



Bluestem NEWS

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FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

We're Ready for Storm Season. Are You?

Now that summer is in full swing, like many of you, I welcome more opportunities to be outdoors and enjoy the warmer weather. Summer time brings many of my favorite activities like cooking out with family and friends, afternoons on the golf course and simply slowing down a bit to enjoy life.

But summer months also make conditions right for dangerous storms. Our region is known for tornadoes and severe storms, often destroying everything in the storm's path. These potential weather events can also cause destruction to our electrical system, but I want you to know that Bluestem Electric crews are ready and standing by to respond should power outages occur in our area.

When major storms knock out power, our line crews take all necessary precautions before they get to work on any downed lines. I would encourage you to also practice safety and storm

preparedness to protect your family during major storms and outages.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency recommends the items below as a starting point for storm and disaster preparedness, but you can visit www.ready.gov for additional resources.

- ▶ Stock your pantry with a three-day supply of non-perishable food, such as canned goods, energy bars, peanut butter, powdered milk, instant coffee, water and other essentials (i.e., diapers and toiletries).
- ▶ Confirm that you have adequate sanitation and hygiene supplies including towelettes, soap and hand sanitizer.
- ▶ Ensure your first-aid kit is stocked with pain relievers, bandages and other



Mike Morton

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Sign Up for Auto Pay on SmartHub

Save time and pay your monthly electric bill automatically by bank draft. No need to find a postage stamp or worry if your payment will reach us on time. Contact Bluestem Electric for more information and request an application or you can find it online at www.bluestemelectric.com.

To sign up, you will need to provide the following information: your name, bank name, phone number, checking account number, routing number (ABA No.), bank address and Bluestem account number(s).

You can also pay your bill online at www.bluestemelectric.com using your bank account or credit card. Click on the SmartHub Pay Online button. It's safe and secure!



WHAT TO LOOK FOR **AFTER** A STORM

When the skies clear and the birds sing, know that the storm's fury could have created electrical hazards that you may or may not be able to see. Conditions in which stray electricity could energize the area, a person or objects include:

DOWNED POWER LINES

- ▶ on the ground
- ▶ under storm debris
- ▶ draped over or touching a metal fence
- ▶ covered by standing water
- ▶ across or by the road
- ▶ hidden in tree branches

OTHER POSSIBLE DAMAGE

- ▶ drooping or sagging lines (never try to move one)
- ▶ split or broken utility poles
- ▶ damage to a padmount transformer (green box)
- ▶ lightning strike to a substation transformer
- ▶ damaged or unstable guy wires

NEVER GO NEAR downed power lines or other damaged electrical equipment to assess damage or clean up the area. **STAY AWAY** and call 911 to report damage.

Power lines and other electrical equipment do not have to be sparking, arcing (giving off a flame) or on fire to be energized.



2 New Trustees Elected to Board

AMANDA GNADT and **STEPHEN O'SHEA**, are two new trustees on the Board of Trustees for Bluestem Electric Cooperative.

Amanda Gnad, Alma, was one of the nominees for District 4, Position 1. Amanda was elected in December 2020 by mail-in ballot to serve a three-year term. She replaced Ervin Gnad who had served the membership for 37 years as a trustee.



Amanda Gnad



Stephen O'Shea

Stephen O'Shea, Blaine, was one of the nominees for District 3, Position 1. Stephen was elected in December 2020 by mail-in ballot to serve a three-year term. He replaced Harold McCarter who had served the membership for 8 years as a trustee.

We're Ready for Storm Season. Are You? *Continued from page 16A*

medical essentials, and make sure your prescriptions are current.

- ▶ Set aside basic household items you will need, including flashlights, batteries, a manual can opener and portable, battery-powered radio or TV.
- ▶ Organize emergency supplies so they are easily accessible in one location.

In the event of a prolonged power outage, turn off major appliances, TVs, computers and other sensitive electronics. This will help avert damage from a power surge and help prevent overloading the circuits during power restoration. That said, do leave one light on so you will know when the power is restored. If you plan to use a small generator, make sure it's rated to handle the amount of power you will need, and always review the manufacturer's instructions to operate it safely.

Listen to local news or a NOAA Weather Radio for storm and emer-

gency information, and check Bluestem's Facebook or website for power restoration updates. After the storm, avoid downed power lines and walking through flooded areas where power lines could be submerged. Allow ample room for utility crews to safely perform their jobs, including on your property.

Advance planning for severe storms or other emergencies can reduce stress and anxiety caused by the weather event and lessen the storm's effects. Sign up for NOAA emergency alerts and warnings, and check our web page for other important co-op news and information.

I hope we don't experience severe storms this summer, but we can never predict Mother Nature's plans. At Bluestem Electric we recommend that you act today because there is power in planning. From our co-op family to yours, we hope you have a safe and wonderful summer.



