

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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Manager of Member Services

Contact Us

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FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

Unplug With Meaningful Community Programs

Most adults vaguely remember that “checking for messages” meant listening to an answering machine. We carried on with our days without relying on cell phones and managed just fine. But today, we are more connected than ever through our smartphones and other devices.

Our phones are so much more now — from cameras to calendars to social media connections — and truly disconnecting from them can be tough. But it's even harder for our kids to unplug because they only know life with these tiny screens. It's difficult for them to imagine life without computers, gaming devices, tablets or cell phones.

But there's great value in unplugging for children and adults, even if it's for just a short period of time. For kids, time away from the screen to be outside with other children allows them to connect with nature and others in a way that a virtual experience simply does not allow. They are able to experience life in the moment and allow their creativity and energy to break free.

Fortunately, we have access to great community programs and organizations that provide children with a safe place to play, learn and grow, while cultivating new skills and interests.

These types of clubs and programs offer kids an opportunity to explore activities and interests outside of school academics. Children can investigate areas they might not otherwise have access to and discover new interests and passions. They often learn new skills and strengthen existing ones. It's no secret that the broader the range of experiences and activities children are exposed to, the more likely they are to find their own path and possibly a career. Community programs also foster important leadership development and public speaking skills. Through guided and informal play and activities, children learn problem-solving and interpersonal skills that enable

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Mike Morton



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 on Oct. 4

DISTRICT 1

LABERTA LOHMEYER – Wamego
LARRY SCHEELE – Linn
JOEL VOELKER – Palmer

DISTRICT 2

GINNY BECK – Clay Center
CATHY MARTIN – Riley

DISTRICTS 3 & 4

to meet in Wamego on Oct. 5

DISTRICT 3

JANICE GOEHRING – Westmoreland
MIKE HEPTIG – St. George
ELAINE HOFMAN – Blaine
JON HOLLIDAY – Soldier

DISTRICT 4

EVAN PARSONS – Manhattan
KELSEY STAMM – Alma

The following is a list of trustee positions with expiring terms:

District 1 & 2, POSITION AT LARGE
MARK DIEDERICH – Greenleaf

District 3, POSITION 2
DEAN BLANKA – Wamego

District 3 & 4, POSITION AT LARGE
RICHARD RIDDER – St. George

Grandma Hoerner's Foods, Inc. Awarded Rural Economic Development Loan



From left: Scott Quinn, Grandma Hoerner's, Inc. Assistant Controller; Dwayne and Regina McCoy, Owners of Grandma Hoerner's received Bluestem's REDLG loan presented by Kevin Heptig, Bluestem's Manager of Member Services.

The Bluestem Electric Cooperative Board of Trustees and General Manager are proud to announce that **GRANDMA HOERNER'S, INC.**, has been awarded a Rural Economic Development Loan through RUS.

Grandma Hoerner's, Inc. used the funds for an expansion of their current business in Wabaunsee County for building improvements and to produce a new product line through purchasing and adding furniture, fixtures and equipment for their processing facility.

The new expansion for Grandma Hoerner's Foods facility will be a welcome addition to the county and will serve the surrounding communities for years to come.

Grandma Hoerner's, Inc. is the sixteenth economic development project to receive assistance through Bluestem's economic development efforts and assistance.

Unplug With Meaningful Community Programs

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them to resolve conflicts peacefully and improve interpersonal relationships.

Adults can also find meaningful opportunities to spend time with the kids when we all unplug. From board games to craft projects to playing in the park, there are many ways we can unplug for some family fun.

While you and your children are disconnecting, take a moment to identify potential energy savings. Unplug electronics that are not in use to avoid "vampire" energy loss. This is the energy that is drained from technology and electronics even when they are not in use. For example, although it is turned off, your TV is waiting to receive a signal from the

remote and your DVR is waiting to record the next show or perform an update. When you're unplugging from your electronics, try unplugging them from your home to achieve those energy savings.

Let's encourage youngsters to step away from the screens and join in, to play and be part of an organization that helps them connect with others and find meaningful interactions and explore new activities and interests.

When you do plug back in, Bluestem Electric is here to help you save money and energy by connecting you with energy-saving programs and services. While we'd love to see you in person, we're also just a call or click away.

