



Bluestem NEWS

Bluestem Electric Cooperative

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Mark Diederich
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Michael M. Morton
General Manager

Trisha Bradley
Manager of Accounting and Finance

Jerod Chaffee
Manager of Line Operations

Benjamin C. Easterberg
Manager of AMI and IT

Kevin Heptig
Manager of Member Services

Contact Us

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

FROM THE MANAGER

Power in Your Hands



Mike Morton

Whether we are training new employees or talking to members out and about, I always make it a point to discuss what makes electric co-ops different

from other types of utilities. This month, I thought I would tell you a few things I often share.

Bluestem Electric's decisions are made locally, by trustees who also live right here in our community. Everyone who pays to receive electricity from the co-op is a member. When you pay your electric bill each month, your money stays here — to pay for the electricity used, or to make improvements to our local system to strengthen service reliability. The money you pay the co-op does not line the pockets of shareholders five states away. We are a

co-op, and we exist to provide a service to you, our local members.

You may notice that throughout the year, we schedule opportunities for you to attend co-op events, like our annual meeting, so we can hear from you. We conduct surveys to gather your feedback on co-op programs and services so that we can plan and adjust for the future.

Our success lies in your satisfaction, which is why we offer these opportunities to engage and listen to what you have to say.

Because you are a part of an electric cooperative, you can count on our team to maintain local jobs, at-cost electricity and first-class service, no matter what the economy — and supply chain issues — throw at us.

Bluestem Electric is striving to keep our costs as low as possible so we can keep more money in your pocket. We want to help you maximize the value you can get from our services

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Board Approves Revenue Requirement and Cost-of-Service Study

The Bluestem Electric Board of Trustees has authorized a revenue requirement and cost-of-service study to consider the need for a future rate increase. Power Systems Engineering has been contracted to perform both studies..



Nominating Committee Selected

Each year, the Bluestem Electric Board of Trustees 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. 3)

DISTRICT 1

JON PENNER – Hanover
TIM VOELKER – Greenleaf
JERRY BURGER – Palmer

DISTRICT 2

STEVEN FOX – Clay Center
NATHAN LARSON – Riley

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

DISTRICT 3

MIKE HEPTIG – St. George
JANICE GOEHRING – Westmoreland
ANDY MORTON – Westmoreland
DAN POLLOCK – Havensville

DISTRICT 4

EVAN PARSONS – Manhattan
KELSEY STAMM – Alma

Trustee Positions with Expiring Terms

DISTRICT 1, POSITION 2

BRUCE MEYER – Palmer

DISTRICT 2, POSITION 1

GARY BUSS – Leonardville

DISTRICT 3, POSITION 1

STEPHEN J. O'SHEA – Blaine

DISTRICT 4, POSITION 1

AMANDA GNADT – Alma

Bluestem, CoBank Provide Funding to Area Nonprofit Organizations



From left: Bluestem Trustee Gary Buss presents a check to Janice Woodyard, board president, Community Food Basket Serving Northern Riley Co. and Doris Fritz, volunteer.

Bluestem Electric Cooperative has partnered with CoBank to provide \$16,000 in donations to four local charitable organizations; **COMMUNITY FOOD BASKET SERVING NORTHERN RILEY COUNTY** in Riley, **THE LIGHTHOUSE FOR CHRIST** in Clay Center, **COMMUNITY HEALTH MINISTRY** in Wamego and **MANHATTAN AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGE**, in Manhattan.

The donations are part of CoBank's "Sharing Success" Charitable Contribution Program for 2023. CoBank is a cooperative bank serving agribusinesses and rural infrastructure providers such as Bluestem Electric and Farm Credit associations throughout the United States. CoBank established Sharing Success in 2012. Since then, the

bank and its customers have together contributed nearly \$76 million to groups such as volunteer fire departments, local schools and hunger relief programs the majority of which are located in rural communities.

Bluestem provided a \$2,000 donation to each organization, which was then matched by CoBank. Throughout rural America, cooperatives are working to improve the quality of life in their communities.

The Bluestem Board of Trustees is proud to assist these organizations with funding so they can continue their success of helping those in need in Clay, Jackson, Pottawatomie, Riley, Marshall, Nemaha, Wabaunsee and surrounding counties.



From left: Bluestem Trustee Amanda Gnad and Bluestem General Manager Michael Morton present Carla Malone, Community Care Ministry, with their donation.



Lighthouse for Christ Director Abby Sprague (left) receives a donation from Bluestem Electric presented by Trustee Patricia Bloomdahl.

Your Bluestem Payment Options

Bluestem Electric has six convenient payment options for our members. All members receive a standard monthly bill for their electrical use. Bills are due and payable upon receipt. We realize one method of payment does not fit every Bluestem member's needs, so we have several payment options available for your convenience. All our payment options are free.

Auto Payment/Bank Draft



Members have the option to have payments automatically withdrawn from their bank accounts or credit/debit cards. Sign up through our online bill pay system or visit the office. Auto payments are drawn automatically each month on the due date of the bill.



Prepaid

Bluestem Electric has a prepaid option where you pay for electricity as you go, in advance. When your account becomes low, an email or text is sent to advise you to add more to your account, much like putting fuel in your car. The meter is your "electricity tank gauge" and you will no longer receive a paper bill.

