



Bluestem NEWS

Bluestem Electric Cooperative

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Contact Us

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FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

Celebrating Membership

October is National Co-op Month



Mike Morton

Fall is a busy time, and October is a particularly eventful month with school, community and sports activities in full swing. It is also when all cooperatives celebrate

National Co-op Month.

When I say Bluestem Electric Cooperative celebrates Co-op Month, it really means we are celebrating you! After all, our co-op wouldn't exist without you, our consumer-members.

Our core business purpose is to serve as your electricity provider, but the larger mission of the co-op is to help make our corner of the world a better place. Concern for Community is one of Seven Cooperative Principles that all co-ops share.

Similar to how our wires run through our service territory, our concern for community flows through all of our decisions — because being a co-op means being a responsible partner and good neighbor.

Bluestem Electric works to help our community thrive through initiatives led by our employees and local board that is comprised of neighbors who live right here in our communities. Because we are local, we understand our community's unique needs and strive to help meet them.

We are proud to support local youth through our scholarship programs. We partner with CoBank's Sharing Success and support area foodbanks and other charitable organizations such as Community Health Ministries, Shepherds Crossing, Lighthouse for Christ, Washington

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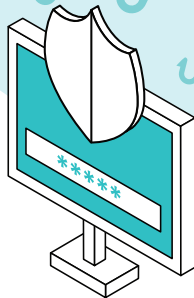


Protect Yourself in Cyber

October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month

Improve your cyber-hygiene in four steps:

- 1 ENABLE MULTI-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION.** Multi-factor authentication goes beyond a simple username and password to require a two-step login.
- 2 USE STRONG PASSWORDS AND A PASSWORD MANAGER.** A password manager can keep all your passwords safe and only requires remembering one main password. Make sure it's secure with an extended character count and includes numbers and symbols.
- 3 UPDATE SOFTWARE REGULARLY.** Software updates can help eliminate security risks and decrease your chance of a cyberattack.
- 4 RECOGNIZE AND REPORT PHISHING ATTACKS.** Whether they are in the form of a text or an email, phishing presents a real hacking danger. Know what to look for to prevent falling for such an attack.



Focused on
YOU.

OCTOBER IS NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH

Electric cooperatives were created to serve their members. Because we're a co-op, we're able to adapt to our community's unique needs. That's the power of co-op membership.

Bluestem Nomination and 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.

Celebrating Membership Continued from page 12A

County Food Bank, The Crisis Center and Caring Community Foundation.

The word “cooperative” is close to “cooperation,” meaning people working together toward a common goal — mutually benefitting one another and the larger community. That’s the essence of the cooperative spirit. Our employees and member-elected board members are invested in the community in which they live and serve.

Above all, as a co-op we put our members’ priorities first. As your trusted energy partner, we know that saving energy and money is important to you. That is why we have numerous programs in place to help, including,

TOU, Auto Pay, Attic Report Card and PrePay metering.

We want to empower you to manage energy use at home. If you haven’t already, I encourage you take a moment and download our app, SmartHub. Through the app, you can conveniently monitor and manage your energy use. And we are here to help, so give us a call if you have questions about your energy bills.

Bluestem Electric is continuously examining ways to operate more efficiently while continuing to provide the highest level of friendly, reliable service you expect and deserve. After all, we’re your local co-op. We were built by the members we serve.

Bluestem Welcomes News Employee



DeAnn Breault

On April 28, Bluestem Electric Cooperative welcomed **DEANN BREault** as a member services representative.

Prior to joining Bluestem, Breault was the levy specialist and administrative assistant for the Riley County Clerk’s Office. She attended Butler County Community College.

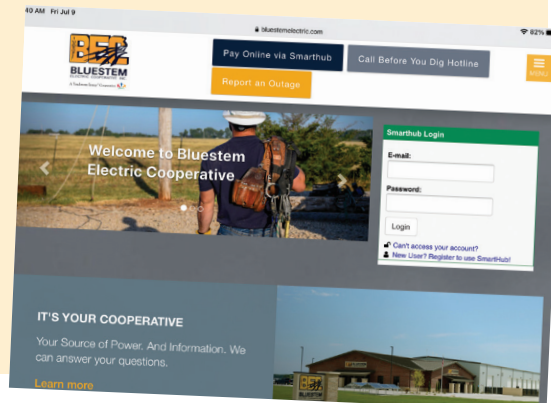
She and her husband, Adam, live near Belvue. They have three children Aven, 17; Jaxson, 13; and Amelia, 9.

