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Bluestem NEWS

Bluestem Electric Cooperative

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Contact Us

Wamego

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785-456-2212

Clay Center

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FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

Your Co-op is a Catalyst for Good



Mike Morton

Over the years, you've probably heard or read about cooperatives' concern for our communities. This is one of the core principles that sets cooperatives apart from other types of

utilities and businesses. We've always taken this mission and responsibility to heart because it's who we are as a co-op.

Over the past few months, like so many of you, we've risen to meet new challenges and strengthen the safety net for our community, particularly for those who are most vulnerable. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we've made numerous adjustments to programs

and operations to maintain business continuity while staying focused on the bigger mission, helping our consumer-members during this turbulent time.

Now, with the holidays fast approaching, these recent events have made me pause and think about the role we play in our community. While our purpose is to provide safe and reliable energy to you, the members we serve, we have a greater mission — to be a catalyst for good.

You're probably aware of our youth scholarship program where Bluestem awards 10 scholarships, six \$750 scholarships and four \$500 scholarships, to high school seniors whose parents/guardians are members of Bluestem Electric Cooperative.

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Nominating Committee Report

The nominating committee nominated the following individuals as candidates for the trustee positions whose three-year terms will be expiring:

District 1, Position 2

▶ **BRUCE MEYER**
Palmer

District 2, Position 1

▶ **GARY BUSS**
Leonardville

District 3, Position 1

▶ **HAROLD MCCARTER**
Wamego
▶ **STEPHEN J. O'SHEA**
Blaine

District 4, Position 1

▶ **AMANDA GNADT**
Alma
▶ **ERIC PECK**
Manhattan

The election of all candidates will be held by mail ballot in December. Each member will be mailed one ballot for the candidates in their district. Ballots will need to be returned to the cooperative office by Jan. 1, 2021.

Standby Me: Installing a Backup Generator

Many businesses and massive buildings rely on standby power when the power goes out — for the safety of their employees and customers and to power essential items.

More and more home generators are being installed so families can have backup power when they need it, whether to power appliances and essential medical equipment or simply for convenience.

There is more than one type of permanent generator. One has a transfer switch that must be manually “thrown” before turning on the alternate source of power, which is wired into a house. This type of generator is permanent but not considered “standby” because of the manual switch, and it should not be located near a home. (Always consult a professional electrician when installing or maintaining a permanent generator.) Not throwing the switch can result in backfeeding, which sends electricity back into power lines, and can seriously injure or kill electric lineworkers or others working to restore power.

Another type of fixed generator is permanently housed in a metal box and is usually located close to the house. It is the most expensive permanent generator — a standby version that is permanently and professionally installed to power most of the appliances in your home.

When needed, a standby generator automatically transfers the power source from the electric grid to the generator. The cost of this type of permanent generator varies depending on how much backup power you want.

Besides the cost of the system, there are also installation costs to consider, since it will need to be installed by licensed and

Always consult a professional electrician when installing or maintaining a permanent generator. Not throwing the switch can result in backfeeding, which sends electricity back into power lines, and can seriously injure or kill electric lineworkers or others working to restore power.

bonded contractors. This is definitely not a DIY project! Fixr.com estimates the national average install cost between \$4,500 and \$9,000, which does not include the price of the unit.

When considering a standby generator, a representative from the supplier you select will assess your home’s energy needs and should ask you what you would like to power in the event of an outage. Other required steps include preparing a site near your current electrical meter and pouring a concrete pad.

The contractor(s) will install a new subpanel and automatic transfer switch. Your generator supplier should also create a detailed plan of which appliances and electronics should not be supplied with power during an outage since the generator’s power supply can fluctuate and possibly damage sensitive items.

To inquire about how permanent generators should be safely used and installed, contact Bluestem Electric at 785-456-2212 or 800-558-1580.

Understanding Demand and Consumption

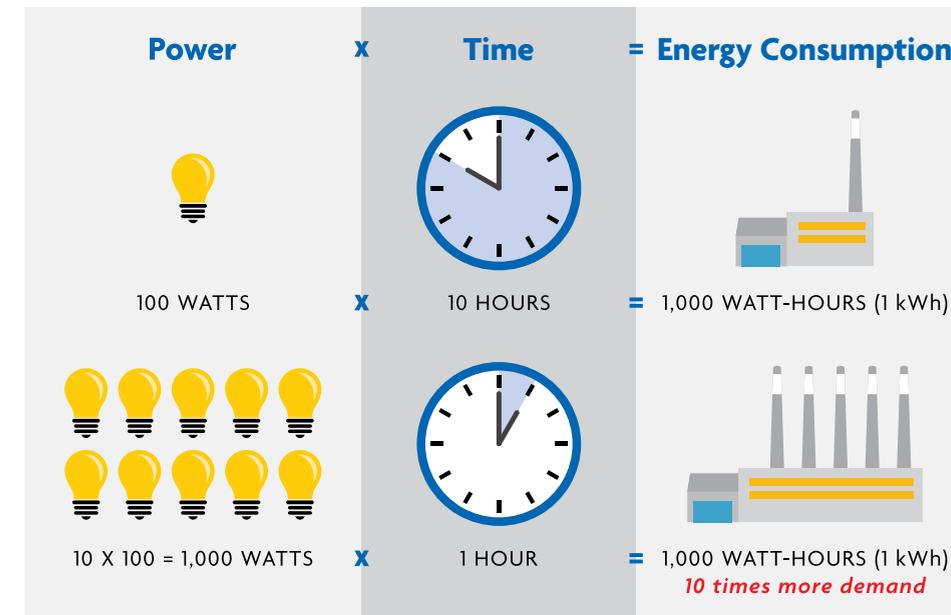
The difference between demand and consumption is vital to your choices in reducing your energy costs. A simple way to see the difference between demand and consumption is by considering two examples.

