

Bluestem NEWS

Bluestem Electric Cooperative

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Manager of Member Services

Contact Us

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FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

Blessings of the Season

I love everything about this time of year. Just the thought of the holiday season brings a smile to my face and evokes a sense of comfort and nostalgia. Recalling family gatherings and traditions warms my heart and fills my senses.

It's a time of reflection. I'm grateful for my own family as well as my co-op family. At Bluestem Electric, we're driven by a sense of mission and purpose. Our team feels a strong connection to our community and our members, because we live here too.

While many of community-focused programs and activities ramp up this time of year, we have several programs and services in place to help our members year-round. I'd like to remind you about some of these offerings in hopes you'll find them beneficial.

We hope you'll take advantage of SmartHub, an app that empowers you to monitor, manage and pay your

energy bill conveniently through your phone. Another service we offer is prepaid metering, which is intended to help budget your monthly energy costs. Bluestem members can pay for electricity before it's used, then use the electricity until the credit expires.

During the time period paid for, you'll receive regular feedback on your balance and an email will alert you when your balance is running low. Another service available is Outage Texting. Once a member is signed up for Outage Texting, they will be able to text their outage into the Bluestem After Hour Call Center to report a power outage. Once power is restored, a text will be sent to the member letting them know power has been restored in their area.

In addition to helping members save



Mike Morton

ANNUAL MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

The Bluestem Electric Cooperative, Inc. Annual Meeting will be held on March 28, 2022, at the United Methodist Church Family Life Center in Clay Center, KS. The meeting will begin at 7:00 PM. Official Notice of the Annual Meeting will be mailed approximately 10 days prior to the meeting. We hope that you will plan on attending the Annual Meeting and take part in the business of the Cooperative.



Proposed Bylaw Revisions

You are hereby notified, pursuant to K.S.A. 17-4608 and Article ____ of the bylaws, that the following proposed amendments to the bylaws are being submitted to a vote of the membership by mail ballot, as provided by Article III of the bylaws. The sections of the bylaws in which changes are proposed follow this notice. Deleted language is indicated by ~~strike~~type and additions to the bylaws are blue.

The Board of Trustees recommends the adoption of the amendments to the Bylaws of Bluestem Electric Cooperative Association, Inc. A “yes” vote is a vote in favor of the proposed changes. A “no” vote is a vote against the proposed changes. A complete version of the bylaws can be found at www.bluestemelectric.com

ARTICLE I MEMBERSHIP

Section 1.11. Alternative Dispute Resolution. Any and all disputes, claims or controversies arising from or related to the electric system's provision of services in any way shall, at the request of either party, be resolved by binding arbitration pursuant to the written procedures established by the Board of Trustees. Each member agrees to arbitrate all such disputes, claims or controversies according to this bylaw and in accordance with the written procedures and rules of arbitration. Arbitration proceedings shall be held at a neutral location within any County that the Cooperative is providing a Cooperative service. This arbitration agreement remains in effect even in the event of membership withdrawal or termination.

SECTION 3.01. ANNUAL MEETING.

The Annual Meeting of the Members shall be held ~~during the months of March or April~~ each year on a date and at a time designated by the Board, for the purpose of passing upon reports covering the previous fiscal year and transacting such other business as may come before the meeting. Annual meetings will alternate, ~~at a location determined by the Bluestem Board of Trustees, between District #1 & #2 and District #3 & #4 Wamego and Clay Center.~~ Or, in the alternative, the Board may, by a 2/3 majority, designate the annual meeting to be in any County where the Cooperative is providing a Cooperative electrical service. To the extent authorized by the Board, however, and subject to guidelines and procedures adopted by the Board, an Annual Meeting may be held without a geographic location if the Meeting is held through the Internet or other Electronic communications technology in a manner; (1) permitting the Cooperative to verify that each Person participating in the Meeting is a Member; and (2) permitting Members the opportunity to read or hear the proceedings substantially concurrently with their occurrence, vote on matters submitted to the Members,

ask questions, and make comments. Failure to hold the annual meeting at the designated time shall not work a forfeiture or dissolution of the Cooperative.

SECTION 3.02. SPECIAL MEETINGS.

Special meetings of the members may be called by resolution of the Board or by petition signed by at least ten percent of all members of the cooperative or of a district. It shall be the duty of the Secretary to cause notice of the meeting to be given as specified in Section 3.04. The Board may designate the special meeting to be in any County where the Cooperative is providing a Cooperative electrical service.

SECTION 3.03 SPECIAL DISTRICT MEETINGS.

Special meetings of districts one and/or two, and three and/or four may be called by resolution of the Board of Trustees or by a petition signed by at least 10% of all members of the district or districts for the purpose of receiving and acting on information relative to the removal of a Trustee as set out in Section 4.06. It shall be the duty of the Secretary to cause notice of the meeting to be given as specified in Section 3.04. If the special meeting is of members of district one and/or two, it shall be in any County within District #1 and/or District #2 where the Cooperative is providing a Cooperative service Clay Center, and if the special meeting is of members of district three and/or four, it shall be in any County within District #3 and/or District #4 where the Cooperative is providing a Cooperative service Wamego.

