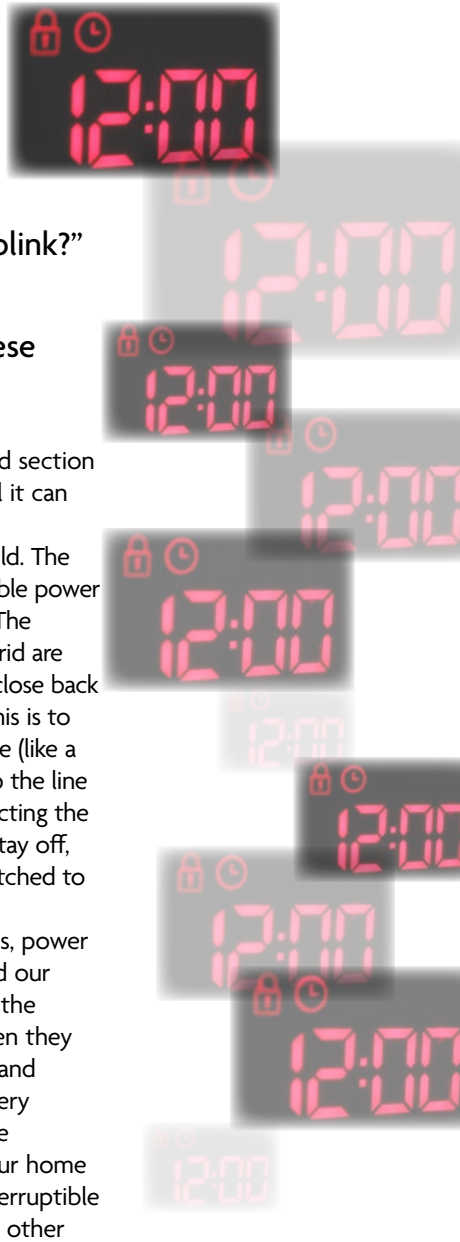


Bluestem Electric Cooperative, Inc. will award 10 scholarships for $1,000 each to high school seniors whose parents or guardians are members of Bluestem Electric Cooperative. The scholarship application will be available on the Bluestem website starting Nov. 17, 2026. Please visit www.bluestemelectric.com/scholarships for more information.

Scholarships will be awarded to the top 10 candidates who complete an online application, test and personal video **BY FRIDAY, JAN. 8, 2027, AT 4:30 P.M.**

For more information contact your high school counselor after Nov. 17, 2026, or call Bluestem Electric Cooperative at 800-558-1580.

‘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 on our members.

Blinking lights result from momentary outages caused by a disturbance on the line. These momentary outages can result from natural events, power supply issues, or human activity, including storms, lightning, vehicle accidents, or animals and tree branches contacting power lines. These momentary outages can sometimes occur on our power supplier’s transmission lines that feed the cooperative’s system, which Bluestem does not have control of.

When lights blink, it indicates 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 recloser” (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.

Bluestem’s system is operating as it should. The co-op cannot guarantee 100% uninterruptible power because of the above-mentioned causes. The OCR’s and fuses protecting the electrical grid are designed to open up (cause a blink), then close back in to keep the power on. The reason for this is to try and clear any transient faults on the line (like a squirrel or tree), then close back in to keep the line on. Without this type of equipment protecting the circuits, the power would just go off and stay off, causing an outage until a line crew is dispatched to clear the problem and restore power.

Although the weather, nature’s creatures, power supply issues and acts of God, 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 surge protection for the major appliances in your home and surge protection with a built-in uninterruptible power supply (UPS) for your computer or other electronic devices whose “memory” would be lost with a power interruption.



TIPS TO AVOID UTILITY SCAMS

Stay alert for fraudulent utility calls. Scammers can spoof caller ID to make calls appear to come from your electric utility. They may threaten disconnection, demand immediate payment or ask for personal information. Don’t rely on caller ID to verify a caller’s identity. If a call seems suspicious, hang up and contact your utility using the phone number printed on your bill or listed on the official website. SOURCE: FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION



Why every step matters near a downed power line

When a downed power line touches the ground, electricity can spread out like ripples on a pond.

If your feet touch two different voltage levels, electricity can move through your body.

That is step potential, and it can be deadly.

IF YOU SEE A DOWNED POWER LINE:

- **STOP.** Keep yourself and others at least 50 feet away.
- **CALL 911.** Report it and wait for help.
- **NEVER TOUCH THE LINE** or anything it touches, including fences, vehicles, trees, equipment or people.

IF YOU ARE NEAR A DOWNED LINE, DO NOT WALK OR RUN AWAY:

- **SHUFFLE TO SAFETY.** Keep feet close together and on the ground.
- **HOP AWAY.** Keep feet together; hop and land together.

Downed lines can be silent, still and deadly. Stay away and call 911.

SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG

Optimize Your HVAC System

Continued from page 12A ▶

conditioned air to escape before it reaches the rooms where you need it. If you've noticed rooms that never seem to be comfortable or you have noticed unusually high energy use, ask an HVAC professional to inspect your ductwork.

Fall is also an ideal time for a professional tune-up. A technician can inspect your heating system, identify potential problems, and make sure it is operating safely and efficiently before the coldest weather arrives. Regular professional maintenance can also help extend the life of your equipment.

Finally, take more control of your energy use by proactively managing your thermostat. There's no reason to heat an empty house. Lowering the temperature when you're away can help reduce energy use. And think about lowering the temperature while you sleep too! A programmable or smart thermostat can make those adjustments automatically, taking one more thing off your to-do list.

Your home heating system has an important job this winter. Give it a little extra attention this fall to help the system operate more efficiently, reduce unnecessary energy use and potentially prevent an inconvenient breakdown on a cold winter night.



ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Lower your water heater temperature to save energy. The U.S. Department of Energy recommends 120 F for most households. Lowering the temperature can reduce energy use and help prevent scalding. Always check the owner's manual before making adjustments.

SOURCE: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY