

Bluestem NEWS

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FROM THE CEO

How Extreme Summer Temperatures Impact Reliability

When outdoor temperatures soar, our electricity use increases. That's because our air conditioners are running longer and more often to counteract sweltering outdoor temperatures. Factor in that we all tend to use electricity at the same times — in the morning and early evenings — and that equals a lot of strain on our electric grid.

At Bluestem Electric cooperative, we work closely with KEPCo, our local generation and transmission (G&T) cooperative in resource and infrastructure planning to ensure you have the power you need whenever you flip a switch, but the electric grid is much larger than your local co-op and G&T.

In summer months, when more electricity is being used simultaneously across the country, it is possible for electricity demand to exceed supply, especially if a prolonged heat wave occurs. If this happens, which is rare, the grid operator for our region of

the country, the Southwest Power Pool (SPP), may call on consumers to actively reduce their energy use or initiate rolling power outages to relieve pressure on the grid. Bluestem Electric will try to keep you informed about situations like this to the best of our ability.

We work proactively with our G&T to create a resilient portion of the grid and ensure electric reliability in extreme weather, including regular system maintenance, grid modernization efforts and disaster response planning; but it takes everyone to keep the grid reliable.

To help keep the air conditioner running for you, your family and neighbors, here are a few things you can do to relieve pressure on the grid during times of extreme summer heat:

- ▶ Select the highest comfortable

Continued on page 12B ▶



Michael Leitch



HOW EXTREME SUMMER TEMPERATURES IMPACT RELIABILITY *Continued from page 12A* ▶

thermostat setting and turn it up several degrees whenever possible. Your cooling system must run longer to make up the difference between the thermostat temperature and the outdoor temperature.

- ▶ **PRO TIP:** Seal air leaks around windows and exterior doors with caulk and weatherstripping. Air leaks and drafts force your cooling system to work harder than necessary.
- ▶ Run major appliances such as dishwashers, ovens and dryers during off-peak hours when the demand for electricity is lower.
- ▶ **PRO TIP:** Start the dishwasher before you go to bed.
- ▶ Use ceiling fans to make yourself feel a few degrees cooler. Remember, ceiling fans cool people (not rooms), so turn them off in unoccupied rooms.
- ▶ **PRO TIP:** During summer months, set ceiling fan blades to rotate counter-clockwise, which pushes cool air down for a windchill effect.
- ▶ Close blinds, curtains and shades during the hottest part of the day to block unwanted heat gain from sunlight.
- ▶ **PRO TIP:** Consider blackout curtains with thermal backing or reflective lining to block heat and light.
- ▶ Use smaller appliances, such as slow cookers, air fryers and toaster ovens to cook meals.
- ▶ **PRO TIP:** Studies have shown that air fryers use about half the amount of electricity than a full-size oven. Air fryers are smaller and use focused heat, which results in faster cooking times, less heat output and lower energy use.

As we face the challenges posed by soaring summer temperatures, understanding the impact on energy demand is crucial for maintaining a reliable power supply. By adopting energy conservation practices during periods of extreme heat, not only can you save money on your electric bills, but you can also contribute to the resilience of the grid, keeping our local community cool and connected.

SUNPOWERED STUDENT CHALLENGE

Rock Creek Students Share Solar Skills With Bluestem Board



The Rock Creek Solar Team presents to the board of trustees.

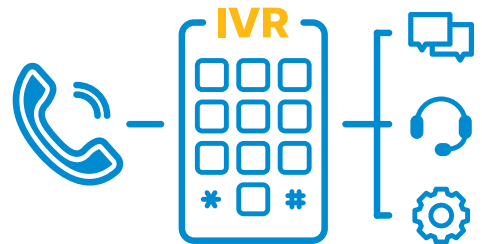
Members of the Rock Creek High School Solar Team presented to the Bluestem Board of Trustees, sharing skills they've developed as a part of the group. The team recently competed in the SunPowered Student Challenge, which invites local high school teams to showcase their solar energy knowledge and engage with electric industry professionals.



Rock Creek Solar Team recently competed in the Sun Powered Student Challenge.

Exciting News!

