

**Clay Center:**  
524 Dexter, P.O. Box 513  
Clay Center, KS 67432  
785-632-3111

**Wamego:**  
1000 South Wind Dr., P.O. Box 5  
Wamego, KS 66547  
785-456-2212

[www.bluestemelectric.com](http://www.bluestemelectric.com)



# Bluestem NEWS

## Bluestem Electric Cooperative

### Board of Trustees

**Richard Ridder**

President

**Dan Pollock**

Vice President

**Bruce Meyer**

Secretary

**Donald Classen**

Treasurer

**Dean Blanka**

Trustee

**Patricia Bloomdahl**

Trustee

**Gary Buss**

Trustee

**Mark Diederich**

Trustee

**Ervin Gnad**

Trustee

**Harold McCarter**

Trustee

**Steven Ohlde**

Trustee

### Staff

**Michael M. Morton**

General Manager

**Jason W. Moore**

Assistant Manager

**John Bettencourt**

Power Communications Technician

**Tim Diederich**

Operations Superintendent

**Kevin Heptig**

Member Services Director

**Marla J. Marshall**

Office Manager/Accountant

### Contact Us

**Wamego**

P.O. Box 5, Wamego, KS 66547  
785-456-2212

**Clay Center**

P.O. Box 513, Clay Center, KS 67432  
785-632-3111

## FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

### We Love Our Community

Bluestem Electric Cooperative is dedicated to the special bond and obligation that ties us to the community we serve. With Valentine's Day approaching, we can't think of a better time to express how much we love this community and serving you, the members of the co-op.

We know when we helped bring electricity to rural Kansas many years ago, the quality of life improved for all. Through the years, other issues needed to be tackled, and we have been at the forefront of helping to address some of those issues. Most recently, we asked for your help in convincing our elected officials in Washington, D.C., to pass the RURAL Act. Because of these grassroots efforts, the bill was signed into law protecting more than 900 electric co-ops throughout the nation from losing their tax-exempt status. We want to continue to help meet the long-term

needs of our community to ensure it continues to thrive – because just like you, we live here too.

While our top priority is to provide safe, reliable energy to you, equally important is our mission to enrich the lives of the consumer-members (that's you!) we serve. This focus to benefit the larger community is central to the way we operate as a cooperative. Bluestem Electric knows electricity is a critical need for modern-day life, but it takes more than poles and power lines to make a community.

Over time, our co-op has evolved to meet the changing needs of our community, thereby improving the quality of life for everyone. And that can mean many different things like programs for Kansas youth, such as education scholarships. It means partnering with organizations like

*Continued on page 16C ▶*

## 2020 Annual Meeting Announcement

Notice will be in the March issue of the *Kansas Country Living*

The Bluestem Electric Cooperative, Inc. Annual Meeting will be held on March 23, 2020, at the United Methodist Church Family Life Center in Clay Center.

The meeting will begin at 7 p.m. **THE ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE MARCH ISSUE OF KANSAS COUNTRY LIVING MAGAZINE THIS YEAR.**

Please look for this issue as there will **NOT** be a separate booklet mailing. Official Notice of the annual meeting will be mailed approximately 10 days prior to the meeting. We hope you will plan to attend the annual meeting and take part in the business of your cooperative.

March 2020						
S	M	T	W	U	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

## Bluestem Election Results

Bluestem 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 of 2019.

### Districts 1, Position 1

► **STEVE OHLDE**, Linn

### District 2, Position 2

► **PATRICIA BLOOMDAHL**, Clay Center

### Districts 3, Position 3

► **DAN POLLOCK**, Havensville

### District 4, Position 2

► **DONALD "BO" CLASSEN**, Manhattan



## Topeka Farm Show 2020

Three electric co-ops of eastern Kansas joined forces to sponsor a booth at the Topeka Farm Show, Jan. 7-9. 4 Rivers, Bluestem and FreeState used the opportunity to interact with members and the public.

Members who stopped at the co-op booth could visit with cooperative staff about residential energy efficiency tips, cooperative programs and renewable resources.

Members could also register to win one of three Power Quick Pot pressure cookers donated by KEPCo. Bluestem member Nancy Horne was one of the winners. More than 300 exhibiting companies participated in the event that drew more than 22,000 attendees at the Stormont Vail Events Center in Topeka.



Representatives from the cooperatives: (from left): Mike Tweedy, 4 Rivers; Matt Lambert and Corey Calvert, FreeState; and Kevin Heptig, Bluestem.

The Topeka Farm Show celebrated its 31st anniversary this year. The electric cooperatives began attending the show in the early 1990s and have had a presence every year since.

## ATTENTION: Need a Ride on March 23? Free Transportation to the Annual Meeting

Do you need a ride to your annual meeting this year? The Bluestem Electric Cooperative will be offering rides to the Bluestem Annual Meeting held at the United Methodist Church Family Life Center in Clay Center on March 23, 2020.

If you live in Bluestem Districts #3 or #4 and would like a ride to your annual meeting, please fill out the information below and return to our office by **MARCH 11, 2020**.