SECTION 3.05 QUORUM. Business may not be transacted at any meeting of the members unless there are present, in person or by proxy ~~or through the Internet or other Electronic communications technology as described in Section 3.01~~, at least ~~fifty~~ seventy-five members, except that, if less than a quorum is present at any meeting, a majority of those present in person may adjourn the meeting to another time and date. At all meetings of the members, whether a quorum is present

or not, the Secretary shall affix to the meeting minutes, or incorporate therein by reference, a list of those members who were registered as present in person or by proxy. A quorum for a special meeting of members of one or more districts shall be twenty five members from each district in person or by proxy.

SECTION 3.07 MAIL BALLOT and/ or Electronic Ballot. Issues may be presented to the members by means of a written ballot forwarded to the members and returned to the Cooperative by electronic format, mail, or hand delivered. Except as provided hereinafter, the Board shall determine which issues are decided by a mail and/or electronic ballot and the terms, conditions and procedures to regulate its use. Issues will be decided by a majority of the mail and/or electronic ballots received and shall have the same force and effect as a vote taken at a meeting of the members.

SECTION 3.08 PROXY VOTING. Members may vote by proxy at a meeting of members. The member voting proxies must be a voting member of the meeting. A member may be a proxy for no more than three members. All proxies must be in writing and signed by the member on a form provided by the cooperative or deemed satisfactory by the Secretary. Proxies may not be used for mail and/or electronic ballot voting.

SECTION 3.10 Any requested items of new business must be presented to the Board, in writing, not less than ninety (90) days before the annual meeting. The Board shall take action on any items of new business presented by a Petition signed by not less than five percent (5%) of the members, by submitting the question(s) to the members by a mail and/or electronic ballot or by inclusion on the agenda of a Special Meeting or Annual Meeting. Notice of new business for consideration at the annual meeting shall be included in the written notice of the Annual Meeting as provided in Section 3.04.

ARTICLE IV BOARD OF TRUSTEES.

SECTION 4.02 QUALIFICATIONS TO BE NOMINATED, ELECTED AND REMAIN

A TRUSTEE. Any natural person shall be eligible to be nominated, elected and remain a Trustee of the Cooperative who:

(1) Is a member of the cooperative and is a bona fide resident, in the Trustee district which the member is to represent.

(2) Is not an employee of the Cooperative or has not been an employee of the cooperative within the last three (3) years or in any way financially interested in a competing enterprise or a business engaged in selling energy, energy services or energy supplies or maintaining energy producing or selling facilities. However, the Board may grant exceptions for "deminimus" competing enterprises; A Trustee, current and/or past, seeking to gain employment with the Cooperative shall not be serving and/or have served on the Board of Trustees for one (1) complete year prior to date of employment;

(3) Is not related to an incumbent Trustee or an employee of the Cooperative. The term "related" means the relationship of spouse (including common law spouse), child (step/in-law/grand), brother (step/in-law), sister (step/in-law), parent (step/in-law), grandparent, aunt, uncle, nephew, niece, or co-habitant. Upon establishment of the fact that a Trustee is holding the office in violation of any of the

foregoing provisions, the Trustees shall remove the Trustee from office.

Nothing contained in this section shall affect the validity of any action taken at any meeting of the Trustees.

SECTION 4.03 DISTRICTS. The territory of the Cooperative shall be divided into four Trustee districts for the purpose of constituting the Cooperative's Board of Trustees. The Trustee districts shall include all of the area contained within the exterior boundaries of the Cooperative service territory, as amended from time to time, together with all of the area within any exterior square mile section which contains any Cooperative service territory (herein a "service section"). The boundaries of Trustee districts shall be depicted on an official territory and Trustee district map adopted and approved by the Board of Trustees of the Cooperative. An official territory and Trustee district map shall be maintained, for membership review and inspection, at both the Wamego and Clay Center offices. Except for service sections bisected by the Kansas River, no service section shall be within more than one Trustee district. The Board may amend the boundaries of the districts, from time to time, as deemed necessary or appropriate.

(1) **DISTRICT ONE:** That portion of the Cooperative service territory together with any service section located North of the township

Six (6) and Seven (7) boundary line, South of the Kansas Nebraska baseline and West of the Big Blue River.

(2) **DISTRICT TWO:** That portion of the Cooperative service territory together with any service section located South of the township Six (6) and Seven (7) boundary line, South of the Kansas Nebraska baseline and West of the Big Blue River.

(3) **DISTRICT THREE:** That portion of the Cooperative service territory together with that part of any service section located North of the Kansas River and East of the Big Blue River.

(4) **DISTRICT FOUR:** That portion of the Cooperative service territory together with that part of any service section located South of the Kansas River.

SECTION 4.04 TRUSTEE POSITIONS

AND TERM OF OFFICE. Trustees shall be elected from each district, only by the members from such district (eligible members), as described hereinafter, for a term of three calendar years as terms of office expire or until their successors shall have been elected and qualified. The number of Trustees for each district and the three-year election cycle for each position within each district shall be as described below.

