



Bluestem NEWS

Bluestem Electric Cooperative

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800-558-1580

FROM THE MANAGER

May is Military Appreciation Month

Service. Mission. Country. You likely identified immediately (and correctly) that these three words describe our nation's veterans. They also succinctly describe a core co-op standard.

While veterans are innately motivated to serve, in a similar way, electric co-ops are guided by foundational principles that put their community first. After all, electric co-ops were founded to bring electricity to rural areas where it did not exist. In doing so, they powered local economies and helped them to thrive. I believe this close connection to an essential mission is why there are so many veterans in the utility industry and why they are such a great fit for electric co-ops.

Today's veterans are highly skilled because everyone who joins the military is either trained in a tech career field or exposed to advanced technology during their years of service. Many veterans have skills in advanced disciplines such as engineering, electronics or mechanics, which are all beneficial for the utility industry. Bluestem Electric is proud to have employed veterans, and we're

especially grateful for their contributions to the co-op and to our communities.

Leadership and Teambuilding Skills

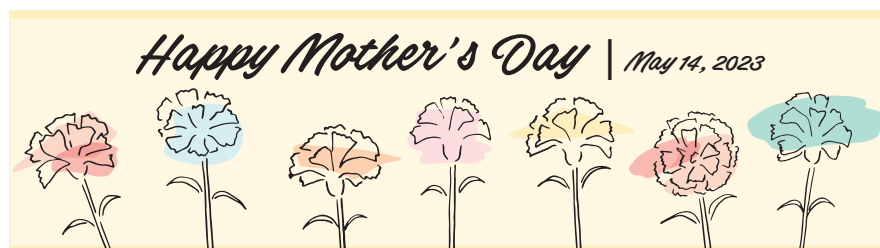
Our veteran colleagues joined the co-op equipped with training in leadership and teamwork. While on active duty within their units, service members work closely together because they know their lives depend on each other's actions. This fosters a high level of self-discipline, sense of personal responsibility and passion for excellence.

The utility industry is increasingly complex and undergoing profound transformation. While there is the traditional engineering and vegetation management aspect of the utility industry, it now also encompasses technology, cybersecurity and the electrification of the transportation sector and other areas of the economy. Veterans are adept at responding to changing conditions and learning and



Mike Morton

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24th Annual Meeting

MONDAY, MARCH 27, 2023

Highlights

Bluestem held its 24th annual meeting on March 27, 2023, at the Bluestem Electric Warehouse in Wamego. Approximately 131 registered members, their guests, trustees, scholarship winners and employees attended the meeting.

The guest speaker was Mark Barbee, Kansas Electric Power Cooperative (KEPCo) Senior VP/COO. Also in attendance was Bill Glynn, director of Cybersecurity for Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. (KEC).

Trustee elections were conducted by mail ballot in December 2022. Reelected to the board were **STEVE OHLDE**, **PATRICIA BLOOMDAHL**, and **DONALD CLASSEN**. Newly elected to the board was **MATTHEW REZAC**.

Prior to the meeting, members and guests toured the Bluestem office facilities and were treated to apple, peach or cherry cobbler and ice cream, coffee and tea. Following the business meeting and remarks, Bluestem linemen gave a live high voltage safety demonstration, after which members names were drawn from those registered for prizes, bill credits and gift cards. Three names were drawn from the members present for cash prizes of \$150, \$100 and \$50.



Members listen to remarks from Mark Barbee, KEPCo, at the meeting.



General Manager Mike Morton and Board President Richard Ridder, present Ervin Gnadt with a certificate of appreciation for 38 years of service to the Bluestem Board of Trustees.



General Manager Mike Morton and Board President Richard Ridder present Dan Pollock with a certificate of appreciation for 33 years of service to the Bluestem Board of Trustees.



From left: Kevin Swenson, Jennifer Soeken, Deann Breault and Trisha Bradley, greet members at the registration booth.



Linemen Derek Francis (left) and Kyle Hooton (right) provide an electrical safety demonstration to members at the annual meeting.



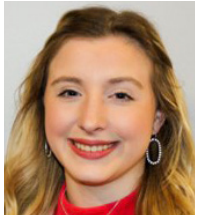
2022 Scholarship Winners

Congratulations to the 2023 Bluestem Electric Cooperative Scholarship winners **JENNA DEROUCHHEY, BRYCE HOELTZEL, BRODY KRAMER, ALLISON MOSER, OLIVIA PRESLEY, GRACIE SCHADEGG, GRANT SMITH, RYAN STUENKEL**, and **JACKSON WINTER**.

Bluestem Electric Cooperative's scholarship program provided nine scholarships totaling \$8,000 to high school seniors whose parents are members of Bluestem Electric Cooperative.

Winners are selected based upon online application data, scores received from an electric cooperative test, and a personal interview with a panel of six judges.

What a great group of young people we have representing Bluestem Electric Cooperative! We wish each of them success as they complete their senior year in high school and begin their college education.



Jenna DeRouchey

JENNA DEROUCHHEY is the daughter of Joel and Julene DeRouchey of Wamego. Jenna attends Wamego High School and plans to dual major in animal science and food science at Kansas State University in Manhattan.



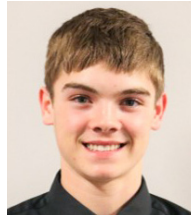
Gracie Schadegg

GRACIE SCHADEGG is the daughter of Mathew and Stacy Schadegg of Wamego. Gracie attends Rock Creek High School and plans to major in music education at the University of Kansas in Lawrence.