The vehicles will leave at approximately 5:30 p.m. from the Bluestem office in Wamego located at 1000 South Wind Drive, and return shortly after the completion of the annual meeting.

### Please complete and return by March 11, 2020

Bluestem Electric Cooperative, Inc., Attention: Annual Meeting Planning Committee  
P.O. Box 5, Wamego, KS, 66547 or P.O. Box 513, Clay Center, KS, 67432

YES, I would like a ride to the Bluestem Annual Meeting. Number of seats needed: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## We Love Our Community *Continued from page 16A* ▶

CoBank for their Sharing Success Program that supports local charitable organizations such as Community Care Ministries, Lighthouse for Christ, Caring Community Foundation Inc., the Washington County Food Bank and other worthy programs.

Over the last several decades, our community-focused programs and other giving projects have fed hungry families, enabled those in need to keep the lights on and so much more – and we couldn't do any of this without you, our members.

We all benefit from these programs

because of you and your neighbors. You empower the Bluestem Electric Cooperative through your membership and through your participation in and support of these programs.

As a local business, we are proud to power your life and bring good things to our community. We hope you will continue to guide our efforts by sharing your perspective as we plan for the future. The energy landscape is undergoing dramatic change fueled by evolving technology and consumer desires for more options. While the larger environment in which we operate

is constantly changing, one thing remains the same. By working together, I'm certain we can continue to do good things for our community.

### Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Are you using your fireplace efficiently? Remember to turn down the thermostat when burning a fire, and close the damper when a fire is not burning. **Source:** [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)

## Stopping Scams for Better Service

Our increasingly connected world is giving scammers more opportunities to connect with unsuspecting consumers, and local authorities, utilities and other businesses are working overtime to keep people informed. They suggest 'if you see something, say something,' is a vigilance adage that can help prevent you, your family or your business from being victimized.

"The Federal Trade Commission has been hearing about scammers impersonating utility companies in an effort to get your money," said Lisa Lake, a federal consumer education specialist. "Your reports help us fight these scams."

Electric cooperatives are among the businesses and consumer organizations supporting Utilities United Against Scams (UUAS), the international consortium of electricity, natural gas, water and sewer providers, and trade and industry associations sharing information on payment scams, identity theft, sales and service schemes.

Mike Morley, director of corporate communications and government affairs for Midwest Energy headquartered in Hays, led the effort to bring Midwest on board with UUAS to help prevent future scams for their consumer-members. Morley says part of the reason utility scammers are so successful is that they hop around, calling different locations and pretending to be a variety of utility companies. Because the scams were varied by company, they were hard to connect. "Now companies involved with the UUAS bring their reports together, making it easier for law enforcement to link the scams and scammers," Morley said.

Imposter scams are the most common type of fraud reported to the Federal Trade Commission, according to UUAS officials. The frequency of the incidents picks up during peak heating and cooling seasons, in part because consumers are most concerned when temperature extremes increase the urgency of maintaining utility service.

"Never give banking information over the phone unless you place the call to a number you know is legitimate," wrote the FTC's Lake in an FTC blog.

There has also been an uptick in door-to-door scams by individuals

claiming to represent utility providers like your electric co-op. Representatives knock or ring the doorbell offering to replace or repair a meter or other device, or solicit personal information to sign a consumer up for programs that could reduce their energy bills.

They may try to charge you for the phony service, sell you unnecessary products, collect personal information for use in identity theft or simply gain entry to steal valuables, officials said.

High-pressure demands are a common tactic in many of the schemes, urging immediate decisions or actions, like immediate payment. Specific payment options like a gift card, wire transfer, cell phone or third-party computer app should raise serious concerns.

"The way a scam works is someone calls saying 'Hey, I'm going to turn off your electricity in 30 minutes unless you pay me \$550' or pick a number and usually it's somewhere above \$300," said Morley. Scammers will then likely inform their targets to purchase a money pack card and call back with the 16-digit pin code located on the back of the card.

"Once you give somebody that 16-digit pin code, that money is gone," said Morley. "They can take it, deposit it into a bank, they can load it to a pre-paid visa card. They can do anything they want with it and at that point, the money basically becomes untraceable."

Utility-connected scams are common because utility services are so common. Lighting, heating, water and sewage services are all essential to modern living, so any threat of service disconnection can provoke a lot of anxiety.

Your first defense is personal awareness of your account status, including knowing your co-op will never call you to get banking information over the phone. According to Morley it takes three steps to complete this scam: the initial call, the purchase of a card and finally providing payment information.

"If you interrupt the scam at any of those three points, it doesn't work," Morley said. "The scam fails. The most important thing in that three-part triangle is knowing these scams exist and to be skeptical."





# Flint Hills HOME SHOW

FEB. 29-MARCH 1 | MANHATTAN



**Building a new home?  
Remodeling your home?  
Want to lower your utility costs?**

Stop by Bluestem Electric's booth to register for a door prize and visit with us about your farm and home electrical needs.



Saturday, Feb. 29, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. | Sunday, March 1, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.  
Manhattan National Guard Armory, 721 Levee Drive, Manhattan