SmartHub/Online Bill Pay



Online bill pay is also available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Click the "Pay Online" button on Bluestem Electric's website or follow bluestemelectric.smarthub.coop/login.html. Members can also download the "Smart Hub" app from the Apple or Android marketplaces on any mobile device.



Mail*

Bluestem Electric's monthly bill comes with a return envelope you can use to mail your check back to us at P.O. Box 33, Wamego, KS 66547. **Please allow additional time if using the Postal Service. Payment must be received in our office on or prior to due date. We DO NOT use the mailing post date for the payment date.*

Bluestem Electric Office



You may pay by check, cash or credit/debit card at our office in Wamego. Our office is open from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday, except for select holidays.



Night Deposit Box

A night deposit box is located at our office in Wamego. Payments dropped off after 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday will be posted the next business day. Please pay inside to avoid broken pay arrangements or disconnection.

Bluestem Electric also has budget billing for members who prefer to pay the same amount each month. Payments are set at your monthly average, making it easy to budget. An accurate 12-month history of your use at your current residence is helpful in determining payments. If you are interested, please call 800-558-1580 to see if you qualify.

Power in Your Hands

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and offerings. For example, we can help you save on energy bills through our free home attic inspection. Bluestem members can take advantage of this offer by calling 816-866-5070 with any questions or to set up an appointment.

You can stay in the know with our monthly local pages inside *Kansas Country Living*.

Please know that you — the members of Bluestem Electric Cooperative — are at the heart of everything we do. Co-ops adhere to seven guiding cooperative principles that reflect core values of honesty, transparency, equity, inclusiveness and service.

We exist to serve you and provide the quality, reliable, friendly service you expect and deserve. While we've grown over the years, we're still driven by the same guiding principles to serve our community. We hope to see or hear from you soon. This co-op was created for you, the members. The power is in your hands.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month

Did you know fall is the perfect time to schedule a heating system tune-up? Home heating accounts for a large portion of winter energy bills, and no matter what kind of system you have, you can save energy and money by regularly maintaining your equipment. Combining proper equipment maintenance and upgrades with recommended insulation, air sealing and thermostat settings can save about 30% on your energy bills. **SOURCE: WWW.ENERGY.GOV**



SAFETY TIP

If you are considering a home solar array, contact your local electric utility early in the process. Your utility will work with installers to ensure proper and safe connection to the power grid.



SOURCE: SAFE ELECTRICITY

WHAT IS A GENERATOR TRANSFER SWITCH?

A transfer or throw switch, also called a double throw switch, is an essential mechanism that shuts off power to the grid before backup power is used.



WHAT DOES A TRANSFER SWITCH DO?

- ▶ Changes or transfers the power load from one source to another.
- ▶ Connects generators rated at 5,000 watts or more to your home's main circuits to provide backup power during an outage.
- ▶ Prevents power from backfeeding into the power grid and endangering utility workers and others.

PERMANENT GENERATORS

- ▶ Have an internal switch that automatically transfers the source of power.
- ▶ Automatically turn on when the power goes out.
- ▶ Must be installed to code by licensed contractors and usually placed near the electric and gas meters.
- ▶ Not all permanently installed generators are standby versions. Some have manual transfer switches. Make sure your permanent generator and switch are installed to code and working properly.

PORTABLE GENERATORS

- ▶ Can be connected to your home's electrical service panel that is properly wired through a transfer switch.
- ▶ Never plug it into a wall outlet as this can cause backfeed.

ALWAYS USE A GENERATOR SAFELY.

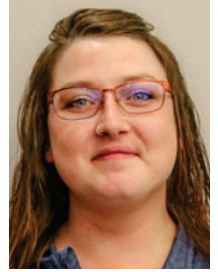
Bluestem Welcomes New Employee

Bluestem Electric Cooperative welcomes **ALYSSA CHRISTIAN** to the cooperative. She started Oct. 24, 2022, as the new accounting specialist.

Prior to joining Bluestem, Christian has worked as an office manager for several small businesses and stayed busy grooming and training dogs.

She is currently a full-time student at Liberty University seeking her degree in political science. She lives in the Wamego area and is a graduate of Wamego High School.

"I am pleased to have the opportunity to be a part of the exceptional team here at Bluestem," she said.



Alyssa Christian



READY.

SET.

REGISTER.

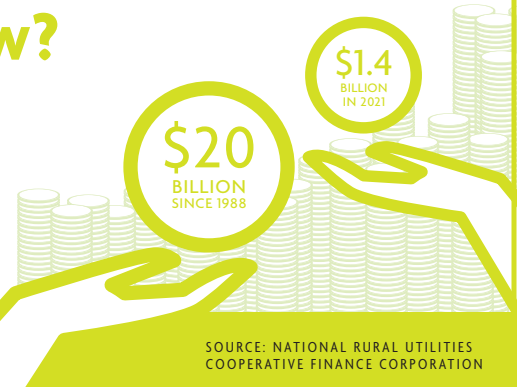
9-19-2023

CO-OPS VOTE

Did You Know?

Electric cooperatives have retired \$20 billion to members since 1988 — \$1.4 billion in 2021 alone.

Because electric co-ops operate at cost, any excess revenues (called margins) are allocated and retired to members in the form of capital credits.



SOURCE: NATIONAL RURAL UTILITIES COOPERATIVE FINANCE CORPORATION