► District One shall have two Trustees.

Position One begins January 1, 2020¹⁴; and

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Bluestem Trustee Candidate Nominees

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

District 1 & 2, Position – At Large

MARK DIEDERICH, Greenleaf, Mark and his wife, Evelyn live in Washington County, Greenleaf, KS. Mark is a cattle and crop farmer / owner and currently serves District 1 & 2 Position at Large He is seeking reelection because consistent economical electrical power is essential for our rural home and business.

District 3, Position – 2

MICHAEL LEITCH, Westmoreland, Michael is an RVP – Related Services for Frontier Farm Credit. Michael, his wife, Shannon and their children live in the rural area between Wamego and Westmoreland, KS. Michael is running for the board because: In an ever-changing world, access to consistent, affordable electricity will be more important than ever and I would like to be part finding the solutions to meet these challenges.

DENNIS SCHWANT, Wheaton, Dennis is a farmer, rancher in Pottawatomie County. Dennis and his wife, Ireta, live in the rural Whea-

ton area. He is interested in rural development and maintaining, reliable and reasonable cost to his fellow Bluestem Members.

District 3 & 4, Position – At Large

RICHARD RIDDER, St. George, Richard and his wife, Michele, live in the Flush, KS area and currently serves on the board . Richard is a farmer and beef producer and recognizes the importance of reliable and affordable electricity. Service the community is important to him, and would like to continue to use his experience and common sense to keep our Coop strong and our members happy.

ERIC PECK, Manhattan, Eric lives in the Zeandale, KS area and is a retired military officer who has a farm, helps his neighbors farm and volunteers as a firefighter and an instructor for the Servicemember Agricultural Vocational Education non-profit. Eric lives in the Zeandale, KS area. Eric Would like to keep Bluestem service reliable and reasonably priced and is also interested from his previous experience with the Kansas National Guard and Kansas Division of Emergency Management on disaster response and mitigation.



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 ap-

plication and test that must be completed and submitted by **FRIDAY, JAN. 14, 2022, AT 4:30 P.M.** In the second stage, a panel of judges will interview finalists on Wednesday, Feb. 23, 2022.

For more information, contact your high school counselor or call Bluestem Electric at 785-456-2212.

Proposed Bylaw Revisions

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- Position Two begins January 1, 2021¹⁵.
- District Two shall have two Trustees.
- Position One begins January 1, 2021¹⁵; and Position Two begins January 1, 2020¹⁴.
- Districts One and Two shall have one Trustee "At Large".
- "At Large" begins January 1, 2022¹⁶.
- District Three shall have three Trustees.
- Position One begins January 1, 2021¹⁵; Position Two begins January 1, 2022¹⁶; and Position Three begins January 1, 2020¹⁴.
- District Four shall have two Trustees.
- Position One begins January 1, 2021¹⁵; and Position Two begins January 1, 2020¹⁴.
- Districts Three and Four shall have one Trustee "At Large".
- "At Large" begins January 1, 2022¹⁶.

SECTION 4.05 NOMINATION OF TRUSTEES.

The Board shall appoint a nominating committee, on or before the first day 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 **in any County within District #1 and/or District #2 where the Cooperative is providing a Cooperative Service at Clay Center** and committee members from districts three and four will meet together **in any County within District #3 and/or District #4 where the Cooperative is providing a Cooperative Service 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 **and on the Cooperative Website and/or other Cooperative Social Media sites.** ~~If a Trustee is to be elected from districts three and 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 not less than 5% of the members 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 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 **and/or electronic ballot as determined by the Trustees.** 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 the provisions of this section shall not affect the validity of any election of Trustees.

The secretary shall mail the ballots to the respective members on or before the 10th day

of December of each year. On or before the first day of January of each year, ballots must be post marked or received at the Wamego office ~~or the Clay Center office.~~

ARTICLE V MEETINGS OF THE BOARD

SECTION 5.01 REGULAR MEETINGS.

A regular meeting of the Board shall be held periodically, but not less than bi monthly, at a date and time as the Board may provide by resolution.

Regular Trustees' meetings will **be held in alternate between Wamego, and Clay Center, Kansas.** Or, in the alternative, the Trustees may, by a 2/3 majority, designate the regular meeting to be in any County where the Cooperative is providing a **Cooperative electrical service.**

Regular Trustees' meetings may be held without notice other than such resolution fixing the time, date and place thereof. Failure to hold the regular meeting at the designated time shall not work a forfeiture or dissolution of the Cooperative.

ARTICLE XIII AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

Amendment of Bylaws may be initiated by a majority of the Board or a Petition signed by not less than five percent (5%) of the members. These bylaws shall be altered, amended or repealed by the members by mail **and/or electronic ballot** or at any annual or special member meeting by a majority vote of the members voting by ballot or attending such meeting, in person or by proxy, provided the notice of such meeting, or the ballot shall have contained a copy of the proposed alteration, amendment or repeal, or an accurate summary explanation thereof. The Board shall determine the method and time schedule of presenting the question(s) to the members.