

Bluestem **NEWS**

BLUESTEM ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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CONTACT US

Bluestem Electric Cooperative, Inc.
P.O. Box 5, Wamego, KS 66547
800-558-1580

Bluestem Hires New CEO

Bluestem Electric's Board of Trustees are proud to announce **MICHAEL LEITCH** as the new CEO. He will take over the duties on Jan. 3, 2025, upon the retirement of the current General Manager Michael Morton.

Leitch previously worked at Frontier Farm Credit for 27 years, in various leadership roles.

"On behalf of the Bluestem Board of Trustees we are pleased to welcome Michael Leitch to our Bluestem team," said Board President Mark Diederich. "Michael is familiar with our Bluestem community and is a member of the cooperative. His experience at Farm Credit Cooperative will bring a strong skill set in finances and leadership. We are all looking forward to working with Mr. Leitch."

"I would like to thank the Bluestem Board of Trustees for this opportunity to serve as their CEO," Leitch said.

"I am excited for the opportunity to continue serving a cooperative and truly honored by the trust the board has put in me. The team at Bluestem is second to none. Michael Morton has assembled a great team and prepared the cooperative for a bright future. Working with the employees to serve the mission of providing safe, reliable energy to our members is a wonderful opportunity that I am humbled to have in front of me."

Leitch lives on a small farm in the Wamego area with his wife and three children. He graduated from Kansas State University with a bachelor of science degree in mass communications, and from Baker University with master of science degree in management.



Michael Leitch



BLUESTEM OFFICIALLY OPENS CLAY CENTER WAREHOUSE

Bluestem Electric's Board of Trustees and employees welcomed Schultz Construction, BG Consultants and Grow Clay County to their ribbon cutting and open house celebrating Bluestem's new Clay Center warehouse.

SPECIAL MEETING DEC. 16

There will be a special meeting to review Rules and Regulations **DEC. 16, 2024, AT 10:30 A.M.** at the Bluestem Electric Cooperative office at 1000 South Wind Drive in Wamego. Please visit www.bluestemelectric.com for more information.

Trustee Elections This Month

In the next few days, you will receive a voting packet for the trustee elections at Bluestem Electric Cooperative. Please follow the directions and return your marked ballot in the envelopes supplied.

Ballots must be postmarked or received at the cooperative office prior to Jan. 1, 2025. The teller committee will meet on Jan. 8, 2025 at the Bluestem Electric Cooperative office located at 1000 South Wind Drive in Wamego, Kansas at 7 p.m. to tabulate and certify the election results.

The results of the election of trustees will be printed in the February edition of the *Bluestem NEWS* located inside *Kansas Country Living* magazine.



Mark Diederich



Dan Pollock



Richard Ridder

TRUSTEES WITH EXPIRING TERMS ARE:

DISTRICT 1 & 2, POSITION AT LARGE

▶ **MARK DIEDERICH**
Greenleaf

DISTRICT 3, POSITION 2

▶ **DAN POLLOCK**
Havensville

DISTRICT 3 & 4, POSITION AT LARGE

▶ **RICHARD RIDDER**
St. George

2025 Bluestem Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting

The Bluestem Electric Cooperative, Inc. Annual Meeting will be held on **MARCH 24, 2025**, at the Bluestem Electric Cooperative Warehouse in Wamego, Kansas. The meeting will begin at 7 p.m. Official Notice of the Annual Meeting will be mailed no less than 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.



MARCH 24, 2025



7 P.M.



BLUESTEM ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE WAREHOUSE IN WAMEGO



'Blinks' Can Signal a Properly Working Electrical System

We often hear the question from members "What causes my lights to blink?" The utility network is subject to certain short-term losses of power, and Bluestem Electric Cooperative takes all possible measures to prevent these occurrences and minimize the effects to our members. Blinking lights are a result of momentary outages that occur when some type of disturbance exists on the line. These momentary outages can result from natural events, power supply issues, or human activity, including storms, lightning, vehicle accidents, or animals and tree branches contacting power lines. These momentary outages can sometimes occur on our Power Supplier's transmission lines that feed the Cooperatives system, which Bluestem does not have control of.

When lights blink, it is an indication that the cooperative's equipment is operating properly. If a fault or short circuit happens on a power line, a device called an "oil circuit re-closer" (OCR) opens to stop it, then quickly closes back in. Although the process is quick — and usually temporary — it may cause your lights to blink, making it necessary to reset digital clocks and appliances with digital displays.

