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Bluestem NEWS

Bluestem Electric Cooperative

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Power Communications Technician

Tim Diederich

Operations Superintendent

Kevin Heptig

Member Services Director

Marla J. Marshall

Office Manager/Accountant

Contact Us

Wamego

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785-456-2212

Clay Center

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FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

Make Your Voice Heard

There's an old political saying, "if you're not at the table, you're on the menu." This adage is the perfect answer to the question, "why vote?" It's a blunt description of what happens when you don't engage in the political process.

If you don't vote, you're not only missing the opportunity to support a candidate who shares your views and concerns, you're allowing others to chart a course that impacts your future. That's why we're encouraging all Bluestem Electric Cooperative members to recognize National Voter Registration Day on Sept. 22, 2020. Whether you're registering yourself or others to vote or helping members of our community get organized, there are many ways to get involved.

Your Vision, Your Vote

While local elections may not be as exciting as the high-profile presidential

election, they are just as critical. Local elections have a direct impact on your community and on your quality of life.

Like the national level, local elections represent who we are as a community, and more importantly, where we want to go. Whether it's an election for a mayor, sheriff, state representative, school board, or an electric co-op board member, your vision for the community is tied to your vote.

Voting keeps elected officials accountable. Elections are a direct and tangible source of feedback. For example, Bluestem Electric board members provide strategic guidance on the direction of the co-op and how it serves the community. Local board members embody the voice and identity of the community. Bluestem

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Mike Morton

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Clothes dryers make up a large portion of your appliance energy consumption. Clean the lint filter after each cycle and scrub the filter with a toothbrush once a month to remove film and increase air circulation. **Source: energy.gov**



Nominating Committee Selected

Each year the board of trustees of the cooperative shall appoint a nominating committee whose function is to nominate one or more candidates for trustee positions with expiring terms. The Bluestem Board of Trustees has appointed the following members to serve on the respective nominating committee:

DISTRICTS 1 & 2 (to meet in Clay Center Oct. 6)

District 1

- ▶ **BRYCE HECK** – Linn
- ▶ **JERRY BURGER** – Palmer

District 2

- ▶ **GINNY BECK** – Clay Center
- ▶ **NATHAN LARSON** – Riley

DISTRICTS 3 & 4 (to meet in Wamego Oct. 5)

District 3

- ▶ **MIKE EBERT** – St. George
- ▶ **JANICE GOHRING** – Westmoreland
- ▶ **DAROLD BRUNKOW** – Wamego
- ▶ **JON HOLLIDAY** – Soldier

District 4

- ▶ **KATHERINE PACHECO** – Alma
- ▶ **EVAN PARSONS** – Manhattan

TRUSTEE POSITIONS WITH EXPIRING TERMS

- ▶ **District 1, Position 2**
BRUCE MEYER – Palmer
- ▶ **District 2, Position 1**
GARY BUSS – Leonardville
- ▶ **District 3, Position 1**
HAROLD MCCARTER – Wamego
- ▶ **District 4, Position 1**
ERVIN GNADT – Alma

Meet Bluestem's Summer Interns

Summer intern **KYLER ALDERSON** has been working with the line crews at the Wamego office. Alderson is the son of Corey and Jane Alderson of Wamego. He graduated from Wamego High School in 2015. He attended Hutchinson Community College, Highland Community College, Kansas State University, and is currently attending Manhattan Area Technical College



Kyler Alderson



Kaden Parrack

with plans to graduate in December 2020 with a degree in electrical power and distribution. Alderson enjoys sports, fishing and hanging out with friends and family.

KADEN PARRACK is a summer intern with the line crews at the Clay Center office. He is the son of Chad and Trisha Parrack of Riley. He graduated from Riley County High School in 2019 and is currently attending Manhattan Area Technical College with plans to graduate in December 2020 with a degree in electrical power and distribution. Parrack's hobbies are boating, hunting, fishing, dirt bikes, camping and off-roading.

GMS Mapping Service Area this Fall

Bluestem Electric has contracted with Global Mapping Solutions (GMS) to do GIS system mapping. Accurate mapping helps Bluestem inventory poles, wire and equipment locations, which helps in the event of storm damage in restoring the power lines.



GMS' personnel and trucks will be navigating Bluestem's system tagging and mapping poles and equipment starting in October. If you see them in the area, they will have a "Contracted by: Bluestem Electric" sign on their vehicles.

NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION DAY

SEPT. 22, 2020

Make Your Voice Heard Continued from page 16A ▶

Electric's nomination and elections process consists of the board appointing a nominating committee on or before the first of October each year. The election of trustees shall be by mail ballot. Only those nominees selected by the nominating committee or by petition shall appear on the ballot which shall be mailed to respective members on or before the 10th day of December each year. The ballots must be postmarked and received at the office on or before the first day of January each year.

Staying in Sync with the Community

Ultimately, the role of the co-op board is governance. While day-to-day decisions are made by our employees, bigger decisions are made by the board, whose mission is to look out for the vitality of the co-op and the members we serve. Bluestem Electric board members provide their perspective on community priorities, thereby enabling us to make more informed decisions on long-term investments.

However, boards are not perfect, and we need you, the members of the co-op, to help keep the system in check. We depend on you and your neighbors to vote so that we can stay on course and ensure we are in sync with the community we serve.

A strong voter turnout shows investment in the community and ensures diverse views are represented. The whole community benefits when more people participate in the process because greater numbers reflect a consensus on the direction of the future and the will of the people.

