

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Bluestem Electric Cooperative, Inc.
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Bluestem NEWS

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FROM THE MANAGER

We are Here to Serve You

"We are here to serve you." We have all heard this phrase countless times. These words may sound generic, but to us — your local electric cooperative — they mean everything.

Bluestem Electric was created to serve our community. Back in the day, neighbors banded together and formed our co-op for the common good. In our case, it was the only way the community could bring electricity to the area where there was none. In doing so, Bluestem Electric helped the community thrive. That mission-focused heritage is the golden thread woven throughout our history.

Today, we are continuing to power the community. While our focus has remained steady on providing safe and reliable energy to our members, today's energy landscape and consumer expectations are far different than they were decades ago. That is why we are adapting, to keep pace with changing technology, evolving needs and new expectations.

Serving as your trusted energy adviser means we want to help you save energy (and money) and provide advice and information on energy topics. For example, if you're looking for ways to save energy, check out WWW.BLUESTEMELECTRIC.COM/SAVE-YOUR-BILL for energy-saving tips and ideas to increase the energy efficiency of your home. Attic Report Card can provide Bluestem members with a 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. Understanding how your home uses energy can help determine the best ways to modify energy use and thereby keep more money in your wallet.

If you are considering a rooftop solar installation, we would be happy to give you an unbiased view of the pros and cons. Investing in a solar system is a major decision, and it's important to fully understand the costs, responsibilities and any potential savings. Unlike a solar company that has one objective — to sell their products and services — we will look at the total energy picture and help you determine the best options for your home. We understand that homeowners must complete their due diligence, and we are here to help you through that process.

So, the next time you hear Bluestem Electric use the phrase "we are here to serve you," we hope you know that we mean it. Service is deeply ingrained into who we are. We continue to evolve with the times, and in return, we have found additional ways to serve you and provide more options for you to power your life.

We are here whenever you need us. Connect with us online, in person, or by phone. However you choose to connect, please let us know how we can serve you better.



Mike Morton

Automatic Payment Reminder

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 cards. This ensures your account will be paid on time and you will avoid penalty charges.

In addition, if you add a new account or have multiple accounts and want them all on ACH, each individual account will need to be signed up.

BEC Warehouse Groundbreaking



Bluestem Electric broke ground June 12 on the new warehouse facility in Clay Center. Pictured (from left): From Schultz Construction: Taylor Kuhn, vice president of operations/superintendent; Devin Randel, project manager; and Brett Ballou, president. From Bluestem: Gary Buss, trustee; Matthew Rezac, trustee; Patricia Bloomdahl, trustee; Bruce Meyer, secretary; Michael Morton, general manager; Mark Diederich, treasurer; Michael Leitch, trustee; Stephen O'Shea, trustee; Steven Ohlde, trustee; Donald Classen, vice president of the board of trustees; and Amanda Gnadt, trustee.

Following two years of facility assessments and analysis, Bluestem Electric Cooperative Board of Trustees participated in an official groundbreaking ceremony on June 12, 2023, for the new warehouse facility at 1518 17th Road in Clay Center.

The new warehouse, which is estimated to be completed by next summer, will replace the current Clay Center warehouse buildings, which were built in 1963 and 1974. The design/build team of Schultz Construction and BG Consultants out of Manhattan are managing the project.

The new facility will provide the cooperative with additional storage space to protect multiple bucket trucks, digger trucks, service vehicles and other equipment used daily by the Bluestem Electric team.

Bluestem Wamego Summer Interns

This year, Bluestem Electric welcomes three summer interns who are currently attending Manhattan Area Tech with plans to graduate in December 2023 with a degree in electrical power and distribution.



Bluestem welcomes three summer interns this year (from left) Peyton Blackwood, Brady Brummett and Kaden Smith.

PEYTON BLACKWOOD is working with the line crews in Clay Center. He is the son of Amanda and Chadd Blackwood of Clay Center. He graduated from Clay Center Community High School in 2022. In his free time, he enjoys hunting and fishing.

