

Bluestem NEWS

BLUESTEM ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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CONTACT US

Bluestem Electric Cooperative, Inc.
P.O. Box 5, Wamego, KS 66547
800-558-1580

FROM THE CEO

Reliability Requires Investment



Michael Leitch

As your local power provider, Bluestem Electric's mission has always been simple: **SAFE, RELIABLE ENERGY.** Behind every switch, every warm home, and every business that opens its doors is a complex system that requires constant care. Reliable electricity doesn't happen by accident. It requires ongoing investment in our local grid — through system repairs, maintenance, upgrades, and the integration of new technologies that help us operate smarter and more efficiently.

Much of the energy system we rely on today was built decades ago. While it continues to serve us well, age alone means that components must

be repaired or replaced to maintain performance and safety. From poles and wires to transformers and substations, every part of the grid has a lifespan. Routine maintenance helps extend that lifespan, but eventually, equipment must be updated to meet modern standards. These proactive investments reduce the likelihood of outages, shorten restoration times when disruptions do occur and create a stronger backbone for our growing community.

The demands on the electric grid are also evolving. Homes and businesses today use more electricity than ever, and that trend will only continue. Electric vehicles, advanced HVAC systems, smart appliances and new commercial facilities add load to the local distribution system. As these technologies take hold, the grid must be able to support increased demand while maintaining the reliability our

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BLUESTEM ELECTION RESULTS

BEC members of the respective districts elected the following cooperative members for three-year terms on the Bluestem Electric Board of Trustees by mail ballot in December 2025.

DISTRICT 1, POSITION 1

STEVE OHDL
Linn

DISTRICT 2, POSITION 2

PATRICIA BLOOMDAHL
Clay Center

DISTRICT 3, POSITION 3

MATTHEW REZAC
Onaga

DISTRICT 4, POSITION 2

DONALD CLASSEN
Manhattan

SWITCH TO PAPERLESS BILLING, RECEIVE CREDIT

Switch to paperless billing through your SmarHub account and receive a one-time \$5 credit on your next bill.

Starting Jan. 1 through March 31, Bluestem is offering a one-time \$5 credit on the following month's bill after you sign up for paperless billing. Please note that all offers are valid only for first-time sign-ups. If a member has more than one account that they sign up for, they will only receive one \$5 credit to be applied to one account.

Please note if you go back to paper billing within six months of paperless billing sign up, a \$5 charge will be added to your bill.

Go to <https://bluestemelectric.com/paperless-billing> for more information.

If you have questions, call us at 800-558-1580.

Reliability Requires Investment

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members expect. Strategic upgrades such as poles, wire, transformers and meter upgrades are essential to ensuring we can meet these needs both today and in the decades ahead.

At the same time, new technologies are reshaping how we operate. Tools such as smart meters and advance monitoring systems allow us to detect problems faster and respond more effectively. These technologies can isolate problems and provide real-time data that helps us plan and maintain equipment more efficiently.

Implementing innovative technologies into the grid is not just a convenience — it is a necessity for ensuring reliability in an increasingly complex energy landscape.

While these improvements require thoughtful planning and financial investment, the return is significant.

A stronger grid supports economic growth, improves service quality and enhances safety for our crews and community. Most importantly, it ensures that the essential power you rely on is available whenever you need it.

Our commitment to reliability runs deeper than infrastructure alone. It reflects our responsibility to the people and communities we serve. Every upgrade, every repair and every technology we deploy is an investment in your daily life — from the comfort of your home to the success of local businesses and schools.

We know that powering our community means preparing for the future, not just maintaining the present. By investing in our local grid today, we are building the foundation for a brighter, more resilient tomorrow.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Ensure you're making the most of your home heating system. Replace or clean filters to keep your furnace or heat pump running efficiently. Listen for strange noises and check for uneven heating — these signs indicate that the system may need servicing. Ensure vents and radiators aren't blocked by furniture or rugs as proper airflow helps your system work less and saves energy. A little maintenance along the way can prevent costly repairs and keep your home cozy through winter. SOURCE: NRECA

WINTER EMERGENCY KIT

Top Must-Haves For Your Emergency Kit

Be ready with at least three days of supplies and don't forget to stock your vehicles with a similar kit.

- ▶ Battery-powered radio
- ▶ Blankets, clothing and sturdy shoes
- ▶ Cash
- ▶ Cellphone and charger, power bank
- ▶ Flashlight and batteries
- ▶ First-aid kit
- ▶ Medications, medical equipment
- ▶ Non-perishable food and manual can opener
- ▶ Water: 1 gallon per person, per day

ADD TO YOUR VEHICLE KIT

- ▶ Canned and compressed air with sealant for emergency tire repair
- ▶ Extra coat, gloves and hat
- ▶ Emergency flares
- ▶ Jumper cables
- ▶ Sand bags or road salt
- ▶ Windshield scraper



Why is the Demand for Electricity Rising?

