

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Bluestem Electric Cooperative, Inc.
1000 South Wind Dr., P.O. Box 5
Wamego, KS 66547
800-558-1580

www.bluestemelectric.com



Bluestem NEWS

Bluestem Electric Cooperative

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FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

Affordable Electricity Powers Quality of Life

Most of us use electricity, either directly or indirectly, at almost all times. Because electricity is so abundant and available with the simple flip of a switch, it's easy to take it for granted.

According to the Energy Information Agency (EIA), the typical U.S. household now uses more air conditioning, appliances and consumer electronics than ever before.

The average home also contains 10 or more internet-connected devices. Considering everything that is powered by electricity, it's no wonder we occasionally might wince at our monthly bill. But keep in mind, it's no longer just the "light bill."

Electricity Powers Quality of Life

Electricity powers our quality of life. From the infrastructure of your home (appliances, water heater and HVAC system) to charging your smartphones and computers, and powering your TV and Wi-Fi router, your energy bill covers so much more than lighting.

Today, there is more demand for electricity than ever before. At home, in schools and business, and in commercial sectors such as transportation, the need for electricity is increasing.

Typically when demand goes up, so does the price, as is the case with most goods or services, like cable or even your favorite specialty coffee. However, that's

not true with electricity. Let's take a look at how the value of electricity compares to other common expenses.

Over the last five years, the cost of rent increased 3.4%, medical care increased 2.8%, and education increased 2.2%. But the cost of electricity only increased 1%.

Considering all the ways we depend on electricity, it still remains a great value.

So, the next time you're enjoying your favorite podcast, TV series or movie, consider the value of electricity and how it enhances your quality of life.

We care about you, the consumer-members we serve, and understand that electricity is more than a commodity — it's a necessity. That's why Bluestem Electric will continue working hard to power your life, reliably, safely and affordably.



Mike Morton



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).

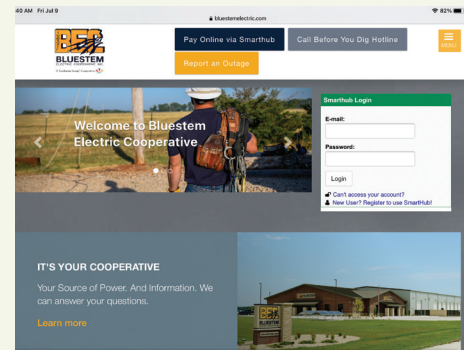
You can also pay your bill online at www.bluestemelectric.com using your bank account or credit card. Click on the SmartHub Pay Online button. It's safe and secure!



Beware of Third Party Bill Payment Services

Bluestem Electric DOES NOT charge members to make payments on our cooperative website (www.bluestemelectric.com), through the SmartHub app, or by phone. Third-party payment locations and websites are NOT affiliated with Bluestem Electric, and payments made through these sources cannot be guaranteed.

Be sure that you see the BEC logo (shown at left) and use the Bluestem Electric website www.bluestemelectric.com.



Bluestem Nomination, Election Process

Excerpt from the Bluestem Electric Cooperative Bylaws

SECTION 4.05 NOMINATION OF TRUSTEES. The Board shall appoint a nominating committee, on or before the first of October of each year, consisting of not less than one, nor more than five members from each district for whom a Trustee is to be elected. Board members may not serve on the nominating committee.

Only committee members from each district will nominate their own candidate. Committee members from districts one and two will meet together at Clay Center and committee members from districts three and four will meet together at Wamego. Nominating committees shall meet during the month of October. On or before the first day of November, the nominating committee shall prepare and post a list of nominations for Trustee at the Wamego office if a Trustee is to be elected from districts three or four and at the Clay Center office if a Trustee is to be elected from districts one or two. The committee shall nominate one or more candidates for each position. Nominations may be made by petition, filed on or before the close of business, November 30, at the Wamego office for Trustees to be elected from districts three and four, and at the Clay Center office for Trustees to be elected from districts one or two. The petition must be signed by no less than 5% of the membership of the district for whom the Trustee is to be

elected. The secretary shall immediately post such nominations at the same place where the list of nominations by the committee is posted. Nominations made by the petition shall appear on the ballot in the order received