The OCR is essentially a breaker, functioning much like a breaker in the electrical panel in your home. It permits power to continue flowing through the line with only a brief interruption of service — rather than causing an extended power outage. If the short circuit contin-

ues, the OCR will operate or 'trip' three times before eventually stopping the flow of electricity and causing a power outage. This process protects the lines from damage, cutting off power to the affected section of the line and isolating the problem until it can be repaired.

Bluestem's system is operating as it should. The co-op cannot guarantee 100% uninterrupted power because of the above-mentioned causes. The OCRs and fuses protecting the electrical grid are designed to open up, (cause a blink) then close back in to keep the power on. The reason for this is to try and clear any transient faults on the line, (like a squirrel or tree), then close back in to keep the line on. Without this type of equipment protecting the circuits, the power would just go off and stay off causing an outage until a line crew is dispatched to clear the problem and restore power.

Although the weather, nature's creatures, power supply issues and acts of God, are beyond our control, cooperative members can lessen the effects and inconvenience of "blinks" when they occur. When purchasing small appliances and digital clocks, consider a model with battery backup. You may also want to install surge protection for the major appliances in your home and surge protection with built-in uninterrupted power supply (UPS) for your computer or other electronic devices whose "memory" would be lost with a power interruption.

Bluestem Offers 10 SCHOLARSHIPS

Bluestem Electric Cooperative, Inc. will award 10 scholarships for \$1,000 each to high school seniors whose parents or guardians are members of Bluestem Electric Cooperative.

Scholarships will be awarded to the top 10 candidates that complete a two-stage process. The first stage will include an online application and test that must be completed and submitted by

4:30 P. M.

FRIDAY, JAN. 10, 2025,

In the second stage, a panel of judges will interview the finalists on

MONDAY, FEB. 17, 2025.

For more information, contact your high school counselor or call Bluestem Electric Cooperative at 800-558-1580.





10 Holiday Travel SAFETY TIPS

Millions take to the highways over the holidays, making it one of the busiest travel times of the year. If you're traveling by car this season, follow these safety tips:

- ▶ **PREPARE YOUR HOME** — Cancel mail, pause deliveries and have someone check on your home. In snowy areas, arrange for snow removal.
- ▶ **REDUCE FIRE RISKS** — Unplug nonessential electrical devices and check smoke detectors.
- ▶ **DON'T OVERSHARE** — Avoid posting travel plans on social media to prevent potential break-ins.
- ▶ **INSPECT YOUR CAR** — Ensure tires are inflated and carry jumper cables, as cold weather can drain batteries.
- ▶ **PACK AN EMERGENCY KIT** — Include a car phone charger, blankets, food and water, coats and a flashlight with batteries.
- ▶ **CHECK THE WEATHER** — Check the weather before and during your trip to avoid storms.
- ▶ **BUCKLE UP AND SLOW DOWN** — Increase your following distance to safely navigate slick roads and allow extra time to get to your destination.
- ▶ **TAKE FREQUENT BREAKS** — Stop every few hours to stay alert and stay hydrated to avoid fatigue.
- ▶ **SHARE YOUR ITINERARY** — Let family or friends know your travel plans to and from your destination.
- ▶ **PUT THAT PHONE AWAY** — Avoid distractions — driving requires your full attention.

SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG



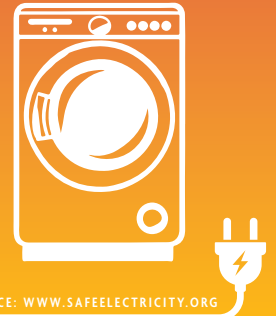
ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

If you're planning to purchase electronic gifts this holiday season, look for the Energy Star label, which indicates higher energy efficiency performance. Electronics that receive the Energy Star rating are up to 25% more efficient than standard products. This holiday season, give the gift of energy savings with Energy Star-rated electronics and equipment. **SOURCE: NRECA**



SAFETY TIP

Lint buildup in your dryer can be a serious hazard, as it can easily catch fire if not cleaned regularly. By taking a few moments to clear out the lint trap before each use, you can improve the efficiency of your dryer and also greatly reduce the risk of a potentially dangerous dryer fire.



SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG



Never use extension cords or a power strip with a space heater, and make sure the unit is not plugged into the same circuit as other electric appliances.

SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG



Christmas trees are involved in an average of **150** home fires each year.

SOURCE: NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION, WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG