



Bluestem NEWS

Bluestem Electric Cooperative

Board of Trustees

Richard Ridder

President

Donald Classen

Vice President

Bruce Meyer

Secretary

Mark Diederich

Treasurer

Dean Blanka

Trustee

Patricia Bloomdahl

Trustee

Gary Buss

Trustee

Amanda Gnad

Trustee

Steven Ohlde

Trustee

Stephen O'Shea

Trustee

Dan Pollock

Trustee

Management Staff

Michael M. Morton

General Manager

Jason Moore

Assistant Manager

John Bettencourt

Manager of AMI and IT

Trisha Bradley

Manager of Accounting and Finance

Tim Diederich

Manager of Line Operations

Kevin Heptig

Manager of Member Services

Contact Us

Bluestem Electric Cooperative, Inc.

P.O. Box 5

Wamego, KS 66547

800-558-1580

FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

Tree Trimming Improves Service



Mike Morton

One of the things I love best about our community is the natural beauty that surrounds us. We are fortunate to have so many trees that offer beauty, shade and a habitat for all

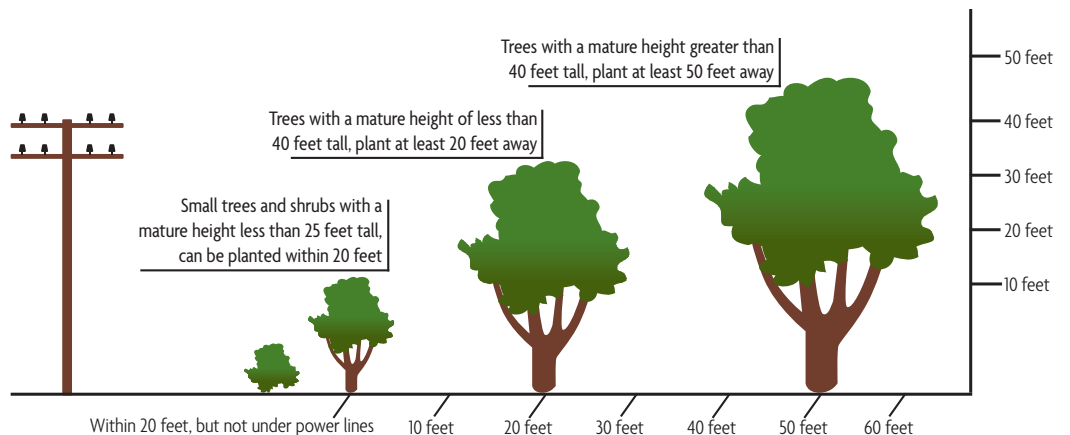
sorts of birds and other wildlife. We know that you appreciate our community for many of the same reasons.

At Bluestem Electric, we strive to balance maintaining beautiful surroundings and ensuring a reliable power supply by keeping power lines clear in rights-of-way (ROW).

While we recognize and appreciate the beauty of trees, there are three main benefits to tree trimming in ROW

areas. However, before touching on the main reasons, let me explain what a "right-of-way" is and how it may impact you. A right-of-way is the land we use to construct, maintain, replace or repair underground and overhead power lines. Rights-of-way enable the co-op to provide clearance from trees and other obstructions that could hinder the power line installation, maintenance or operation. ROW areas are typically on public lands or located near a business or home. Regardless, Bluestem Electric must be able to maintain the power lines above and below the ROW. The overall goal of our vegetation management program is to provide reliable power to our members while maintaining the beauty of our community. Proactive vegetation

Continued on page 16B ▶



Welcome New Employee

Bluestem Electric Cooperative welcomes

TRISHA BRADLEY

to the cooperative. She started Jan. 25, 2021, as the new manager of accounting and finance.



Trisha Bradley

Prior to joining Bluestem Electric, Bradley was a senior manager at Varney & Associates, CPAs working as a financial statement auditor for commercial, non-profit and governmental entities. She is a graduate of Kansas State University with a bachelor's degree in business administration and a master's degree in accountancy. Bradley has more than eight years of experience in accounting and financial reporting.

She and her husband, Eammon, live in Wamego and have one son, Blaire, 18 months. In her free time, she enjoys spending time outdoors, going on adventures with her family, and playing with her son.

"I am excited to join the Bluestem team and I greatly appreciate this opportunity to serve our members. I am eager to learn more about this exciting industry and the cooperative principles," Bradley said. "Everyone has been very welcoming, and I look forward to contributing to the cooperative's mission in providing exceptional service to our members for years to come."

Tree Trimming Improves Service

Continued from page 16A ▶

management benefits co-op members in three tangible ways.

Safety

First and foremost, we care about our members and put their safety and that of our lineworkers above all else. Overgrown vegetation and trees pose a risk to power lines. For example, if trees are touching power lines in our members' yards, they can pose grave danger to families. If children can access those trees, they can potentially climb into a danger zone. Electricity can arc, or jump, from a power line to a nearby conductor like a tree. A proactive approach also diminishes the chances of fallen branches or trees during severe weather events that make it more complicated and dangerous for lineworkers to restore power.

We also want to ensure member safety by completing the tree trimming near power lines using OSHA-certified tree trimmers. Trimming tree limbs near power lines is a dangerous job and has many hazards. We do not want our members attempting to trim any limbs near power lines.

