

Bluestem **NEWS**

BLUESTEM ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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CONTACT US

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FROM THE MANAGER

May Your Christmas Be Merry and Bright



Mike Morton

As November kicks off, it is hard to believe we will soon be gathering with family and friends to celebrate the Christmas season. This festive time of year brings

joy and warmth, but as the weather gets cooler and we spend more time indoors, Christmas can also bring increased energy use and a higher risk of electrical and fire hazards.

As your local electric cooperative, our team at Bluestem Electric cares about your wellbeing. This month, I would like to share a few practical tips to help you stay safe and efficient during the Christmas season.

SAFETY FIRST

My family truly enjoys decorating our home for Christmas. Before we deck the halls, I always check electrical cords and light strands to make sure they are not frayed or damaged. This gives us peace of mind, knowing our Christmas lights are ready to safely brighten our home. I also double check the lights we use outside to make sure they are rated for outdoor use.

Like many households, we also enjoy scented candles. While festive, candles can create fire hazards and should never be left unattended. One of the best and easiest ways to safeguard your home is to test smoke alarms often. We test ours on the first of each month, so it is easy to remember.

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May Your Christmas Be Merry and Bright Continued from page 12A ►

Testing smoke alarms only takes a few seconds and could save lives.

'TIS THE SEASON FOR SAVINGS

Spending more time indoors with a few more guests in the home can really impact home energy use. By taking a few small steps to save energy during the Christmas season, you can lower your bills.

I like to remind my family members to mind the thermostat. Since heating and cooling make up the majority of home energy consumption, the thermostat is one of the best places for savings. Lower it a few degrees, especially when you have family or friends stopping by. Company brings additional warmth to your home.

Your family can also save energy by decorating with LED Christmas lights. LEDs are the most energy efficient

lighting options available, and they last much longer than traditional bulbs.

There is no denying one of the best parts of Christmas is the food — not just the meals but the time we spend together in the kitchen. There are many ways to save in the heart of your home, but one of the best approaches is to cook with smaller countertop appliances, such as air fryers, slow cookers and toaster ovens. These handy appliances consume a fraction of the energy used to heat the oven, creating the perfect recipe for mealtime and energy savings.

I hope you will implement some of these energy-saving and safety tips into your Christmas plans. For additional advice, visit our website at www.bluestemelectric.com. We're here to help you with safety and savings year-round.

FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT BLUESTEM ELECTRIC, WE HOPE YOUR CHRISTMAS SEASON IS MERRY AND BRIGHT.

2025 Bluestem Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting

The Bluestem Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Annual Meeting will be held on **MARCH 24, 2025**, at the Bluestem Electric Cooperative Warehouse in Wamego, Kansas. The meeting will begin at 7 p.m. Official Notice of the Annual Meeting will be mailed no less than 10 days prior to the meeting. We hope that you will plan on attending the annual meeting and take part in the business of the cooperative.



MARCH 24, 2025



7 P.M.



**BLUESTEM ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE
WAREHOUSE
IN WAMEGO**

Nominating Committee Report

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

DISTRICT 1 & 2, POSITION AT LARGE

► **MARK DIEDERICH**
Greenleaf

DISTRICT 3, POSITION 2

► **AARON ALLEN**
Holton
► **BRENT MCKEEMAN**
Manhattan

DISTRICT 3 & 4, POSITION AT LARGE

► **RICHARD RIDDER**
St. George

The election of all candidates will be held by mail ballot in December. Each member will be mailed one ballot for the candidates in their district. **BALLOTS WILL NEED TO BE RETURNED TO THE COOPERATIVE OFFICE BY JAN. 1, 2025.**

Bluestem Welcomes Brewer to Staff

Bluestem Electric Cooperative welcomes **KRISTAL BREWER** to the co-op. Brewer started on Jan. 22, 2024, as a member representative/accounting specialist.

Prior to joining Bluestem, she was a clerk analyst II at the Riley County Treasurer's Office. She's a graduate of Colby Community College and has been in customer service for over 20 years.

Brewer and her husband, Chad, live in Wamego. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with family and friends, traveling, and attending K-State football games.