SECTION 4.06 ELECTION OF TRUSTEES. The election of Trustees shall be by mail ballot. Only those nominees selected by the nominating committee or nominated by petition shall appear on the ballot. There may be write-in votes for a qualified member not named on the ballot. The ballot shall first list the name(s) nominated by the committee, then the name(s) nominated by petition in the order received and, at the end, a place to write in a name. Failure of strict compliance with provisions of this section shall not affect the validity of any election of Trustees.

The secretary shall mail the ballots to the respective members by the 10th day of December of each year. Ballots must be postmarked or received at the Wamego office or the Clay Center office on or before the first day of January of each year.

Those members who have been appointed to serve on each district's respective Nominating Committee will be listed here in next month's *Kansas Country Living Magazine*.

These bylaws are under review by the Bluestem Electric Board of Trustees following the consolidation of offices in Feb. 2021.

Reminder

School starts this month!

The school year is coming up. Please make sure to drive carefully and watch for school buses stopped for children on the roadway!



Understanding Power Surges and Blinks



Have you ever noticed your lights blink during a thunderstorm? Or perhaps you've noticed a blinking microwave clock when you arrive home. When this happens, you've likely experienced a brief disruption to your electric service, which could result from a power surge or blink. While the symptoms of surges and blinks can appear similar, what's happening behind the scenes can be quite different.

What's a power surge?

Power surges are brief overvoltage spikes or disturbances of a power waveform that can damage, degrade or destroy electronic equipment within your home or business. Most electronics are designed to handle small variations in voltage; however, power surges can reach amplitudes of tens of thousands of volts — this can be extremely damaging to your electronic equipment.

Surges can be caused by internal sources, like HVAC systems with variable frequency drives, or external sources, like lightning and damage to power lines and transformers.

Bluestem Electric encourages all members to install surge protective devices (such as surge protector power strips) to safeguard your sensitive electronics. If you're experiencing frequent surges in your home or business and you believe the cause is internal, contact a qualified electrician to inspect your electrical system.

What's a power blink?

Power blinks are also brief service interruptions, but they're typically caused by a fault (short circuit) on

a power line or a protective device that's working in reaction to the fault. Faults can occur through a variety of instances, like squirrels, birds or other small animals contacting an energized power line, tree branches touching a power line, or lightning and other similar events. In fact, when it comes to power disruptions caused by critters, squirrels reign supreme. In 2019 alone, squirrels were responsible for more than 1,200 outages.

Any of the events noted above can cause your power to blink, but you may also experience a brief interruption when protective devices that act like circuit breakers are working to detect the fault. Believe it or not, these brief power blinks caused by protective devices are good because that means the equipment is working as it should to prevent a prolonged outage.

Regardless of the cause, Bluestem Electric line crews will be on their way to inspect the damage and make necessary repairs after a power outage. And you can help too! Any time you experience repeated disruptions to your electric service, please let us know by calling 800-558-1580.

Home Charging Options for Electric Vehicles

Before purchasing your own electric vehicle (EV), be sure you consider the multiple options for charging your vehicle at home. Your local electric cooperative is a great resource to learn about EVs and how the vehicle charging will affect your energy usage.

Electric vehicles have three common EV charging levels: Level One, Level Two and DC Fast Charge.

Level One Charging

Level One is the most basic charging level. If you choose this option, your EV will typically include an adapter that plugs into a typical 120-volt outlet. This is the easiest and cheapest charging solution, but it will take much longer to charge your EV.

Level Two Charging

Level Two is about three to five times faster than Level One, but this level of charging often requires separate purchases and installation. The EV is plugged into a 240-volt outlet, which is used for larger appliances, like a clothes dryer.

Most homes do not include a 240-volt outlet in garages, so the outlet must be installed by a licensed professional. You typically see Level Two charging stations at shopping malls, office buildings and multi-family community spaces.