One 100-watt lightbulb burning for 10 hours consumes 1,000 watt-hours or 1 kWh. The entire time it is on, it requires or “demands” 100 watts or 0.1 kW from the utility. That means the utility must have that 0.1 kW ready whenever the customer turns the lamp on.

Similarly, 10 100-watt lightbulbs burning for 1 hour consume 1,000 watt-hours or 1 kWh. Note that in both examples, the consumption is 1 kWh. However, look how differently the second situation impacts the utility from a demand perspective. The utility must now be prepared to provide 10 times as much capacity in response to the “demand” of the 10 lightbulbs operating all at once.

If both of these customers are billed for their consumption only, both will get the same bill for 1 kWh of energy, which is the way most residential customers are billed. But the

requirement for the utility to meet this energy requirement is very different. In the second case, the utility has to have 10 times more generating capacity to provide the second customer’s brief high demand for power compared to the first case.



A Catalyst for Good Continued from page 16A

We also have a strong commitment to safety — not just for our employees, but for our community as well. We visit schools as we are able to teach children of all ages how to stay safe around electricity. We hold safety demonstrations at community meetings and other gatherings. Although we haven’t been able to do many demonstrations this year due to the pandemic, we are hoping to continue this education as it is safe to do so.

You’ll also see our employees serving on local boards, coaching youth sports and volunteering at charitable events. Because when you work at a co-op, you understand how important a strong community

is — after all, without our consumer-members, the co-op wouldn’t exist.

We know that our core job is to keep the lights on; but our passion is our community. Because we live and work here too, and we want to make it a better place for all.

If there’s anything we can do to help you, whether providing energy-saving advice to help lower your monthly bill or discuss payment plan options during these difficult times, please reach out to us.

Concern for community is the heart and soul of who we are. And no matter what the future brings, you can count on your electric co-op to care about you.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Keep cold air out to save energy. Seal air leaks around pipes and any gaps around chimneys and unfinished spaces behind cupboards and closets.

Source: energystar.gov



Bluestem Offers 10 SCHOLARSHIPS

Bluestem Electric Cooperative will award six \$750 scholarships and four \$500 scholarships to high school seniors whose parents or guardians are members of Bluestem Electric.

The scholarships will be awarded to the top 10 candidates who complete a two-stage process. The first stage will include an online application and test that must be completed and submitted by **FRIDAY, JAN. 15, 2021, AT 4:30 P.M.** In the second stage, a panel of judges will interview finalists on Wednesday, Feb. 24, 2021.

For more information, contact your high school counselor **AFTER NOV. 9, 2020**, or call Bluestem Electric at 785-456-2212 or 785-632-3111.

Do You Pay By Credit Or Debit Card?

The Payment Card Industry (PCI) governs the security of credit and debit cards. Due to this regulation, we are no longer able to store your credit card information and must enter the data on a secure payment system each time you call. We do not wish to inconvenience our customers, but we do value the security of your private information and will comply with the regulations.

If you wish to continue to pay by credit and debit card, we encourage you to set up an account online. Visit bluestemelectric.com and click on the "SmartHub Pay Online" button or download the SmartHub app. The information you need to access your account is contained on your monthly bill. You can store your information on your SmartHub account (or you can enter the information each time). You can also set up your account to pay automatically each month. Be sure to update the expiration date when it changes!

You can continue to call or stop in with your card to pay your account. Just please be aware that our protocol for handling these payments has changed and we will need additional information from you. You will need to have your card in hand.



If you wish to continue to pay by credit and debit card, we encourage you to set up an account online.

You can also pay your bill by automatic bank draft. Find the form on our website under "Electric Service/Payment Options" or ask us to mail it. Just think — no missed payments and no expiration dates! You may also call in with your bank account information or you can always pay with a good old-fashioned check or cash.



VISIT VOTE.COOP TO LEARN HOW TO BECOME A CO-OP VOTER.



Happy Thanksgiving

Our offices will be closed Thursday, Nov. 26, and Friday, Nov. 27, in observance of the holiday. Happy Thanksgiving from our co-op family to yours!

