



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Bluestem Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
1000 South Wind Dr., P.O. Box 5  
Wamego, KS 66547  
800-558-1580  
[www.bluestemelectric.com](http://www.bluestemelectric.com)

# Bluestem NEWS

## BLUESTEM ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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Manager of AMI and Mapping/OMS

**Kevin Heptig**  
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### CONTACT US

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800-558-1580

## FROM THE CEO

# Lineworkers Are Ready When It Matters Most

As CEO of Bluestem Electric, I have the unique privilege of seeing firsthand what it truly takes to keep the lights on for our members. In April, we take time to pause and recognize the brave men and women who make that possible every single day — our lineworkers.

When storms impact our communities and outages occur, many people experience the inconvenience, but our lineworkers see a call to action. Our crews are always ready when it matters most — leaving family dinners, working through the night, and heading into challenging conditions to restore power as safely and quickly as possible. That readiness is not accidental. It

comes from rigorous training, deep experience and a shared commitment to serving others.

What makes lineworkers especially remarkable is that they aren't just restoring power to a system — they're restoring power to their own communities. They live here. They raise their families here. They understand that electricity is more than a convenience; it's essential to daily life and to local businesses, schools,



**Michael Leitch**

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## 2025 CAPITAL CREDITS ALLOCATION

For the 2025 capital credits allocation, active members will be notified of their allocation on their monthly electric bill sent in **MAY 2026** under the Important Messages header of the bill. This **ON BILL** allocation notice for active members is a new method of communicating this information, and a separate allocation notice will not be sent. Please refer to Bluestem's website for further information on capital credits.

### Important Messages

**2025 CAPITAL CREDIT NOTICE:**  
2025 Coop Capital Credit Allocation: \$232.52  
2025 G&T Capital Credit Allocation: \$12.73  
Total 2025 Capital Credit Allocation: \$245.25  
Total Unretired Capital Credits: \$2,873.21  
Refer to our website for more information on capital credits.

## NOTICE TO IRRIGATORS

**CONTRACT  
BEGINS JUNE 1**

The contract year for all irrigation services is June 1, 2026, through May 31, 2027. If you need to change the rate for any of your irrigation services, please notify the office by May 1. Horsepower charges will appear on your May bill.

The appropriate equipment must be installed for the load management rate by the beginning of the contract year. If you have any questions about the load management options, any current irrigation service, or any new irrigation service, please do not hesitate to contact our office at 800-558-1580.

**Lineworkers Are Ready When It  
Matters Most** *Continued from page 12A* ▶

farms and emergency services. Powering the places we call home is personal to lineworkers.

Electric cooperatives like Bluestem Electric were built on the principle of neighbors helping neighbors, and our lineworkers embody that spirit every day. They are the first to respond and the last to leave, often working long hours behind the scenes. At times, serving our neighbors means going beyond our own service territory through a process known as mutual aid. During major outage events, Bluestem crews stand ready to assist neighboring co-ops — sometimes close to home, and sometimes across state lines — to help restore power. This spirit of mutual aid strengthens all cooperatives and ultimately benefits the members we serve.

We understand that any time the

lights go out it can be frustrating, bringing everyday life to a halt. We are incredibly grateful to our members for your patience and encouragement during these times. Linework is demanding, physical, and at times, dangerous. Our crews approach each job with a focus on safety and teamwork. They take pride in their craft and in the trust our members place in them.

On April 13, 2026, we will celebrate Lineworker Appreciation Day, but one day is hardly enough. Every day, we thank lineworkers for their service and dedication, which are the backbone of our cooperative.

To our lineworkers: Thank you for your hard work, your readiness and your unwavering commitment to the communities we serve. We are proud to stand behind you and grateful for all that you do.

**READY WHEN IT MATTERS MOST**

When the lights go out, lineworkers are ready to answer the call, day or night, to safely restore power and keep our communities moving forward. They take pride in powering the places we call home. Today and every day, we thank lineworkers for their service and commitment.

**LINWORKER APPRECIATION DAY IS APRIL 13, 2026**



# Be Aware of Utility Poles When Burning!

Before burning, check the property for electrical equipment and power poles to avoid damage and potential outages.

Electrical power lines and transmission equipment can pose special hazards for prescribed burns. Special consideration during the planning and conducting of a prescribed burn can eliminate or greatly reduce injury and damage from these factors. When burning under or near electrical power lines or high voltage transmission lines, exercise extreme care. Mow or remove vegetation from around any poles or equipment. Back burn to create a fire break and keep people and equipment away from overhead power lines. The following situations can lead to injury or death.

## SMOKE BUILDUP

Smoke consists of carbon particles, which can conduct electricity. If the concentration of carbon is high enough, an electrical discharge from the line to the ground, like lightning, can occur. The discharge hazard increases as line voltage increases, distance to the ground decreases, and the amount of smoke increases. Such discharges have killed firefighters. To reduce the potential for discharges, the fire front should not be allowed to cross under

the lines in large areas. By properly coordinating the location of the burn with the wind direction or by lighting the fire parallel to the line, no major smoke buildup can occur.

## WATER AND POWER LINES

When working below power lines with water hoses, extreme care must be taken to keep water streams out of overhead lines. Water will conduct electricity and the water stream will act as a conductor. Water should never be directed toward the power line or poles.

## DOWNED POWER LINES

Power lines can be downed during a prescribed burn, by vehicles colliding with poles or poles being burned. If power lines are downed, there are two hazards: the lines themselves and the combination of lines on wire fences, which can produce the potential for electrical shock for long distances. When lines are downed, they become hard to see and people or vehicles can run into them. Electrocutation or serious shock injury can occur. Also, wildfires can be started by the downed lines arcing. If lines fall on fences, a new hazard is created. Electricity will be conducted by the fence wires for long



**Before burning, check the property for electrical equipment — like this padmount transformer — and power poles to avoid damage and potential outages.**

distances. As long as the wires contact each other, there is the potential for electrical shock or death.

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.

**DO NOT LET A CONTROLLED BURN REACH A POWER POLE.**

**The pole could slowly burn from the inside out leaving behind a serious electrical hazard.**

PHOTO BY BLUESTEM ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

As spring arrives, take advantage of milder temperatures to save energy at home. Open windows on pleasant days to bring in fresh air instead of running your HVAC system. It's also a great time to replace dirty air filters, which helps your system run more efficiently and improves indoor air quality. As daylight increases, turn off unnecessary lights and rely on natural sunlight when possible. Small seasonal adjustments like these can reduce energy use, lower monthly bills, and help keep your home comfortable as winter transitions into spring. SOURCE: NRECA

**KNOW WHAT TO DO TO SAVE LIVES.**

# STAY AWAY FROM DOWNED LINES

**Always assume a downed power line is energized and dangerous, even if it's not sparking or making noise.**

**KEEP YOUR DISTANCE:**

- ▶ Stay at least 50 feet away.
- ▶ Do not touch the line or anything — or anyone — it's touching.
- ▶ Warn others to stay far back.
- ▶ Call 911 and state it's an electrical emergency.
- ▶ Do not touch or step in water near a downed line. Water conducts electricity and creates a dangerous mix.



**IF YOU'RE INSIDE YOUR VEHICLE:**

- ▶ Stay inside and call 911.
- ▶ Wait for utility or emergency crews to tell you it's safe to exit.
- ▶ Only leave the vehicle if there is immediate danger, like a fire.

**IF YOU MUST EXIT DUE TO FIRE OR DANGER:**

- ▶ Open a door that's not touching the ground, if possible.
- ▶ Cross your arms over your chest. Jump clear without touching the vehicle and ground at the same time.
- ▶ Land with feet together. Shuffle or hop away without separating them. Get as far away as you can.
- ▶ Avoid power lines that are on the ground or sagging overhead.
- ▶ Do not go back to the vehicle until it's confirmed safe.



SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG

## Happy Work Anniversary Kevin!



Kevin Swenson (left), journeyman lineman, celebrates 30 years at Bluestem Electric. Pictured with CEO Michael Leitch.

Celebrating an incredible milestone — 30 years of dedication and hard work! **KEVIN SWENSON**, journeyman lineman, has shown commitment, leadership and a positive impact to Bluestem Electric. Thank you Kevin for 30 years!

### SAFETY TIP

Power poles aren't bulletin boards. Nails, staples, signs and decorations can injure lineworkers or damage their protective gear and equipment when they climb poles to keep the power on. Keep poles clear to help protect the people who power our community.



SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG

### TIPS TO AVOID UTILITY SCAMS



Don't fall victim to power outage scams. When widespread outages occur, scammers may target affected utility customers. They can contact you via call, text or email, urging you to act quickly and provide personal information to restore service. Always communicate with your utility through official channels, such as their website, mobile app or phone number listed on your bill. SOURCE: WWW.FTC.GOV