BRADY BRUMMETT is working with the line crews in Wamego. He is the son of Jason and Lynnette Brummett of Riley. He graduated from Riley County High School in 2018 and then attended Cloud County Community College for an associate's degree. In his free time, he enjoys hunting, fishing and going to the lake.

KADEN SMITH is working with the line crews in Wamego. He is the son of Lindsay and Jermaine Smith. He graduated from Topeka High School in 2020, then attend Washburn University where he played for the Washburn football team. In his free time he enjoys lake days, friends and going to the gym.

Welcome to the cooperative family!

Use Energy Wisely

We hear a lot about peak energy demand, but what is it and how does it impact electricity use? As the name implies, peak energy demand occurs when energy consumption is at its highest. In much of the U.S., energy use spikes in summer and winter due to the need to heat and cool indoor spaces.

Although it depends on where you live, summertime energy demand increases when outdoor temperatures soar. In Kansas, peak demand is generally on weekdays between 3-7 p.m., when most individuals are returning home, cooking dinner and preparing for evening activities. In the winter, there are two high-use times of day: early morning and late afternoon/evening. Weekends and holidays are typically considered off peak.

Changing the time of day you use energy can help lower your energy bills and avoid interruptions or service glitches that can occur during peak demand times. To do this, consider running major appliances during off-peak times; smart devices or appliances with delay starts can help achieve this goal.

Do your part to use energy wisely when temperatures are high. In the

summer months, help decrease demand by doing the following:

- ▶ Turn your thermostat temperature up by 2 degrees or more and program your thermostat to a higher temperature when no one is home.
- ▶ If you do not have one, consider purchasing a smart thermostat.
- ▶ Make sure your HVAC system is in good working order. Remember to keep your unit and the area around it clean and clear.
- ▶ Use bathroom and kitchen fans temporarily to remove heat and humidity. Remember: Fans cool people, not rooms. Turn them off before you leave the room.
- ▶ Use your countertop toaster, air fryer and/or convection oven instead of your oven. Even better, keep the heat outside by cooking food on the grill.
- ▶ Use major appliances in the early morning or late evening. Delay turning on your dishwasher or clothes washer until you're heading to bed.

What's the fuss about PEAK ENERGY USAGE?

Peak energy demand is when energy consumption is at its highest.

In much of the U.S., energy use spikes in summer and winter due to increased energy demands for heating and cooling spaces.

IN THE SUMMER: Energy use spikes from mid- to late afternoon until evening.

IN THE WINTER: Energy use is higher in the early morning and then again in late afternoon/evening.

Adjusting when you use electricity can help even out energy use and avoid service interruptions caused by high demand.

SOURCE: U.S. ENERGY INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION

- ▶ Program smart devices to run appliances at off-peak times.
 - ▶ Close window coverings during the hottest part of the day.
 - ▶ Use minimal lighting and try using LED lighting instead of traditional incandescent bulbs.
 - ▶ Turn off and disconnect electronics that are not in use.
 - ▶ Turn off stand-alone dehumidifiers.
- Making small changes to conserve energy can help even out energy use, save money on your utility bill and avoid service interruptions caused by high demand.

FREE & EASY ways to save energy

(Spoiler Alert: Your clothes and dishes won't know the difference)

16% Major home appliances account for approximately 16% of an average home's energy consumption.



- ▶ Keep your refrigerator at 35-38 F and your freezer at 0 F.
- ▶ Regularly defrost manual-defrost freezers and refrigerators.



- ▶ Run full loads of laundry instead of several smaller ones.
- ▶ Use cold water to wash your clothes.

- ▶ When buying new appliances, consider Energy Star® versions.
- ▶ Unplug appliances you're not using.



- ▶ Skip the heated dry setting on your dishwasher.
- ▶ Fully load your dishwasher before washing.

Time to replace that old appliance? Replacing older versions with energy-efficient models can save the average household more than **\$500 per year.**

SOURCES: NATIONAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL, U.S. ENERGY INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION

Respect the Heat

Soak up the sunshine but remember summertime heat can get intense. Unlike hurricanes, floods and tornadoes, the dangers of extreme weather strike without much notice. An average of 702 heat-related deaths occur each year in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Whether you're out and about enjoying your community, watching children take part in summer sports or simply taking a dip in the pool, watch for signs of heat-related illnesses. In a matter of minutes, situations can go from fun-in-the-sun to alarming.

