

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Bluestem Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
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800-558-1580

[www.bluestemelectric.com](http://www.bluestemelectric.com)



# Bluestem NEWS

## Bluestem Electric Cooperative

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### Contact Us

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## FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

# A Balanced Fuel Mix Promotes Power Reliability



Mike Morton

As I've noted before in my past columns, the energy industry is undergoing a dramatic transformation as consumer demand for more renewable energy sources grows, and

innovation and technology continue to advance exponentially. You're likely witnessing this energy evolution firsthand.

In driving across the region, you may have noticed fields of solar panels owned by co-ops and other utilities, along with an increase in solar panels on your neighbors' roofs. Maybe you've heard about the impending changes in the transportation sector with most major vehicle companies announcing

plans to offer more electric vehicles at more affordable prices.

Consumer interest in renewable energy is strong and growing. In addition, national studies indicate that consumers have an expectation that companies operate in an ethical and responsible manner — including when it comes to the environment.

At Bluestem Electric, we have always put the good of our community first. While our primary function is to provide reliable and affordable energy to our members, we are more than an electricity provider. Because we are a co-op, our mission is to enrich the lives of our members and to serve the long-term interests of our community. We feel we're doing both by investing in renewable energy sources.

*Continued on page 16B ▶*



HAPPY  
★  
**4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY**  
★★★  
INDEPENDENCE DAY  
Our office will be closed on  
Monday, July 5, for the holiday.

## A Balanced Fuel Mix Promotes Power Reliability

Continued from page 16A ▶

Green energy is certainly not new. Solar, wind and hydro power have been around for decades. However, the recent innovations and advances in renewable technology have led to sharp decreases in cost, making it more feasible and accessible.

However, to borrow a nautical analogy, it takes a long time to turn the direction of a large ship — and changing the energy mix we use to power homes and businesses doesn't happen overnight. While renewable energy use is increasing, we will still depend on traditional forms of energy to keep power flowing reliably to your home. After all, solar and wind energy are referred to as "intermittent" power since the sun does not always shine and the wind does not always blow. This fact coupled with the growing demand for renewables creates its own challenges. That's why there is real value in maintaining a balanced mixture of fuel types to ensure reliability and resiliency, and meet the growing demand for electricity.

As the energy industry continues to evolve, Bluestem Electric is striving to take advantage of technology advances and market opportunities as they become available. This means Bluestem Electric can leverage the flexibility of the grid to offer a wider range of renewable power selections as we continue to bring safe, reliable and affordable power to our community.

Albert Einstein once observed that "Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving." For Bluestem Electric to meet the growing demand for renewable energy and ensure the reliability of our power supply, we must constantly make operational adjustments as we strive for balance and a brighter future for our members.

## New Employee at Bluestem



Mary Hobbs

Bluestem Electric Cooperative welcomes **MARY HOBBS** to the cooperative. Hobbs started March 8, 2021, as the new customer service representative.

Prior to joining Bluestem, she was an IT technician for Riley County. She previously graduated from Fort Hays State University earning her bachelor's in business administration. Prior to graduating from Fort Hays, she attended Allen Community College and played on their volleyball team.

Hobbs lives in Wamego and is a graduate of Wamego High School. She has a dog named Holly and a cat named Gary.

"I am excited for the opportunity to start my career at Bluestem," she said. "I am devoted to serving Bluestem's members. Everyone has been so welcoming and helpful in this transition and I look forward to working with my coworkers."

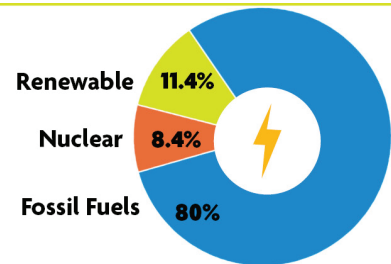


### Automatic Payment Reminder

If you are signed up for automatic bank draft or recurring credit/debit card payments for your Bluestem Electric account(s), please update your information if you change bank accounts or get new cards. This ensures your account will be paid on time and avoid any penalty charges.

In addition if you add a new account or have multiple accounts and want them all on ACH, each individual account will need to be signed up.

About **80%** of the nation's energy comes from fossil fuels, **8.4%** from nuclear energy and **11.4%** comes from renewable sources.



## ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month

During summer months, run large appliances that emit heat (like clothes dryers and dishwashers) during the evening when it's cooler. This will minimize indoor heat during the day when outdoor temperatures are highest. **SOURCE: NRECA**



# Bluestem Demonstrates Safety for Local Schools and Organizations

Bluestem Electric linemen provided several power line safety demonstrations with their safety trailer this year. The demonstrations were held for Clay County Community High School and Middle School, Clay Center Police Department, Clay County Sheriff Department, Clay County Road Crew, local EMS and fire departments and area ag industries.

Live electrical power lines are often a factor for firefighters, first responders and emergency crews responding to fires, vehicle accidents and severe weather emergencies. Sessions like these reinforce the danger as well as the precautions needed when working around power lines.

The trailer is equipped with transformers that produce 7,200 volts. Bluestem linemen demonstrated what happens when objects come in contact with power lines and what to do if there is an accident involving power lines, which includes staying away from any power lines that



From left: Linemen Courtney Grater, Baylee Easterberg and Kevin Swenson review safety tips.

are down. Always treat power lines as if they are live. Never exit the vehicle until you are told by a power company representative that it is safe to do so. If, however, the vehicle catches fire, it will be necessary to exit the vehicle even if help has not arrived. When exiting the vehicle jump with both feet together and continue to jump as far as possible from the power lines.

To schedule a safety demonstration, contact Bluestem Electric at 800-558-1580.



Bluestem lineman Trenton Canfield demonstrates what happens when a person comes into contact with a line when using a grain auger.



Bluestem lineman Baylee Easterberg demonstrates a tire catching on fire while in contact with a power line.

## Don't Fall Victim to Utility Scams

Every day, millions of Americans are targeted by scammers through phone calls, emails, text messages, online or in person. Scammers' tactics can change daily, which is why it's important for consumers to stay on top of the latest scam reports from local and national news outlets, as well as your local utility companies.

Just last year several Bluestem Electric members were targeted through a phone scam in which the scammers demanded immediate payment and threatened to shut off power if the money was not received. Remember, Bluestem Electric Cooperative, will never call you and demand immediate payment without notice.

We want you to be aware of two trending scam tactics. One is the overpayment trick, which occurs when a scammer contacts you and claims that you have overpaid your utility bill. The scammer will say they need your personal banking information to deposit the credit back to your checking account. Don't fall for this scam! If you make an overpayment on your energy bill, Bluestem Electric will automatically apply the credit to your account, which will carry over to your next billing cycle. Another trending scam is smishing (short for SMS phishing). Many consumers know to watch out for suspicious emails, but we tend to trust text messages sent to our smartphones. Always question suspicious texts, especially from someone claiming to represent a utility. Bluestem Electric will only send you important updates via text if you've signed up for our load management or outage texting program from SmartHub. These are just a couple examples of trending scams, so it's important to watch for any red flags.

Here are a few reminders on how to take control of the situation when you've been targeted by a scammer:

▶ **TAKE YOUR TIME.** Utility scammers try to create a

sense of urgency so that you'll act fast and hand over personal information, especially over the phone. Take a moment to think about the situation before acting.


▶ **BE SUSPICIOUS.** Scammers typically request immediate payments through prepaid debit cards or third-party apps. Unusual requests like this should raise red flags. Remember, if the request seems strange and out of the ordinary, you're likely being targeted by a scammer.

▶ **CONFIRM BEFORE YOU ACT.** If you're contacted by someone claiming to represent Bluestem Electric or another utility but you're unsure, just hang up the phone and call the utility directly. You can reach us at 800-558-1580 to verify the situation.

Our increasingly connected world provides scammers with more opportunities to connect with unsuspecting consumers. Be vigilant, and please report any utility scams to Bluestem Electric so we can let others in our community know. Together, we can help prevent our friends and neighbors from being victimized.

### AVOID UTILITY SCAMS

Scammers will threaten you with anything from shutting off your power to legal action. Don't fall victim to these types of scams.



- ▶ Our employees will never show up at your door to demand payment.
- ▶ Never give personal information to an unknown caller or visitor. Our representatives have access to the details they need to service your account.
- ▶ Demands for immediate payment by wire transfer, cryptocurrency, gift cards or cash reload cards should immediately raise red flags.
- ▶ If you think you've been contacted by a scammer falsely representing the co-op, please let us know as soon as possible.