Bluestem Electric will be implementing an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system soon. IVR allows callers to interact with Bluestem by way of a computerized system. Members will be able to access information and perform actions, like making payments and updating phone numbers. This upgrade will allow members to make payments more efficiently and securely. For updates on this enhancement please check out future *Kansas Country Living* centerspreads.



Tips to Reduce Wildfire Risks

Wildfires are no longer confined to the western United States. Traditionally associated with dry, fire-prone regions like California, wildfires are now affecting areas in the Midwest and even parts of the Southeast.

This shift is driven by rising temperatures, prolonged droughts and changing weather patterns, which are creating conditions ripe for fires in regions that historically saw fewer of them. As a result, more communities are now facing growing threats from wildfires, prompting a need for broader awareness and preparedness nationwide.

Bluestem Electric is working to reduce the risk of wildfires throughout our service territory. Through regular vegetation management and grid maintenance and hardening practices, we are proactively working to reduce risks and improve the reliability of our local system.

As a member of Bluestem Electric there are steps you can take to prevent wildfires.

1 PROPERLY EXTINGUISH CAMPFIRES. Always douse your campfire with water, stir the ashes and ensure everything is cool to the touch before leaving the area.

2 DON'T BURN ON WINDY DAYS. Avoid outdoor burning when it's windy or dry, as embers can easily spread and ignite surrounding areas.

3 CLEAR VEGETATION AND DEBRIS. Maintain a defensible space around your home by removing dry leaves, dead branches and other flammable materials.

4 USE EQUIPMENT SAFELY. Tools like lawnmowers or chain saws can spark fires. Use them during cooler times of the day and keep them in good working condition.

5 FOLLOW LOCAL FIRE REGULATIONS. Always check for burn bans or restrictions in your area before burning anything or using open flames outdoors.

For more information on wildfire prevention and preparedness, visit www.redcross.org.

SIGN UP FOR AUTO PAY ON SMARTHUB

Save time and pay your monthly electric bill automatically by bank draft.



No need to find a postage stamp or worry if your payment will reach us on time. Contact Bluestem Electric to request an application or you can find it online at www.bluestemelectric.com.

To sign up, you will need to provide the following information: your name, bank name, phone number, checking account number, routing number (ABA No.), bank address and Bluestem account number(s).

You can also pay your bill online at www.bluestemelectric.com using your bank account or credit card. Click on the SmartHub Pay Online button.

Beat the Heat and Stay Safe on the Job

Outdoor workers face serious risks in hot, humid weather. Know how to prevent heat stress when temperatures rise.

HEAT EXPOSURE CAN AFFECT WORKER HEALTH IN A NUMBER OF WAYS:

- ▶ **Heat cramps:** Muscle spasms.
- ▶ **Dehydration:** Dizziness, confusion, decreased urination.
- ▶ **Heat exhaustion:** Fatigue, nausea, pale or cool skin, heavy sweating; needs prompt attention.
- ▶ **Heat stroke:** High body temp, headache, rapid pulse, nausea, hot or dry skin, confusion or unconsciousness. Heat stroke can be fatal; call 911 immediately.

PREVENTION IS KEY

- ▶ **Drink water every 15 minutes.** Consider electrolytes.
- ▶ **Eat light and avoid hot meals.**
- ▶ **Wear a hat and sunglasses.** Apply sunscreen regularly.
- ▶ **Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing.** While necessary for safety, be aware that personal protective gear can increase body heat.
- ▶ **Acclimatize and gradually increase heat exposure.** Allow new or returning employees time to adjust.
- ▶ **Take frequent breaks in a shady or cool location.** Schedule heavy work for cooler times of the day.
- ▶ **Know the signs of heat-related illness** and get medical help promptly if needed.

The Science of Attic Insulation

WHAT'S IN YOUR ATTIC?

The answer to this question could be costing you hundreds of dollars each year!

Bluestem Electric Cooperative is constantly striving to keep your energy costs down, however, the cost of generating the electricity supplied to your home has risen at historical rates over the past decade. What does this mean to you? Energy costs will be increasing.