Heat-Related Illnesses

Hot weather is associated with an increase in heat-related illnesses, including cardiovascular and respiratory complications, renal failure, electrolyte imbalance, kidney stones, negative impact on fetal health and preterm birth, according to the CDC. Death rates increase during and after heat waves, which is why the number of deaths is attributed to heat-related illnesses.

Heat-related deaths result from:

- ▶ Heat stroke and related conditions.
- ▶ Cardiovascular disease.
- ▶ Respiratory disease.
- ▶ Cerebrovascular disease.

Deaths From Heat Events

The National Weather Service (NWS) reports that 105 fatalities per year are directly related to extreme heat (based on a 10-year average). Both the NWS and the CDC agree that extreme summer heat events are increasing in the U.S.

Anyone can be at risk of the health effects of heat, but some are more vulnerable, according to the CDC. Those more vulnerable include:

- ▶ Pregnant women.
- ▶ People with heart or lung conditions.
- ▶ Young children.
- ▶ The elderly.
- ▶ Athletes.
- ▶ Outdoor workers.

How to Help Someone Who's Having a Heat Stroke:



- ▶ Call 911.
- ▶ Stay with them until help arrives.
- ▶ Move them to a shaded, cool area.
- ▶ Remove outer clothing.
- ▶ Place cold cloths on the skin.
- ▶ Soak clothing in cool water.
- ▶ Circulate air around the person.

Heat Stroke

Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related illness, as it restricts the body's ability to cool itself. Body temperature can reach 106 degrees or higher within 10 to 15 minutes, according to the CDC.

Heat stroke can cause permanent disability or death if emergency treatment is not initiated. Symptoms of heat stroke include confusion, altered mental status, slurred speech, hot/dry skin or profuse sweating, seizures, very high body temperature and coma.

If someone is experiencing heat stroke, act quickly to treat the person.

- ▶ Call 911.
- ▶ Stay with the person until help arrives.
- ▶ Move the person to a shaded, cool area.
- ▶ Remove outer clothing.
- ▶ Cool the person with water.
 - ▶ Place cold cloths on the skin.
 - ▶ Soak clothing in cool water.
 - ▶ Concentrate on cooling the head, neck, armpits and groin.
- ▶ Circulate air around the person.

Heat Exhaustion

This type of heat-related illness is the body's response to an excessive loss of water and salt, usually due to excessive sweating. Heat exhaustion is most likely to affect the elderly, people with high blood pressure and those who work outdoors. Symptoms include headache, nausea, dizziness, weakness, irritability, thirst, heavy sweating, elevated body temperature and decreased urine output.

If someone is displaying symptoms of heat exhaustion, do the following:

- ▶ Take the person to a clinic or emergency room.
- ▶ Call 911 if medical care is unavailable.
- ▶ Stay with the person until he or she is evaluated.
- ▶ Remove the person from the heat.
- ▶ Give the person liquids to drink.
- ▶ Remove unnecessary clothing, including shoes and socks.
- ▶ Use cold compresses to cool the person's body.
- ▶ If compresses are not available, splash cold water on the head, face and neck.

Other Heat-Related Illnesses

Other illnesses related to heat stress include rhabdomyolysis, heat syncope (fainting or dizziness), heat cramps and heat rash. Rhabdomyolysis is a medical condition associated with heat stress and prolonged physical exertion. The condition causes the rapid breakdown, rupture and death of muscle. People who have this condition and experience symptoms (muscle cramps, weakness, dark urine) should seek immediate care at the nearest medical facility.

Severity Scale

Heat stroke is the most serious, followed by heat exhaustion and heat syncope (both severe), and then heat cramps and heat rash (less severe).

If you suspect someone is experiencing heat stroke, act right away by calling 911. Heat exhaustion also requires medical evaluation and treatment. In both cases, cool the body as quickly as possible.

