



# Bluestem NEWS

## Bluestem Electric Cooperative

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## FROM THE MANAGER

# Preparing to Serve You Better

Providing reliable power to you is and always will be the top priority for Bluestem Electric. These days, power reliability seems to be making news, now more than ever.

As the energy industry continues to transition and more segments of the economy are becoming electrified, such as vehicles, machinery and even lawn equipment, additional pressures are being placed on our nation's electric grid.

With summer storm season upon us, I thought it would be a good time to tell you about a few measures we're taking to ensure you continue receiving

the reliable power you depend on and deserve.

Let me be the first to say I like trees and the charm they add to our communities, and I know you do too. While trees provide shade and add beauty to our area, you may be surprised to learn that overgrown vegetation accounts for about half of all power outages.

That's why we strive to keep the co-op's power lines clear in right-of-way (ROW) areas. A ROW area is the land



Mike Morton

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HAPPY  
★  
**4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY**  
★★★  
INDEPENDENCE DAY

Our office will be closed on Monday, July 3, and Tuesday, July 4, for the holiday.



happy FATHER'S DAY

**JUNE 18, 2023**

## 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 to request an application or you can find it online at [www.bluestemelectric.com](http://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](http://www.bluestemelectric.com) using your bank account or credit card. Click on the SmartHub Pay Online button.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month

Looking for additional ways to save energy this summer? Your laundry room is a great place to start. Wash clothes with cold water, which can cut one load's energy use by more than half. Your washing machine will use the same amount of energy no matter the size of the clothes load, so fill it up when you can. When drying clothes, separate the heavier cottons. Loads will dry faster and more evenly if you separate heavier cottons like linens and towels from your lightweight clothing.



## Preparing to Serve You Better

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a co-op uses to construct, maintain, replace or repair underground and overhead power lines. This ROW enables Bluestem to provide clearance from trees and other obstructions that could hinder distribution power lines. The overall goal of our vegetation management strategy is to provide reliable power to our members while maintaining the beauty of our area.

### Modernizing Vegetation Management

Generally speaking, healthy trees don't fall on power lines, and clear lines do not cause problems. Proactive trimming and pruning keep lines clear to improve power reliability. However, traditional vegetation management is costly and time consuming. It entails on-the-ground efforts of workers assessing vegetation and overseeing the quality and completion of contractor work. Although this approach has worked for decades, advances and improvements in technology have allowed us to reduce our costs and improve efficiency.

### Planned Outages Improve Reliability

Although it may seem counterintuitive, we also maintain power reliability through planned, controlled outages. By carefully cutting power to one part of our local area for a few hours, Bluestem can perform system repairs and upgrades, which ultimately improve electric service. We will always try to notify you in advance of a planned outage, so make sure we have your correct contact information on file to receive the latest emails or phone calls.

Vegetation management is an essential tool in ensuring power reliability and minimizing the risk of outages. As advancements become more accessible and costs drop, we anticipate using additional technologies to ensure a consistent energy supply while managing the environment.

Lastly, I encourage you to follow Bluestem Electric on social media so you can learn about the latest co-op announcements.

## Meet Josh Boyd, Bluestem Line Crew

**JOSH BOYD** joined Bluestem Electric Cooperative's line crew on May 2, 2022, as an apprentice lineman in Wamego. Prior to joining Bluestem, Boyd was an apprentice lineman for the Local 304 in Topeka. He graduated from Manhattan Tech after completing the Electrical Power Technology program.

Boyd resides in Wamego with his significant other, their son, Mox, and daughter, Maddyn. He spends most of his free time working on his race car.

"I'm excited to be part of a very intelligent group and be able to further my education all while working together and building new relationships," Boyd said.



Josh Boyd

# Explanation of Demand (kW) and Energy (kWh)

## Electricity Usage is Measured in Two Ways

- ▶ **DEMAND (kW = KILOWATTS):** the rate at which energy is used.
- ▶ **ENERGY (kWh = KILOWATT-HOURS):** the amount of energy used.

## Demand Charge (expressed as kW or kilowatts)

Demand is defined to be the rate at which a member uses electricity during a specified time period. Kilowatt demand is measured by the highest rate at which a member uses electricity during a 60-minute time period during the billing period, and billed accordingly.