Bluestem and CoBank Partner to Provide Funding to 3 Area Nonprofit Organizations

Bluestem Electric Cooperative, Inc., has partnered with CoBank to provide \$6,000 of monetary donations to three local charitable organizations, **COMMUNITY FOOD BASKET SERVING NORTHERN RILEY COUNTY** in Riley, the **LIGHTHOUSE FOR CHRIST** in Clay Center and the **COMMUNITY HEALTH MINISTRY** in Wamego.

The donations were a part of CoBank's Sharing Success Charitable Contribution Program for 2021. CoBank, headquartered outside of Denver, Colorado, is a cooperative bank serving agribusinesses and rural infrastructure providers such as Bluestem Electric and Farm Credit associations throughout the United States. The \$4 million fund is a cornerstone of CoBank's corporate citizenship efforts, matching donations by the bank's cooperative and other eligible customers to nonprofit organizations in their communities. Since Sharing Success was established in 2012, CoBank and its customers have together contributed more than \$56 million to groups such as volunteer fire departments, local schools and hunger relief programs.

Bluestem's Board of Trustees provided a \$1,000 donation each to the Community Food Basket Serving Northern Riley County, the Lighthouse for Christ, and the Community Health Ministry which was then matched by CoBank. Throughout ru-



Gary Buss (left), Bluestem Electric Trustee, presents Jan Woodyard, Community Food Basket Serving Northern Riley County Board President, with a Sharing Success check.

ral America, cooperatives are working to improve the quality of life in their communities.

Bluestem is excited to assist the Community Food Basket Serving Northern Riley County, The Lighthouse for Christ and the Community Health Ministry with this funding so they can continue their success of helping those in need in Pottawatomie, Riley, Clay and surrounding counties.



Mark Diederich (left), Bluestem Electric Board Treasurer; and Patricia Bloomdahl (right), Bluestem Electric Trustee and Lighthouse for Christ volunteer, present checks to Abby Sprague, Lighthouse for Christ Director.



Michael Morton (left), Bluestem Electric General Manager, and Dean Blanka (right), Bluestem Electric Trustee, present a check to Susan Inskip of Community Care Ministry.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month

Energy used for cooling and heating your home makes up the largest portion of your monthly energy bills. By combining regular equipment maintenance and upgrades with recommended insulation, air sealing and thermostat settings, you can save about 30% on your energy bills while helping our environment. **SOURCE: ENERGY.GOV**



Tips for a Safe Harvest

Agriculture is the backbone of our country, and our livelihood greatly depends on the crops provided by American farmers. In addition to being one of the most labor-intensive professions, farming is also considered one of the most dangerous jobs in the U.S.

The hard work and exhaustive labor are tough but rushing the job to save time can be extremely dangerous — even deadly — when farming near electrical equipment.

Every year, we see tractors and other farming equipment accidentally collide with utility poles and power lines, causing injuries and power outages. These dangerous accidents can be avoided by looking up and around your surroundings when operating large farm machinery. If you're preparing for harvest season, please keep the following safety tips in mind:

- ▶ Maintain a 10-foot clearance around all utility equipment in all directions.
- ▶ Use a spotter and deploy flags to maintain safe distances from power lines and other electrical equipment when working in the field.
- ▶ If your equipment makes contact with an energized or downed power line, call 911 immediately and remain inside



Bluestem Electric Journeyman Linemen and Co-Safety Coordinators, Derek Francis and Kevin Swenson, along with Journeyman Lineman Dylan Havenstein provide an electrical safety demonstration at the Wabaunsee County Fair.

the vehicle until the power line is de-energized. In case of smoke or fire, exit the cab by making a solid jump out of the cab (without touching it), and hop away to safety.

- ▶ Consider equipment and cargo extensions of your vehicle. Lumber, hay, tree limbs, irrigation pipes and even bulk materials can conduct electricity, so keep them out of contact with electrical equipment.

Sept. 19-25 is National Farm Health and Safety Week but practicing safety on the farm year-round yields positive results. We hope you never find yourself in a situation where farming equipment contacts power lines or poles, but if you do, follow these safety tips.

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.

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 the office. Auto payments are drawn automatically each month on the due date of the bill.

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.

SmartHub/Online Bill Pay



Online bill pay is also available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Click the "Pay Online" button on 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.

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 33, Wamego, KS 66547. **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.*

Bluestem Electric Office



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

Night Deposit Box



A night deposit box is located at our office in Wamego. 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.

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 800-558-1580 to see if you qualify.