Demand for electricity in the U.S. is booming. Power consumption nationwide is set to increase by at least **38 GIGAWATTS** by 2028 — enough electricity to power 3,600 homes for a year. To meet this demand, a combination of new power plants, grid upgrades and energy storage technology advancements are required. Here are some key factors driving increased demand.

- 1 INCREASED ELECTRIFICATION:** Electric vehicle adoption, electrification of home heating and industrial electrification are increasing overall U.S. energy consumption.
- 2 DATA CENTERS:** Driven by explosions in AI, cryptocurrency and cloud computing, total U.S. data center load is projected to increase by **65%** by 2050.
- 3 ECONOMIC GROWTH:** Residential power consumption is expected to increase by **14% TO 22%** through 2050 due to increases in population and steady economic growth.
- 4 MANUFACTURING GROWTH/ONSHORING:** New, expanding and “onshored/reshored” manufacturing capacity driven by federal incentives is expected to increase industrial demand by **13,000 GIGAWATT-HOURS** per year.

Bluestem Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting

The Bluestem Electric Board of Trustees voted to change to a virtual format for the 2026 annual meeting.

Bluestem will host an open house at the Clay Center warehouse, **1502 17TH ROAD IN CLAY CENTER, KANSAS, FROM 5-7 P.M. ON MARCH 23, 2026**, giving members an opportunity to visit with the Bluestem Board of Trustees.

The annual meeting video will review the cooperative's progress in 2025, along with the financial report, and will be shown during the open house. Refreshments will be served.

THE VIDEO WILL BE AVAILABLE AT WWW.BLUESTEMELECTRIC.COM/ANNUAL-MEETING-INFO.

At the end of the video, members will be shown a code to provide when contacting Bluestem in order to receive their \$20 bill credit.

We hope to see you there!



MARCH 23, 2026



**OPEN HOUSE
FROM 5-7 P.M.**



**BLUESTEM ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE
WAREHOUSE**

1502 17TH ROAD, CLAY CENTER



**SCAN TO
VIEW THE VIDEO**

**[WWW.BLUESTEMELECTRIC.COM/
ANNUAL-MEETING-INFO](http://WWW.BLUESTEMELECTRIC.COM/ANNUAL-MEETING-INFO)**

PAYMENT OPTIONS

Bluestem Electric offers an automated pay-by-phone option 24 hours a day, seven days a week. By calling 844-973-2526 and following the prompts, you can pay with a credit card, debit card or electronic check with **NO FEES**. You will be required to use your Bluestem account number when calling in to ensure accuracy. If it is your first time using the system, be prepared to create a four-digit PIN. For security reasons and to comply with federal rules and Payment Card Industry (PCI) data security standards, Bluestem employees cannot take your payment information over the phone; however, they are happy to assist if you have questions and can be reached at 800-558-1580.



CONVENIENT PAYMENT OPTIONS FOR OUR MEMBERS

All members receive a standard monthly bill for their electrical use. Bills are due and payable upon receipt.



AUTO PAYMENT

Payments can be made automatically when you sign up for Automatic Bank Draft. Your bank account will be drafted on the due date of the bill each month. Members can sign up through our online bill pay system or through the office. You will receive a statement each month from Bluestem to let you know how much your bill is. The bill will say "Auto Pay on xx/xx/xxxx. Do not send payment."



ONLINE BILL PAY

Online bill pay is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week by visiting www.bluestemelectric.com. Members also have the option to download the SmartHub app from the Android or Apple stores on their smartphone. By using your credit card, debit card or bank account, you can either set up a one-time payment or recurring. Recurring payments will be automatically withdrawn each month on the due date.



MAIL

You can pay your electric bill by mailing a check or money order in the return envelope that is included with your monthly bill. If you are mailing a check without the return envelope, please mail to: P.O. Box 33, Wamego, KS 66547.

Be sure to include the name and Bluestem account number of the account to be paid to ensure its proper posting. Please allow sufficient time for postal processing. Payments must be received in our office prior to the due date. We **DO NOT** use the mailing post date for the payment date.



PHONE

Our automated pay-by-phone system is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 844-973-2526.

It is as simple as calling and following the voice prompts. This is a **FREE** service allowing you to make a payment by phone with a debit or credit card or electronic check with **NO FEES**.

For security reasons and to comply with PCI (Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard), Bluestem employees cannot take your payment information over the phone.



800-558-1580