Reliability

Of course, one of the biggest benefits of a smart vegetation management program is reliability. Strategic tree trimming reduces the frequency of downed lines causing power outages. Generally speaking, healthy trees don't fall on

power lines, and clear lines don't cause problems. Proactive trimming and pruning keep lines clear to promote reliability.

We also use data and our technology to maximize the efficiency of our operation. This includes our vegetation management plan. Bluestem utilizes two certified tree cutting companies to help manage the vegetation in our ROW along with the tree clearing that our line crews do. This ongoing maintenance has made a big difference in cutting down the number of outages and blinking lights when there are storms or strong winds like we have had recently compared to what it was like 20 to 30 years ago.

Affordability

As you know, Bluestem Electric is a not-for-profit cooperative, and that means we strive to keep our costs in check to keep our rates affordable. This extends to our approach to vegetation management. If trees grow too close to power lines, the potential for expensive repairs also increases. Effective tree trimming and other vegetation management efforts keep costs down for everyone.

Our community is a special place. We appreciate the beauty trees afford, but we also know our community depends on us to provide reliable energy. Through vegetation management, we are better able to keep the power lines clear, prepare for future weather events and secure the reliability of the grid.



REMEMBER AND HONOR

MEMORIAL DAY

Our office will be closed Monday, May 31, in observance of Memorial Day.

2021 Scholarship Winners

Congratulations to the 2021 Bluestem Electric Cooperative Scholarship winners **ELI ARTZER, MEGAN EBERT, GRACE FIKE, QUIN GIRARD, ZACHARY KOCH, CARLY KOLLE, EMILY PACHTA, CONNOR RICHARDS, ANNIKA WIEBERS,** and **ALEXIS WINTER.**

Bluestem Electric Cooperative's scholarship program provides 10 scholarships totaling \$6,500 to high school seniors whose parents are members of Bluestem Electric Cooperative.

Winners are selected based on 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.



Eli Artzer

ELI ARTZER is the son of Eric and Marjory Artzer of Wamego. Eli attends Wamego High School and plans to major in architectural engineering at the University of Kansas in Lawrence.



Carly Kolle

CARLY KOLLE is the daughter of Royce and Deanna Kolle of Linn. Carly attends Linn High School and plans to study human biology/pre-med at the University of Kansas in Lawrence.



Megan Ebert

MEGAN EBERT is the daughter of Neil and Laura Ebert of St. George. Megan attends Wamego High School and plans to major in biological science with a biomedical emphasis at Wichita State University in Wichita.



Emily Pachta

EMILY PACHTA is the daughter of Jon and Renee Pachta of Wamego. Emily attends Wamego High School and plans to study psychology at Newman University in Wichita.



Grace Fike

GRACE FIKE is the daughter of Gary and Karol Fike of Westmoreland. Grace attends Rock Creek High School and plans to study agriculture and animal science at Kansas State University in Manhattan.



Connor Richards

CONNOR RICHARDS is the son of Joseph Richards and Beth Fischer of Manhattan. Connor attends Rock Creek High School and plans to study biology/pre-med at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota.



Quin Girard

QUIN GIRARD is the son of Ronald and Stephanie Girard of Clyde. Quin attends Clifton-Clyde High School and plans to study agribusiness at Fort Hays State University in Hays.



Annika Wiebers

ANNIKA WIEBERS is the daughter of Justin and Kristey Wiebers of Wamego. Annika is home schooled and plans to study agriculture communications at Kansas State University in Manhattan.



Zachary Koch

ZACHARY KOCH is the son of Brian and Michelle Koch of Wamego. Zachary attends Wamego High School and plans to study mechanical engineering technology at Kansas State University's Polytechnic Campus in Salina.



Alexis Winter

ALEXIS WINTER is the daughter of Tim and Kerri Winter of Wamego. Alexis attends Wamego High School and plans to major in nutrition and kinesiology at Kansas State University in Manhattan.

BEC Receives No Lost Time Award



From left: Lee Tafanelli, CEO of Kansas Electric Cooperatives, presents Bluestem's safety coordinators, Kevin Swenson and Derek Francis, and Bluestem Board President Richard Ridder with their No Lost Time Accident Award.

Bluestem Electric Cooperative Safety Coordinators and Journeyman Linemen Kevin Swenson and Derek Francis were presented the No Lost Time Accident Award by Lee Tafanelli, Kansas Electric Cooperatives (KEC) CEO, and Bluestem Board President Richard Ridder at the Bluestem Board of Trustees' March board meeting.

The award from Kansas Electric Cooperatives was the result of Bluestem Electric employees working safely to maintain and keep the power on during all weather conditions for 344,456 employee hours from Feb. 11, 2016, to Dec. 31, 2020, without a lost time accident. Safety is at the top of the list for the Bluestem Electric Cooperative's strategic plan. Tafanelli and the Bluestem Board of Trustees would like to thank and congratulate all the employees for their dedication to safe work procedures.



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.

NOTICE TO IRRIGATORS

Contract Begins June 1

The contract year for all irrigation services is June 1, 2021, through May 31, 2022. If you need to change the rate for any of your irrigation services for any reason, please notify the office at 800-558-1580 by May 1, 2021.

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, or any current or new irrigation service, please contact the office.

Keep IRRIGATION EQUIPMENT
and [water streams](#) 15 feet away
from overhead power lines.