10 Ways to Save Energy in the Laundry Room

Your clothes washer and dryer account for a significant portion of energy consumption from major appliances, and let's face it — laundry is no one's favorite chore. Make the most of your laundry energy use! There are several easy ways you can save energy (and money) in the laundry room. The Department of Energy recommends the following suggestions for saving on suds:

- 1 WASH WITH COLD WATER.** Switching from warm water to cold water can cut one load's energy use by more than half, and by using a cold-water detergent, you can still achieve that brilliant clean you'd normally get from washing in warm water.
- 2 WASH FULL LOADS WHEN POSSIBLE.** Your washing machine will use the same amount of energy no matter the size of the clothes load, so fill it up if you can.
- 3 USE THE HIGH-SPEED OR EXTENDED SPIN CYCLE IN THE WASHER.** This setting will remove more moisture before drying, reducing your drying time and the extra wear on clothing.
- 4 DRY HEAVIER COTTONS SEPARATELY.** Loads will dry faster and more evenly if you separate heavier cottons like linens and towels from your lightweight clothing.
- 5 MAKE USE OF THE "COOL DOWN" CYCLE.** If your dryer has this cycle

option, you can save energy because the clothes will finish drying with the remaining heat in the dryer.

- 6 USE LOWER HEAT SETTINGS TO DRY CLOTHING.** Regardless of drying time, you'll still use less energy.
- 7 USE DRYER BALLS.** Dryer balls, usually wool or rubber, will help keep clothes separated for faster drying, and they can help reduce static, so you can eliminate dryer sheets.
- 8 SWITCH LOADS WHILE THE DRYER IS WARM.** This allows you to take advantage of the remaining heat from the previous cycle.
- 9 CLEAN THE LINT FILTER AFTER EACH DRYING CYCLE.** If you use dryer sheets, remember to scrub the filter once a month to remove excess buildup.
- 10 PURCHASE ENERGY STAR®-RATED WASHERS AND DRYERS.** New washers and dryers that receive the ENERGY STAR® rating use about 20% less energy than conventional models.

NOTICE

Lightning and Surge Protection Subscribers



Lightning and surge protection subscribers must file a claim with Bluestem Electric on damaged warranted equipment within 30 days of the damage for TESCO to cover the equipment.

We also request that you check your electric meter after each storm to ensure the suppression ring is still working properly. If it isn't, you are at risk of receiving damage to your equipment.

Since the implementation of our new metering system, our employees are not able to check each suppression ring after a storm; however, Bluestem linemen do make an effort to inspect these devices while performing routine maintenance on our system.

How to Inspect the Ring

The TESCO lightning and surge ring has two red LED lights located on the bottom that should be lit at all times. These lights are easier to see if you view them at night when it is dark outside. After a storm, if one or both of the lights are not lit, call the co-op. The ring will be replaced at no expense to you.

Thank you for inspecting these devices after every storm. If you have questions, please call Bluestem at 800-558-1580.

Explanation of Demand (kW) and Energy (kWh)

Electricity usage is measured in two ways:

- ▶ Demand (kW-kilowatts): the rate at which energy is used.
- ▶ Energy (kWh-kilowatt-hours): the amount of energy used

Demand Charge (expressed as kW or kilowatts)

Demand is defined to be the rate at which a member uses electricity during a specified time period. Kilowatt demand is measured by the highest rate at which a member uses electricity during a 60-minute time period during the billing period, and billed accordingly.

Energy Charge (expressed as kWh or kilowatt-hours)

Energy charges are based on the amount of electricity a member uses during the billing

period, which is expressed as kWh. Think of it in terms of your car's speedometer:

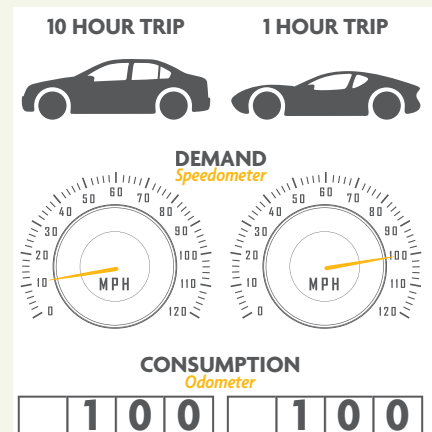
- ▶ If your car travels at a rate of speed of 100 mph for 1 hour, the miles driven is only 100 miles.
- ▶ If your car travels at a rate of speed of 10 mph for 10 hours, the miles driven is 100 miles, but it takes a much more capable and expensive engine to power the car at 100 mph than it does to power the car going only 10 mph.

In Terms of Electricity

If a member's rate of consumption is 100 kW for 1 hour, the kWh consumed is 100 kWh.

Large power accounts are billed for both the rate of energy consumed (kW) and the energy consumed (kWh).

Demand can be thought of as the speedometer reading in your car. It is the rate at which energy is being consumed. Energy Use is like the miles driven on your odometer.



The Science of Attic Insulation

What's in Your Attic?