According to Kansas Electric Power Cooperative, the cost to generate the electricity supplied to rural Kansas homeowners has gone up more than 40% in the last seven years. As energy costs go up, the recommended amount of insulation you should have in your attic goes up too. In roughly the same time period, the minimum amount of attic insulation required in a new home went up by 38.75%. A new home built in 2005 was required to have an R-30

of attic insulation (about 8 inches of cellulose insulation). Seven years later, Energy Star® changed recommendations to R-60 for that same home (16-18 inches of cellulose insulation). When energy costs go up, you need to add more insulation (and make air sealing improvements) to your attic.

WHY IS THE ATTIC SO IMPORTANT FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY?

We are entering some of the hottest months of the year and many homeowners will soon be experiencing seasonally high energy bills. Could your attic insulation be one of the **MAJOR** causes of your high energy bills? If you have an under-insulated attic with poor air sealing, the answer is certainly **YES!**

In the summer your attic can reach 180 degrees or more. This is like having an oven on top of your home. The law of thermodynamics states that heat is constantly moving toward cold to reach equilibrium. This means the extreme heat of the attic is seeking balance and trying (in any way it can) to get into your air-conditioned home. Behind your walls, your home has dozens of wire and plumbing penetrations between your living space and your attic. These holes can only be seen from the attic. These holes act like a freeway for all the heat in your attic to race into your home pushing the cold air (that you paid to cool) right out of the house.

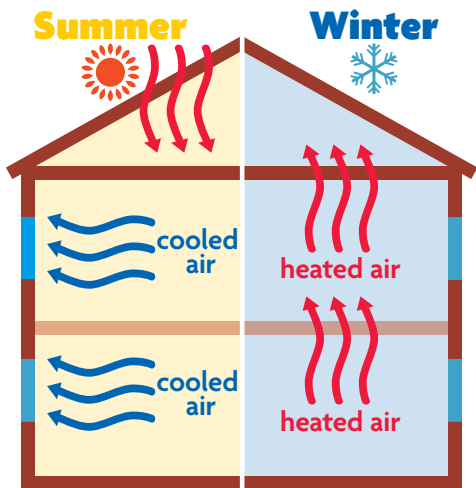
Heat from your attic is also able to conduct right through the ceiling into your home. Conduction is the process of heat moving through a material. The

purpose of insulation in the summer is to slow the conduction process of the heat moving from the “oven” in your attic into your air-conditioned home. If your attic is not insulated to the Energy Star standard, heat will push down through the ceiling of your home rapidly. If you could see the heat rushing into your home it would be like seeing a water faucet in your home constantly running with no off switch. What do you think this process is doing to your energy bills?

YOUR COOPERATIVE'S EFFORT TO HELP MEMBERS

Bluestem Electric Cooperative has been working with Attic Report Card so our members can know exactly how well their attics are insulated and air sealed. Members of Bluestem Electric Cooperative can get this 12-point attic inspection for FREE (\$99 value). A member's Attic Report Card will clearly detail the current condition of the member's attic insulation and list the exact improvement steps it will take to bring the attic up to Energy Star standards. The Attic Report Card improvement team has completed hundreds of improvement projects for cooperative members (many of whom are saving 25% or more on their heating and cooling costs).

If you are curious about the condition of your attic and would like to know how much you can expect to save if you make improvements, visit www.atticreportcard.com and click “Grade My Attic” to schedule your **FREE** attic inspection.



In the summer, your attic is like an oven. Heat races into your home and shoves cold air out.

WHY METER DISCONNECTION SHOULD BE LEFT TO PROFESSIONALS

For safety and compliance, it is crucial to have a Bluestem employee or licensed electrician pull (remove) an electric meter. These professionals are equipped with the knowledge and tools to handle live electrical systems safely, reducing the risk of electrocution, equipment damage, or fire. Unauthorized meter disconnection violates Bluestem's rules and regulations, poses serious hazards, and potentially disrupts service to other customers. Relying on qualified personnel ensures the work is done safely, accurately and in accordance with local codes and utility guidelines.

IF AN ELECTRICIAN IS PULLING (REMOVING) YOUR ELECTRIC METER, PLEASE CALL BLUESTEM FIRST AT 800-558-1580.