

Bluestem NEWS

BLUESTEM ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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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

Electricity Brings Everyday Value

We know our members are feeling stretched right now. When the cost of groceries, gas, insurance and other essentials keeps climbing, every bill that arrives in the mailbox matters — including the electric bill. If you're looking closely at your household budget or wondering how to make each dollar go further, you're not alone. Your co-op understands, and we don't take lightly the trust you place in us to provide safe, reliable energy at a fair cost.

That's why I think it's important to look at what electricity makes possible each day and the value it continues to provide in our homes, farms and businesses.

The average U.S. residential electric bill is about \$150 a month — roughly \$5 a day. I often think about what that \$5 provides. It's about the same cost of a specialty coffee, yet electricity powers nearly every moment of our daily lives,

often without us giving it a second thought. In fact, many typical purchases cost more than a day's worth of electricity. A fast-food combo meal averages about \$10, and a single movie ticket can cost around \$15.

For about \$5 a day, your refrigerator keeps food fresh around the clock. Your heating and cooling system helps keep your family comfortable through the seasons. Lights brighten your home after sunset. Appliances make cooking and cleaning easier. Devices stay charged so you can work, learn, communicate and stay connected with loved ones. When you think about everything electricity makes possible, it's one of the best values in the average household budget.

Even with electricity's exceptional value, we know every dollar matters. If



Michael Leitch

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WWW.VOTE.COOP

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Make your voice count

Take the pledge to vote this election year.

Visit vote.coop to take the pledge.

Co-ops across the nation are dedicated to making our voices heard at the polls. Collectively we can make a difference.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE SELECTED

Each year the board of trustees of the cooperative shall appoint a nominating committee whose function is to nominate one or more candidates for trustee positions with expiring terms. The Bluestem Board of Trustees has appointed the following members to serve on the respective nominating committee:

DISTRICTS 1 & 2 (to meet in Clay Center on Oct. 6)

DISTRICT 1

- ▶ **JERRY BURGER** — Palmer
- ▶ **SCOTT SUMP** — Green
- ▶ **TIM VOELKER** — Greenleaf

DISTRICT 2

- ▶ **JULIE HENTON** — Clay Center
- ▶ **MICHAEL MILLER** — Wakefield

DISTRICTS 3 & 4 (to meet in Wamego on Oct. 6)

DISTRICT 3

- ▶ **DAN POLLOCK** — Havensville
- ▶ **MIKE HEPTIG** — St. George
- ▶ **JON HOLLIDAY** — Soldier
- ▶ **KATHRYN MURRAY** — Onaga

DISTRICT 4

- ▶ **EVAN PARSONS** — Manhattan
- ▶ **MARC DEEVER** — Alma

THE FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF TRUSTEE POSITIONS WITH EXPIRING TERMS:

DISTRICT 1, POSITION 2

- ▶ **BRUCE MEYER** — Palmer

DISTRICT 2, POSITION 1

- ▶ **GARY BUSS** — Leonardville

DISTRICT 3, POSITION 3

- ▶ **STEPHEN J. O'SHEA** — Blaine

DISTRICT 4, POSITION 1

- ▶ **AMANDA GNADT** — Alma

Bluestem Celebrates Retirement of Longtime Employee

KEVIN SWENSON started Feb. 1, 1996, for C&W Electric Cooperative, until they merged with PR&W Electric Cooperative in 1999 to form Bluestem Electric Cooperative. He continued with Bluestem until his retirement on July 15, 2026, serving the co-op and the members for over 30 years.

RIGHT: Kevin and Karla Swenson pose for a photo together while attending Kevin's retirement party.



FARM AND RANCH LIFE IS FULL OF VALUABLE LESSONS

— but also serious risks, especially for kids. Think twice before letting kids drive tractors; more than 40% of fatal farm accidents include those younger than 15.



SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG

Electricity Brings Everyday Value

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you're looking for ways to lower your energy use, Bluestem Electric is here to help. Whether you need information about co-op rebates and efficiency programs or answers to questions about your monthly bill, our team is always available.

If you need assistance in paying your electric bill, Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) is a federally funded program that helps eligible households pay a portion of their energy cost by providing a one-time per year benefit. Members can also call 211 (toll-free, statewide, 24 hours, seven days a week) for a listing of organizations that provide assistance. Outside

of Kansas (or in areas where 211 is unavailable), call 888-413-4327. You will need to enter your location, language spoken and "Utility Assistance."

Bluestem Electric is proud to be more than your electric provider. Because we're a cooperative, we're locally owned by you, the members we serve. That means every decision we make is guided by what's best for our community — not by outside shareholders.

Thank you for trusting us to power your home and your life. We're committed to providing everyday value for you and your family, with safe and reliable energy — so you can make the most of every energy dollar.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

September marks the start of fall's shoulder season, often bringing temperatures mild enough to give your HVAC system a break. Open windows and use ceiling fans when weather allows. It's also a great time to schedule annual HVAC maintenance, as fall often offers better appointment availability. Regular tune-ups can improve efficiency, reduce the risk of breakdowns and keep your home comfortable year-round. SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY



GENERATOR Safety

Avoid deadly backfeed and keep lineworkers safe. Learn how to safely connect your portable generator before you need it at www.safeelectricity.org.



SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELLECTRICITY.ORG

A LITTLE COST. A LOT OF LIFE.

For about \$150 a month, electricity powers hundreds of tasks that keep your home comfortable, connected and running smoothly — from brewing your morning coffee to keeping your family cool, safe and entertained.

- **720** hours of refrigeration
- **20+** loads of clean clothes
- **15+** home-cooked meals
- **90+** hours of lighting
- **30** days of comfort
- Numerous devices charged
- Hundreds of hours of cooling/heating
- Countless connections to work, school and entertainment



SOURCE: NATIONAL RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION

Outage Text Reporting

1

Confirm your cellphone number is listed on your account by calling the Bluestem office.

2

Text 'outagestatus' to 55050 to opt in.

You're signed up for Outage Texting!



If you are experiencing an outage text 'outage' to 55050.

For more information please visit
<https://www.bluestemelectric.com/outage-reporting>

SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH



Be ready before the storm.



Create a plan for your loved ones.



Stay connected during an outage.



Learn how to use your backup generator safely.

SOURCE: NATIONAL RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION

TIPS TO AVOID UTILITY SCAMS



Smart thermostats, security cameras and other connected devices add convenience but can be vulnerable to cyberattacks if not properly secured. Change default usernames and passwords, use strong, unique passwords, enable multi-factor authentication when available, and keep devices updated with the latest software and firmware. Also, protect your home Wi-Fi network with a strong password and modern encryption. These simple steps can help keep your devices and personal information safe.

SOURCE: SOURCE: CYBERSECURITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE SECURITY AGENCY



Farm Safety and Health Week

SEPT. 21-25

As harvest season approaches, take time to think about electrical safety

- ▶ When operating machinery, watch for overhead power lines.
- ▶ Look up before moving tall equipment and keep it at least 10 feet away from power lines.
- ▶ Never approach a downed power line. Report it immediately.
- ▶ We're proud to power the farms that power our communities.

Stay safe out there!