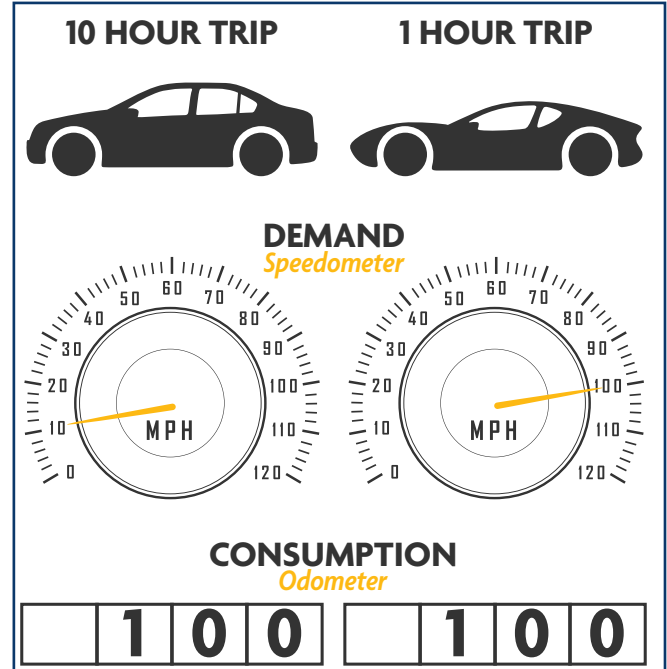
## Energy Charge (expressed as kWh or kilowatt-hours)

Energy charges are based on the amount of electricity a member uses during the billing period, which is expressed as kWh. Think of it in terms of your car's speedometer:

- ▶ If your car travels at a rate of speed of 100 mph for 1 hour, the miles driven is only 100 miles.
- ▶ If your car travels at a rate of speed of 10 mph for 10 hours, the miles driven is 100 miles, but it takes a much more capable and expensive engine to power the car at 100 mph than it does to power the car going only 10 mph.

## In Terms of Electricity

If a member's rate of consumption is 100 kW for 1 hour, the kWh consumed is 100 kWh. Large power accounts are billed



for both the rate of energy consumed (kW) and the energy consumed (kWh).

Demand can be thought of as the speedometer reading in your car. It is the rate at which energy is being consumed. Energy use is like the miles driven on your odometer.

## Check the **WEATHER** Before You Go

More than 72% of lightning fatalities occur from June through August.

### From 2006 through 2021

- ▶ 446 people were struck and killed by lightning in the U.S.
- ▶ Nearly two-thirds of the deaths happened while people were enjoying outdoor leisure activities such as fishing, camping and running.

June, July and August are the peak months for lightning across the U.S.

- ▶ More than 72% of lightning deaths occurred in these months.
- ▶ Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays having slightly more deaths than any other day of the week.

Lightning often strikes away from heavy rain; it can happen up to 10 miles away from rainfall.

**TO PREVENT LIGHTNING-RELATED TRAGEDIES, WHEN THUNDER ROARS, GO INDOORS.**

SOURCE: NATIONAL LIGHTNING SAFETY COUNCIL

# The Science of Attic Insulation

## What's in Your Attic?

The answer to this question could be costing you hundreds of dollars each year!

Bluestem Electric Cooperative is constantly striving to keep your energy costs down, however, the cost of generating the electricity supplied to your home has risen at historical rates over the past decade. What does this mean to you? Energy costs have gone up tremendously.

According to Kansas Electric Power Cooperative, the cost to generate the electricity supplied to rural Kansas homeowners has gone up more than 40% in the last seven years. As energy costs go up, the recommended amount of insulation you should have in your attic goes up too. In roughly the same time period, the minimum amount of attic insulation required in a new home went up by 38.75%. A new home built in 2005 was required to have an R-30 of attic insulation (about 8 inches of cellulose insulation). Seven years later, Energy Star® changed recommendations to R-60 for that same home (16-18 inches of cellulose insulation). When energy costs go up, you need to add more insulation (and make air sealing improvements) to your attic.