By voting in national, state, and local elections, you are serving as a role model for your family, friends, and colleagues. The act of voting demonstrates your support for the community and helps officials chart a course for the future. Democracy is not a spectator sport. Research candidates, learn about issues on the ballot, and get out and vote!

To learn more about National Voter Registration Day or to get involved, visit www.nationalvoterregistrationday.org.

Your Bluestem Payment Options

Bluestem Electric has six convenient payment options for our members. All members receive a standard monthly bill for their electrical use. Bills are due and payable upon receipt. We realize one method of payment does not fit every Bluestem member's needs, so we have several payment options available for your convenience. All our payment options are free.

1. Auto Payment/Bank Draft



Members have the option to have payments automatically withdrawn from their bank accounts or credit/debit cards. Sign up through our online bill pay system or visit either office. Auto payments are drawn automatically each month on the due date of the bill.



4. Night Deposit Boxes

Night deposit boxes are located at our Wamego or Clay Center offices. Payments dropped off after 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday will be posted the next business day. Please pay inside to avoid broken pay arrangements or disconnection.

2. SmartHub/Online Bill Pay



Online bill pay is also available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Click the "Pay Online" button on the left side of Bluestem Electric's website or follow bluestemelectric.smarthub.coop/login.html. Members can also download the "Smart Hub" app from the Apple or Android marketplaces on any mobile device.



5. Mail*

Bluestem Electric's monthly bill comes with a return envelope you can use to mail your check back to us at P.O. Box 5, Wamego, KS 66547 or P.O. Box 513, Clay Center, KS 67432. **Please allow additional time if using the Postal Service. Payment must be received in our office on or prior to due date. We DO NOT use the mailing post date for the payment date.*

3. Bluestem Electric Offices



You may pay by check, cash or credit/debit card at either office in Wamego or Clay Center. Our offices are open from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday, except for select holidays.



6. Prepaid

Bluestem Electric has a prepaid option where you pay for electricity as you go, in advance. When your account becomes low, an email or text is sent to advise you to add more to your account, much like putting fuel in your car. The meter is your "electricity tank gauge" and you will no longer receive a paper bill. Contact either office in Wamego or Clay Center to learn more.

Bluestem Electric also has budget billing for members who prefer to pay the same amount each month. Payments are set at your monthly average, making it easy to budget. An accurate 12-month history of your use at your current residence is helpful in determining payments. If you are interested, please call your local Bluestem office to see if you qualify.

Bluestem Trustees Earn Credentials and Certifications

Bluestem Electric Cooperative Board President **RICHARD RIDDER** and Board Vice President **DAN POLLOCK** were presented with the Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) and Board Leadership certificates from the National Rural Electric Cooperative (NRECA) at the Bluestem monthly trustee meeting.

The CCD program requires attendance and demonstrated understanding of the competencies in five core courses:

- ▶ Director Duties and Liabilities
- ▶ Understanding the Electric Business
- ▶ Board Roles and Relationships
- ▶ Strategic Planning
- ▶ Financial Decision Making

Ridder and Pollock also received the NRECA Board Leadership certificate, which recognizes individuals who continue their professional development after becoming a CCD. Directors who have attained the Board Leadership certificate have completed 10 credits in advanced issues-oriented courses.



Bluestem Electric Cooperative Board President Richard Ridder (right) and Board Vice President Dan Pollock with their Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) and Board Leadership Certificates.

Understanding Energy Demand and Purchasing

You may not think you need to have an understanding of energy demand and purchasing, but do you ever look at your energy bill and wonder what it all means? If your answer to that question is “yes,” then you might be interested to learn how demand impacts your utility bill.

To start, it is important to understand how electricity is made and how it is delivered to your home.

Before Bluestem Electric can send electricity to your home, that electricity needs to be generated by a generation and transmission cooperative (G&T). Once the electricity has been generated, it travels over high-voltage transmission lines to substations, where the voltage is reduced to a safer level. The electricity then travels over distribution power lines and finds its way into your home. So, while you pay your bill to us — your electric distribution cooperative — we don’t actually generate the electricity you use. That is the job of the G&T.

We do help to determine how much electricity our members need to power their homes and businesses, and you play a big part in determining how much electricity the G&T needs to create to keep the lights on in our community. That is where these terms “consumption” and “demand” come in.

Consumption is measured in kilowatt-hours (kWh). Demand is measured in kilowatts (kW). For example, a lightbulb “consumes” a certain number of watts, let’s say 100 watts per hour.

If that lightbulb stays on for 10 hours, it “demands” a certain number of kilowatts (in this case, 1 kW) from the generation station producing electricity.

Now, if you turn on 10, 100-watt lightbulbs in your home for one hour, you are still consuming the same number of kW. However, you are placing a demand on the utility to have those kW available to you over the course of one hour, instead of 10. This requires the generation and transmission plant to produce more power in less time in order to meet your demand.

Bluestem Electric purchases kilowatt-hours from the G&T based on the average demand of our members. Peak demand refers to the time of day when the demand for electricity is highest. This is typically during the evening when families return home from work or school, cook dinner and use appliances the most. Using electricity during this peak demand period often costs more to both Bluestem Electric and to our members.

Demand is the reason your electricity bill fluctuates season to season and even year to year. Generating and distributing power can be a tricky and complicated business, but rest assured Bluestem Electric will always meet the necessary demand to provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity to your family.