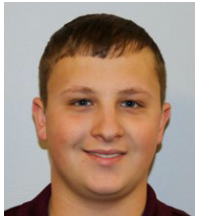
Bryce Hoeltzel

BRYCE HOELTZEL is the son of Hans and Jenny Hoeltzel of Olsburg. Bryce attends Blue Valley High School and plans to study animal science and natural resource management and participate on the livestock judging team at Allen County Community College.



Grant Smith

GRANT SMITH is the son of Michael and Jessie Smith of Clay Center. Grant attends Clay Center Community High School and plans to major in agriculture management and production at Southeast Community College in Lincoln, Nebraska.



Brody Kramer

BRODY KRAMER is the son of Brock and Jessica Kramer of Oakhill. Brody attends Clay Center Community High School and plans to study allied health at McPherson College in McPherson.



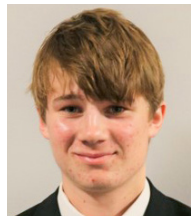
Ryan Stuenkel

RYAN STUENKEL is the son of Kevin and Sheila Stuenkel of Greenleaf. Ryan attends Linn High School and plans to major in agriculture management and production at Southeast Community College in Lincoln, Nebraska.



Allison Moser

ALLISON MOSER is the daughter of Daniel and Lisa Moser of Westmoreland. Allison attends Rock Creek High School and plans to major in political science with a minor in environmental studies at the University of Kansas in Lawrence.



Jackson Winter

JACKSON WINTER is the son of Cade and Jill Winter of Clifton. Jackson attends Clifton-Clyde High School and plans to major in farm and ranch management at Hutchinson Community College in Hutchinson.



Olivia Presley

OLIVIA PRESLEY is the daughter of Clayton and Lynn Presley of Clay Center. Olivia attends Clay Center Community High School and plans to major in nursing at Pittsburg State University in Pittsburg.



Summer Electric Rate Effective June 1

Bluestem's Single-Phase Summer Electric Rate (typically residential) is effective June 1 and will apply to electrical usage from June 1 through Sept. 30.

Why do electricity costs increase in the summer? The main reason is that the demand for electricity increases due to the need for air conditioning and crop irrigation.

Utilities must have enough generating capacity to meet their greatest demand for power throughout the year, which is usually in the summer months. Their cost of owning and operating the additional generating capacity necessary to meet the high summer peaks is reflected in the higher rates charged in the summer.

If you have any questions regarding the summer rate please contact Bluestem's office and also ask about other optional rates for which you may qualify.

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adapting to new technologies, which is essential in our evolving industry.

Mission-Oriented Outlook

Working for an electric co-op is more than a job. There is a clear mission in the work — to help our consumer-members and the community. When you work so closely with the community, you can't help but feel a sense of commitment and responsibility to our members. It's similar to the sense of duty and responsibility that veterans experience in the military. They feel deep, personal responsibility and commitment to their co-op team members and to the members we serve. Veterans are trustworthy and goal oriented, wanting to do right for their co-op and their community.

May is Military Appreciation Month and at Bluestem Electric, we are grateful to have veterans within our membership

and we are proud to serve them and their families within our community. But beyond our gratitude, we demonstrate our deep appreciation through our actions and ongoing commitment to veterans and their families.

At the national level, electric co-ops support the "Vets Power Us" program, which is aimed at employing and honoring veterans and their families. This effort involves partnering with other electric co-ops across the country along with the Department of Labor, the Department of Defense, the Veterans Administration and others to hire veterans in the energy industry.

This month I hope you'll join me in recognizing the sacrifices veterans have made to our great country — and the many contributions they continue to make to our wonderful community. Veterans, we salute you!

Controlling a Controlled Burn

Controlled burns (also known as prescribed fires) can get out of hand and quickly accelerate. When planning controlled burns, follow these safety guidelines:

- Do your research before you begin. There are many safety considerations; check with local authorities and fully research all aspects of a controlled burn before implementing one.
- Be sure to acquire any necessary safety permits and follow local ordinances related to controlled burns.
- Notify your local fire department and neighbors about the controlled burn ahead of time.
- Check the forecast for weather conditions, such as wind direction and speed, as well as humidity (generally, relative humidity should be 40% or higher).

- Do not initiate a controlled burn during a Red Flag Warning, Fire Weather Watch or any other fire ban.
- Clear all vegetation and weeds at least 10 feet (15 feet is better if applicable) around the base of any electric utility pole in the affected area, then wet the base of the poles with water before beginning your burn.
- After any controlled burn, be sure to inspect the electric utility poles for damage. Fire damage is usually evident by blackening or scorch marks; however, even slight discoloration can indicate a serious problem. Sometimes, hot embers can burn the poles from the inside out, and the damage is not immediately apparent.
- If your fire gets out of control, gets too close to a power pole or if the pole catches on fire, call 911 and

Bluestem Electric Cooperative at 800-558-1580.

- Once a fire breaks out, never spray water near the pole, power lines or any other utility equipment.

To inquire about controlled burns near power lines and poles, contact Bluestem Electric Cooperative at 800-558-1580.

For more information about electrical safety, go to www.SafeElectricity.org.

Be Aware of Utility Poles When Burning!

Before burning, check the property for electrical equipment and power poles to avoid damage and potential outages. Always assume any downed power line is energized. Keep everyone away and call 911 immediately. If any poles are damaged by a fire, the person starting the fire could be liable for the damage to Bluestem Electric's equipment and the cost associated with repairing the damage.