

Bluestem NEWS

BLUESTEM ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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FROM THE CEO

Annual Meeting Highlights

Bluestem Electric Cooperative's 27th Annual Meeting was held at 7 p.m. on Monday, March 24, 2025, at the Bluestem Electric Warehouse in Wamego.

At the time of the meeting, Bluestem reported a membership total of 5,547 with 127 members present at the meeting. This represented 2.29% of the total membership, which constituted a quorum for the transaction of business.

CEO Michael Leitch addressed changes within the electric industry. Over the past year Bluestem has gone through many changes and challenges. With the current pace of change there are no signs of it slowing down as technology advances.

Leitch addressed the new rates that took effect in October 2024. The board of trustees considered the rate study extensively, making the changes in an equitable manner that shares the cost across all members. The new rates more

closely mirror how Bluestem is billed by its power supplier.

Leitch also addressed the importance of members using SmartHub as an energy efficiency and bill payment tool. When members sign up for SmartHub they have the capability to view their electricity usage, view past statements, and make payments.

The final topic that was discussed was the new metering system. The project is nearing completion and Leitch thanked the membership for their patience during this transition. After the adjournment of the meeting, Bluestem's linemen put on a live line safety demonstration.



Michael Leitch



On March 24, 127 Bluestem Electric members plus their guests attended the annual meeting.

BLUESTEM 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 goes up due to the demand 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.

SAFETY TIP

Grass and brush fires can occur from lightning or downed power lines, but 85% of wildfires are caused by humans. Common causes include burning debris, using hot equipment on grass, improperly discarding cigarettes and leaving campfires unattended.



SOURCE: WWW.SAFELECTRICITY.ORG

Reminder – Be Aware of Utility Poles When Burning!

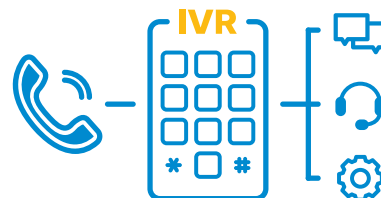


Before burning, check the property for electrical equipment and power poles to avoid damage and potential outages. Always assume any downed power line is energized. Keep everyone away and call 911 immediately. If any poles are damaged by a fire, the person starting the fire could be liable for the damage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

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.



2025 Scholarship Winners

Congratulations to the 2025 Bluestem Electric Cooperative Scholarship winners **DALTON DEBLER, MORGAN ERICKSON, JOLIE GIRAD, AMBER KOLLE, TREVOR MATZKE, ADALYN PFIZENMAIER, LAUREN SMITH, MADDOX TOPLIFF, ISABELLA WILBER** and **JACI WINTER**.

Bluestem Electric Cooperative's scholarship program provided 10 scholarships totaling \$10,000 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 scholarship committee 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.

DALTON DEBLER is the son of Randall and Erin Debler of Alma. Dalton attends Wabaunsee High School and plans to receive an associate degree in agribusiness at Butler Community College and major in animal science at Kansas State University in Manhattan.

MORGAN ERICKSON is the daughter of Ethan and Pamela Erickson of Manhattan. Morgan attends Manhattan High School and plans to major in architecture at Kansas State University in Manhattan.

JOLIE GIRARD is the daughter of Ron and Stephanie Girard of Clyde. Jolie attends Clifton-Clyde High School and plans to major in psychology at Fort Hays State University in Hays.

AMBER KOLLE is the daughter of Jim and Gina Kolle of Linn. Amber attends Washington High School and plans to major in agribusiness at Kansas State University in Manhattan.

TREVOR MATZKE is the son of Brent and Marcie Matzke of Westmoreland. Trevor attends Rock Creek High School and plans to major in agribusiness at Kansas State University in Manhattan.

ADALYN PFIZENMAIER is the daughter of Todd and Cari Pfizenmaier of Clay Center. Adalyn attends Clay Center High School and plans to major in wildlife biology and minor in environmental science at Kansas Wesleyan University in Salina.

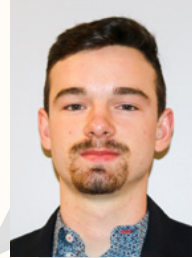
LAUREN SMITH is the daughter of Michael and Jessie Smith of Clay Center. Lauren attends Clay Center High School and plans to study business with a major in finance at Kansas State University in Manhattan.

MADDOX TOPLIFF is the son of Adam and Jennifer Topliff of Wamego. Maddox attends Wamego High School and plans to major in sports management at Wichita State University in Wichita.

ISABELLA WILBER is the daughter of Matthew and Cathy Wilber of Wamego. Isabella attends Wamego High School and plans to study graphic design.

JACI WINTER is the daughter of Cade and Jill Winter of Clifton. Jaci attends Clifton-Clyde High School and plans to major in speech-language pathology at Kansas State University in Manhattan.

Congratulations to our winners!



Dalton Debler



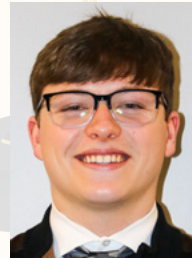
Morgan Erickson



Jolie Girard



Amber Kolle



Trevor Matzke



Adalyn Pfizenmaier



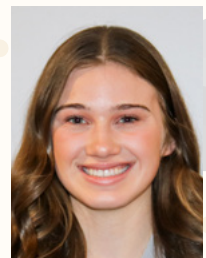
Lauren Smith



Maddox Topliff



Isabella Wilber



Jaci Winter

SUMMER IS COMING

PREPARE YOUR HOME NOW

Don't Let Summer Heat Up Your Utility Bill



Seal cracks around the house with weather stripping or caulk to keep warm air out.



Change the air filter on your cooling unit.



Wash your outdoor AC unit and have your HVAC unit inspected.



Clear the air vents throughout your house.



Install a programmable thermostat. Leave it on a higher temperature when you are away, and set it to cool the house half an hour before you return home.



Update your insulation to keep cool air in your home and warm air out.

SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG

DOWNED POWER LINE & Vehicle Safety

When electric equipment becomes damaged, the ground and objects can become energized. Know what to do to **SAVE YOUR LIFE** and the lives of others.



IN AN ACCIDENT INVOLVING A POWER LINE:

- ▶ **Stay Inside the Vehicle:** The ground may be energized.
- ▶ **Call 911:** Report downed or damaged lines.
- ▶ **Warn Others:** Tell bystanders to stay away.
- ▶ **Wait for Utility Crew:** Do not exit until it's safe.



IF YOU NOTICE SMOKE OR FIRE:

- ▶ **Exit Safely:** Cross arms over your chest and jump out with both feet together. Do not touch the car and the ground at the same time.
- ▶ **Move Away:** Shuffle or bunny hop with feet together. Get as far away as you can.



SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Routine maintenance is important to keep your refrigerator running efficiently. Lint and dirt should be cleaned from the refrigerator coils every six months to a year — or more often if there are pets in the home. When coils are coated with lint, dust or pet hair, your refrigerator works harder than it's designed to, which can prevent the appliance from cooling properly and efficiently. The additional work can increase the energy costs of the refrigerator by as much as 35% and shorten its lifespan. **SOURCE: WWW.ENERGY.GOV**



TIPS TO AVOID UTILITY SCAMS



If you suspect you're dealing with a utility scam, slow down and take your time before acting. Scammers often pressure you to make quick decisions or immediate payments. Instead, take the time to verify the legitimacy of the information by contacting your utility directly. Use a phone number from a reliable source, such as your bill. Taking this simple step can help protect you from falling victim to utility scams.



SOURCE: UTILITIES UNITED AGAINST SCAMS