“I look forward to working with the members of Bluestem Electric and hope to provide them with outstanding customer service,” Breault said.

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 and use the Bluestem Electric website www.bluestemelectric.com.



Cold Weather Rule Effective Nov. 1-March 31

Bluestem Electric Cooperative members who are unable to pay their electric service bills during the cold weather period may qualify for this program. The requirements members must meet to qualify are summarized below:

► MEMBERS MUST NOTIFY

Bluestem Electric of their inability to pay their bill in full.

► **MEMBERS MUST APPLY** to federal, state, local, or other financial assistance programs for which they may be eligible to receive aid in paying utility bills.

► **MEMBERS AND BLUESTEM ELECTRIC WILL REACH** a mutually agreeable payment arrangement.

Please note that failure to follow the above requirements, illegally diverting utility service, receiving service by tampering, or defaulting on a payment agreement will disqualify the member from receiving benefits under the Cold Weather Rule.

Bluestem Electric will send one written notice mailed first class at least five days prior to termination of service. A member may not be disconnected until a recognized regional weather forecasting agency predicts a 24-hour forecast above the activating temperature.

The co-op shall make at least one telephone call attempt and a personal contact attempt with the member of record on the day of termination of service prior to termination of service.

In no event will Bluestem Electric disconnect service if the temperature is forecast to fall below 35 degrees Fahrenheit within 24-hours following the time of disconnection.

The Cold Weather Rule is to ensure that human health and safety are not unreasonably endangered during the cold weather months.

The Cold Weather Rule does not apply to prepay meter accounts.

Don't Become ELECTRICITY'S Path to Ground



When electric utility equipment becomes damaged, the ground and objects can become energized.

If you are in a situation where there could be downed power lines or a damaged pole, guy wire or padmount transformer (green box), know what to do to save your life and the lives of others.

Car Accident —

- 1 Stay inside your vehicle or cab since the ground or objects could be energized.
- 2 Call 911 and report there are downed or damaged power lines or a dislodged green box.
- 3 Wait for the utility crew to arrive to de-energize the power.
- 4 Do not exit until someone from the utility says it is safe to do so.



Only Exit if the Vehicle is on Fire —

- ▶ Cross your arms over your chest and make a clean jump out.
- ▶ Do not touch the vehicle and the ground at the same time.
- ▶ Make solid hops with your feet together as far away as you can.
- ▶ Do not return to the vehicle.



Bystanders —

- ▶ Do not approach the scene. Call 911 for help.
- ▶ Stay at least 50 feet away and do not lean on or touch anything, including fences or guardrails.



Dress Up with Care for HALLOWEEN

When dressing your little ones (or yourself), keep these safety tips in mind



- ▶ Always wear costumes that are labeled flame resistant.
- ▶ Wear bright, reflective costumes or add strips of reflective tape to improve visibility.
- ▶ Do not wear decorative (colored) contact lenses unless you have seen an eye care professional.
- ▶ Wear makeup and hats rather than costume masks that can obscure or obstruct your vision.
- ▶ Test the makeup you plan to use in advance for a possible allergy.

In addition, inspect any plug-in decorations for signs of wear and tear (fraying or bare wires or broken plugs) and replace them if damaged.



WHEN POWER LINES COME DOWN

Collisions with a pole or pad-mounted transformer can cause the ground and objects to become energized. Always consider a downed line or damaged equipment energized and deadly.

If you are in a car accident involving a downed line:

- ▶ Stay in the vehicle.
- ▶ Call 911 to report the downed or damaged line.
- ▶ Wait until someone from the electric utility says it is safe to get out.

If you see a downed or damaged power line or pole or a dislodged electrical cabinet:

- ▶ Do not go near it.
- ▶ Do not touch it.
- ▶ Do not try to move it with another object.
- ▶ Do not touch items that could be energized.
- ▶ Warn others to stay away.