"I am excited to join the Bluestem Electric team," she said. "I am eager to learn more about this exciting industry and grow with the company. I am looking forward to serving our members to the best of my ability. Everyone has been so welcoming and patient!"



Kristal Brewer

SAFETY TIP

When decorating outside, look up and look out. Never throw holiday lights or other decorations into trees near power lines. Be especially careful when working near power lines attached to your house. Keep ladders, equipment and yourself at least 20 feet away at all times.



SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG

HAPPY THANKSGIVING

Our office will be closed on
Nov. 28 and 29 for the holiday.

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.

Scholarships will be awarded to the top 10 candidates that complete a two-stage process. The first stage will include an online application and test that must be completed and submitted by

**FRIDAY, JAN. 10, 2025,
AT 4:30 P.M.**

In the second stage, a panel of judges will interview finalists on **MONDAY, FEB. 17, 2025.**

For more information, contact your high school counselor AFTER NOV. 4, 2024, or call Bluestem Electric Cooperative at 785-456-2212.

READY YOUR HOME FOR WINTER



Prepare your home for winter with the checklist below to ensure safety, efficiency and comfort.

INSPECT HEATING SYSTEM

- ☐ Have your heating system professionally serviced.
- ☐ Replace air filters if needed.
- ☐ Ensure vents and radiators are not blocked for efficient heat distribution.

MAINTAIN SMOKE AND CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

- ☐ Replace batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.
- ☐ Test detectors to ensure they function properly.

PREPARE PIPES AND WATER SUPPLY

- ☐ Insulate exposed pipes to prevent freezing.
- ☐ Drain and shut off outdoor faucets and irrigation systems.
- ☐ Know the location of the water shut-off valve in case of emergency.

PREPARE YOUR HOME'S EXTERIOR

- ☐ Clear gutters and downspouts to prevent ice dams.
- ☐ Trim trees away from the house to avoid damage.
- ☐ Ensure downspouts extend away from the foundation.
- ☐ Service and store equipment such as lawnmowers and trimmers.
- ☐ Gather winter tools such as snow shovels and ice melt.

INCREASE HOME ENERGY EFFICIENCY

- ☐ Seal gaps at windows and doors with weatherstripping or caulk.
- ☐ Set ceiling fans to rotate clockwise to circulate warm air.
- ☐ Lower your thermostat a few degrees to save on heating costs.

SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG

STAY SAFE on Winter Roads

SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG

Winter months can bring snow, ice and windy conditions, creating hazards for drivers. It is important to be prepared in case there is an accident.



BEFORE A WINTER STORM

Perform vehicle seasonal maintenance to ensure:

- ▶ Batteries are charged.
- ▶ Tires have sufficient tread.
- ▶ Spare tire is inflated.
- ▶ Jumper cables are in good condition.
- ▶ A winterized car emergency kit is on hand.
- ▶ Windshield wipers work.
- ▶ Headlights, brake lights and turn signals work.
- ▶ Vehicle has at least a half tank of gas.

PREVENT FROSTBITE AND HYPOTHERMIA

If you are stranded in your car after an accident, observe the following precautions:

- ▶ Do not stay in one position for too long.
- ▶ Stay awake.
- ▶ Do not overexert yourself to avoid strain on your heart.
- ▶ Watch for signs such as a change in skin color, numbness, shivering, slurred speech, loss of coordination or confusion.

WINTER STORMS AND POWER LINES

Always treat sagging and downed power lines as energized and dangerous. Keep at least 50 feet away from the area. If your vehicle hits a power pole, stay inside. Contact 911 and wait for the power to be shut off by utility workers. If your vehicle is on fire, exit the vehicle landing with both feet together and hop away at least 50 feet.



ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Save energy while away by lowering your thermostat a few degrees or creating an "away" schedule with a smart or programmable thermostat. Newer water heaters include a vacation setting, or you can simply lower the temperature manually. Small actions stack up to energy savings. Unplug devices that consume energy when they're not in use, including phone chargers, toothbrush chargers, TVs and gaming consoles. SOURCE: NRECA



VETERANS DAY

★ ★ ★
Honoring All Who Served

NOV. 11, 2024