The answer to this question could be costing you hundreds of dollars each year!

Bluestem Electric Cooperative is constantly striving to keep your energy costs down, however, the cost of generating the electricity supplied to your home has risen at historical rates over the past decade. What does this mean to you? Energy costs have gone up tremendously.

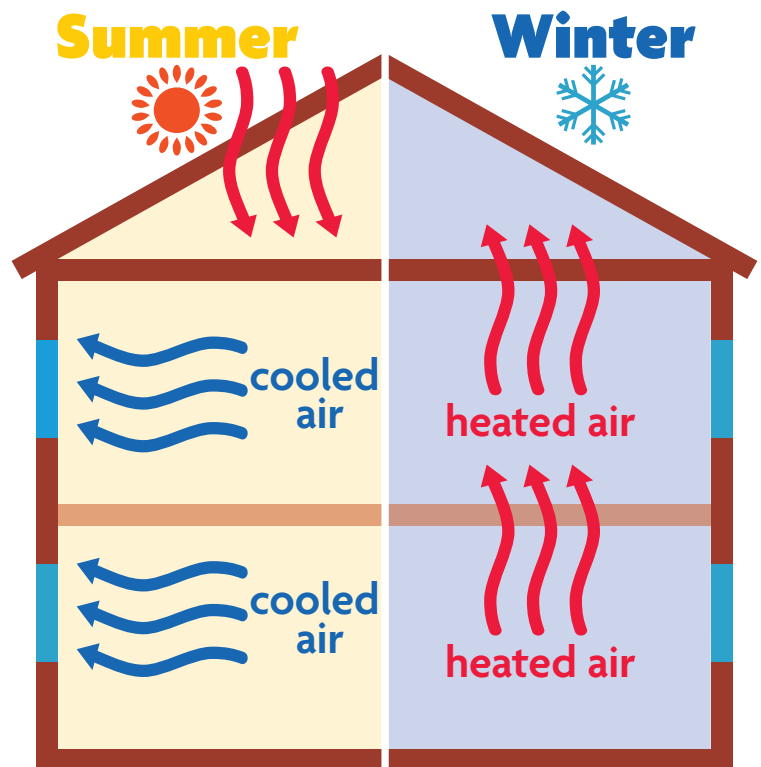
According to KEPCo, the cost to generate the electricity supplied to rural Kansas homeowners has gone up more than 40% in the last 7 years. As energy costs go up, the recommended amount of insulation you should have in your attic goes up too. In roughly the same time period, the minimum amount of attic insulation required in a new home went up by 38.75%. A new home built in 2005 was required to have an R-30 of attic insulation (about 8" of cellulose insulation). Seven years later, Energy Star changed recommendations to R-60 for that same home (16-18 inches of cellulose insulation). When energy costs go up, you need to add more insulation (and make air sealing improvements) to your attic.

Why is the Attic So Important for Energy Efficiency?

We are just entering some of the hottest months of the year and many homeowners will soon be suffering from seasonally high energy bills. Could your attic insulation be one of the MAJOR causes of your high energy bills? If you have an under-insulated attic with poor air sealing, the answer is certainly YES!

In the summer your attic can get up to 180 degrees or more. This is like having an oven on top of your home. The law of thermodynamics states that heat is constantly moving toward cold to reach equilibrium. This means the extreme heat of the attic is seeking balance and trying (in any way it can) to get into your air-conditioned home. Behind your walls your home has dozens of wire and plumbing penetrations between your living space and your attic. These holes can only be seen from the attic. These holes act like a freeway for all the heat in your attic to race into your home pushing the cold air (that you paid to cool) right out of the house.

Heat from your attic is also able to conduct right through the ceiling into your home. Conduction is the process of heat moving through a material. The purpose of insulation in the summer is to slow the conduction process of the heat moving from the "oven" in your attic into your air-conditioned home. If your attic is not insulated to the Energy Star standard, heat will push down



In the summer, your attic is like an oven. Heat races into your home and shoves cold air out.

through the ceiling of your home rapidly. If you could see the heat rushing into your home it would be like seeing a water faucet in your home constantly running with no off switch. What do you think this process is doing to your energy bills?

Your Cooperative's Effort to Help Members

Bluestem Electric Cooperative has been working with Attic Report Card so our members can know exactly how well their attics are insulated and air sealed. Members of Bluestem Electric Cooperative can get this 12 point attic inspection for FREE (\$99 value). A member's Attic Report Card will clearly detail the current condition of their attic insulation and list the exact improvement steps it will take to bring the attic up to Energy Star standards. The Attic Report Card improvement team has completed hundreds of improvement projects for cooperative members (many of whom are saving 25% or more on their heating and cooling costs).

If you are curious about the condition of your attic and would like to know how much you can expect to save if you make improvements call 913-937-9531 or visit www.atticreportcard.com and click "Grade My Attic" to schedule your FREE attic inspection.