## Why Is the Attic so Important for Energy Efficiency?

We are just entering some of the hottest months of the year and many homeowners will soon be suffering from seasonally high energy bills. Could your attic insulation be one of the **MAJOR** causes of your high energy bills? If you have an under-insulated attic with poor air sealing, the answer is certainly **YES!**

In the summer your attic can reach 180 degrees or more. This is like having an oven on top of your home. The law of thermodynamics states that heat is constantly moving toward cold to reach equilibrium. This means the extreme heat of the attic is seeking balance and trying (in any way it can) to get into your air-conditioned home. Behind your walls, your home has dozens of wire and plumbing penetrations between your living space and your attic. These holes can only be seen from the attic. These holes act like a freeway for all the heat in your attic to race into your home pushing the cold air (that you paid to cool) right out of the house.

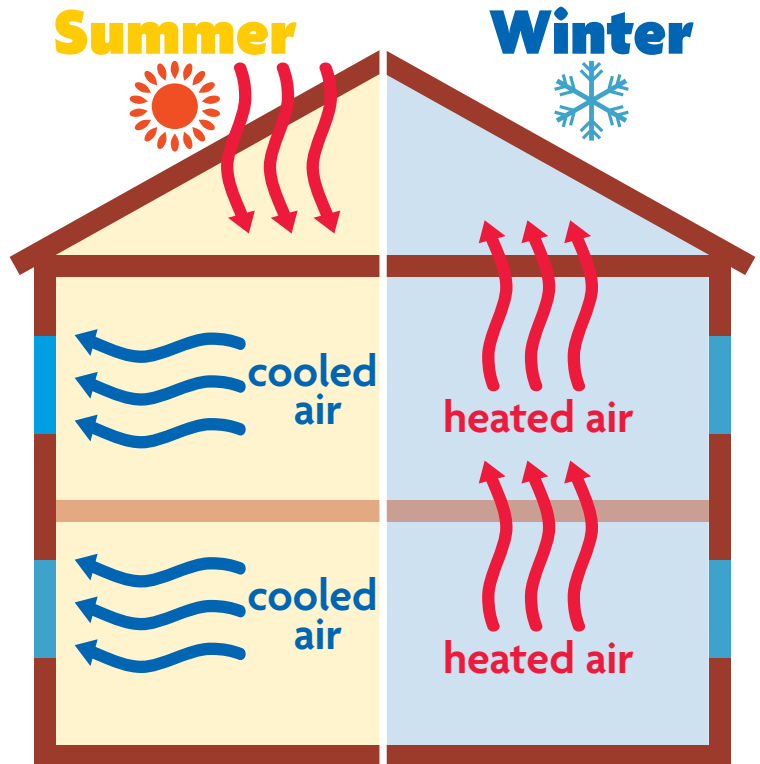
Heat from your attic is also able to conduct right through the ceiling into your home. Conduction is the process of heat moving through a material. The purpose of insulation in the summer is to slow the conduction process of the heat moving from the "oven" in your attic into your air-conditioned home. If your attic is not insulated to the Energy Star stan-

dard, heat will push down through the ceiling of your home rapidly. If you could see the heat rushing into your home it would be like seeing a water faucet in your home constantly running with no off switch. What do you think this process is doing to your energy bills?

## Your Cooperative's Effort to Help Members

Bluestem Electric Cooperative has been working with Attic Report Card so our members can know exactly how well their attics are insulated and air sealed. Members of Bluestem Electric Cooperative can get this 12-point attic inspection for **FREE** (\$99 value). A member's Attic Report Card will clearly detail the current condition of their attic insulation and list the exact improvement steps it will take to bring the attic up to Energy Star standards. The Attic Report Card improvement team has completed hundreds of improvement projects for cooperative members (many of whom are saving 25% or more on their heating and cooling costs).

If you are curious about the condition of your attic and would like to know how much you can expect to save if you make improvements visit [www.atticreportcard.com](http://www.atticreportcard.com) and click "Grade My Attic" to schedule your **FREE** attic inspection.



In the summer, your attic is like an oven. Heat races into your home and shoves cold air out.