DC Fast Charging

DC Fast Charge stations are typically seen near high-traffic public areas, like gas stations, rather than in homes. This is the fastest charging level, with the ability to charge an EV to 80% in under 30 minutes. As EVs continue to become more popular, you can expect to see more DC Fast Charge stations throughout Kansas.

If you're charging an electric vehicle at home, please contact Bluestem Electric at 800-558-1580. EV charging creates additional energy demand. The time of day you charge your EV can have an impact on the grid and your monthly energy costs.

By letting us know about your EV charging levels, we can help ensure your home is prepared for the additional energy consumption.

Feeling stressed this harvest season?
WHAT'S YOUR PLAN?

Breakdowns. Long hours. Setbacks.

There is no way to predict
what harvest will bring.

Have your **PLAN** in place to manage
your stress for a safe and healthy harvest.

P **Prepare for the Season**
With preparation, some stress can be avoided. Anticipate the demands of harvest and plan ahead. For example, prep healthy meals, fuel equipment and perform routine maintenance ahead of schedule. **What can you do to prepare?**

L **Lean on Loved Ones**
Seeking support from others rather than taking on everything yourself can help reduce stress. Text or call a friend or family member when you need support.
Whom can you lean on?

A **Activate Coping Mechanisms**
Coping mechanisms can help manage stress. They include engaging in physical activity, finding ways to make yourself laugh and carving out time for hobbies. **Which coping mechanisms will you use?**

N **Nip Negative Self-Talk**
Negative self-talk leads to decreased morale and feelings of hopelessness. When your inner critic nags, be kind to yourself and remember thoughts are not reality. **How will you tell your inner critic to take a hike?**

Need immediate assistance?
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
1-800-273-8255

CONTENT DEVELOPED BY JOSIE M. RUDOLPHI AND COURTNEY CUTHBERTSON, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS EXTENSION

Proper Rest, Using '4 A' Method can Improve Harvest Safety

Farming requires long days in the field and little rest. The pressure to harvest as much as possible, combined with fatigue and looming deadlines, increases the risk of injury. In fact, most injuries occur during the spring and fall when stress and fatigue are common among farmers.

The safety and health of workers, including making time for sleep, should be a priority when considering a farm's productivity, according to Josie Rudolphi, University of Illinois Extension associate research scientist. "Rushing and cutting corners can lead to injury, which no one has time for, especially during the harvest," Rudolphi says.

Rudolphi grew up on a farm and understands the pressures of harvest season. She says that getting proper rest can make a huge difference in staying safe, but during the time crunch of harvest season, farmers sacrifice sleep to work late into the night.

"Sleep deficiency has been associated with increased injury, reduced reaction time, and reduced concentration," Rudolphi says. "All of which could impact health and safety, as well as productivity."

The demands of harvest are stressful, and a lack of sleep can intensify that and lead to errors in the fields or even on the roads.

To improve sleep, Rudolphi advises farmers to go to bed and wake up at regular times when possible. They can use rainy days to catch up on sleep.

Other Sleep Health Tips Include:

- ▶ Create a bedroom environment that encourages sleep; keep it quiet, dark and cool.
- ▶ Limit electronic device use.
- ▶ Avoid large meals, caffeine and alcohol before bedtime.

In addition to improving sleep, managing stress is an important component to injury prevention, health and safety, according to Rudolphi. "By using the 'Four A' Method of avoid (planning ahead), adapt (changing expectations), alter (changing the situation when you can) and accept (acknowledging that a situation is what it is), farmers can successfully manage the stress of long hours and unpredictability," she adds.

For information about safety around electricity, including farm and ranch safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month

When shopping for new lightbulbs, know the difference between lumens and watts. Lumens measure the amount of light produced by the bulb, while watts measure energy consumption. Energy-saving LEDs come in a variety of colors and brightness levels and last 15-25 times longer than incandescent bulbs. **SOURCE: ENERGY.GOV**

