

# Bluestem NEWS

## BLUESTEM ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**Mark Diederich**  
President

**Donald Classen**  
Vice President

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Trustee

**Richard Ridder**  
Trustee

### MANAGEMENT STAFF

**Michael M. Morton**  
General Manager

**Trisha Bradley**  
Manager of Accounting and Finance

**Jerod Chaffee**  
Manager of Line Operations

**Benjamin C. Easterberg**  
Manager of AMI and Mapping/OMS

**Kevin Heptig**  
Manager of Member Services

### CONTACT US

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

## FROM THE MANAGER

### Co-ops Power Communities With Purpose



**Mike Morton**

Communities come in all shapes and sizes. Some are based on geographical proximity, some are based on shared interests or hobbies, and some communities can even be found in virtual spaces like social media groups. Regardless of where or how they are formed, communities can bring people together and create a sense of belonging.

Bluestem Electric is deeply committed to our members, and we are glad you are part of the electric cooperative community.

This October, more than 30,000

cooperatives across the U.S. are celebrating National Co-op Month. It is a time to reflect on all the aspects that set cooperatives apart from other types of businesses, but more importantly, it is a time to celebrate the power of co-op membership.

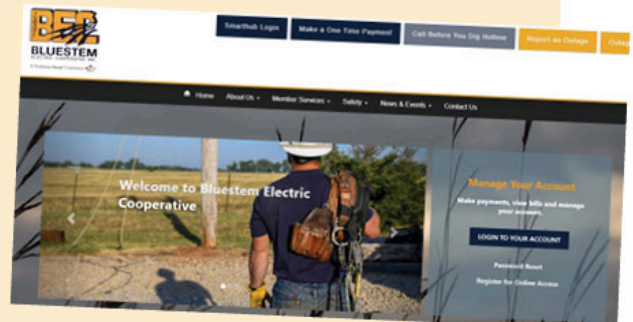
Electric cooperatives are not-for-profit utilities that are built by the communities they serve. For Bluestem, our mission has always been to provide safe and reliable electric energy and other services to our consumers as efficiently and economically as possible. We care about your quality of life, and because we are locally operated, we are uniquely suited to meet our members' evolving energy needs.

Beyond the business of electricity, our employees and board of trustees are equally invested in our local

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## BEWARE OF THIRD PARTY BILL PAYMENT SERVICES

Bluestem Electric **DOES NOT** charge members to make payments at [www.bluestemelectric.com](http://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](http://www.bluestemelectric.com) to make bill payments.





## BLUESTEM EMPLOYEES ACCEPT NO LOST TIME ACCIDENT AWARD



Board President Mark Diederich (center) presents a No Lost Time award to Safety Coordinators and Journeymen Linemen Derek Francis (left) and Kevin Swenson (right). The award recognizes Bluestem employees' 550,535 hours without a lost time accident.

Bluestem Electric Cooperative Safety Coordinators and Journeyman Linemen Kevin Swenson and Derek Frances were presented with a No Lost Time Accident Award certificate by Board President Mark Diederich at the Bluestem Board of Trustees' August board meeting.

The award from Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. was the result of the Bluestem Electric employees working safely to maintain and keep the power on, during all weather conditions without a lost time accident.

In total, Bluestem employees have completed 550,535 employee hours, from Feb. 11, 2016, to Dec. 31, 2023, without a lost time accident.

Safety is at the top of the list for the Bluestem Electric Cooperative strategic plan. The Bluestem Board of Trustees would like to thank and congratulate all the employees for their dedication to safe work procedures.

Join us for an open house event at Bluestem Electric's Clay Center Warehouse!

Oct. 21 | 1-3 p.m.

Refreshments and cookies will be served. Tour the warehouse and view live safety demonstrations by our linemen.

Bluestem Electric Clay Center Warehouse  
1502 17th Rd. | Clay Center, KS 67432

## Co-ops Power Communities With Purpose

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community. Why? Because we live here, too. That is why we work hard to support local economic development projects, scholarships and charitable giving initiatives that make our community a better place to call home.

All co-ops, including Bluestem, are guided by seven cooperative principles that embody the values and spirit of the cooperative movement. These seven principles are a framework to help all co-ops navigate challenges and opportunities while remaining true to our purpose:

**1 OPEN AND VOLUNTARY MEMBERSHIP:** Co-op membership is open to anyone who can use the co-op's services.

**2 DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL:** Members make decisions that shape the cooperative. Why? Because co-ops are created by the members, for the members.

**3 MEMBERS' ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION:** Members contribute money to the co-op to make sure it runs smoothly now and in the future. At Bluestem, this happens through paying your energy bills.

**4 AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE:** Co-ops are

independent and can operate on their own, which ultimately benefits the members.

**5 EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION:** Co-ops continuously focus on education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their co-op.

**6 COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES:** Co-ops share with and learn from other cooperatives. We help each other out in times of need because we want other co-ops to thrive.

**7 CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY:** All cooperatives work for the greater good of the local communities they serve. Co-ops give back to their communities to help them thrive and grow.

This October, as we celebrate National Co-op Month and the power of membership, we hope you will recognize the many aspects that set electric cooperatives apart. Our mission is reliable power. Our purpose is people — the local communities we're proud to serve.



## EXCERPT FROM THE BLUESTEM ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE BYLAWS

### Bluestem Nomination and Election Process

#### 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 in any County within District #1 and/or District #2 where the Cooperative is providing a Cooperative Service and committee members from districts three and four will meet together in any County within District #3 and/or District #4 where the Cooperative is providing a Cooperative Service. 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 and on the Cooperative Website and/or other Cooperative Social Media sites. 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. 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 and/or electronic ballot as determined by the Trustees. 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.

On or before the first day of January of each year, ballots must be postmarked or received at the Wamego office.

### 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.







**1** Confirm your cellphone number is listed on your account by calling the BEC office.

**2** Visit <https://notifications.crc.coop/?uid=6727> or scan the QR code.

**3** Accept the user agreement and complete an online form to create a text reporting account.



**4** You will receive a text verification code on your cellphone. Enter the code into

the form to confirm your account. Click submit. You are now ready to report an outage at your location(s).

**5** If you have multiple accounts, you can add keywords based on service location (e.g. home, well, shop, irrigation, etc.). Use these keywords when texting outages (e.g., outage home, outage well) to help BEC crews to expedite restoration times.

# Linemen Provide High Voltage Safety Demo

Linemen from Bluestem performed a safety demonstration for the Know2Grow event hosted by Ohlde Seed Farm for an audience of 225 participants.

Thank you Ohlde Seed Farm for allowing us to demonstrate farm safety around power lines.



*October is National*

**C O O P**  
**M O N T H**

Electric cooperatives are not-for-profit, community-led utilities. Because we are a co-op, we can adapt to our local members' needs, providing the programs and services you care about most.

*That's the power of co-op membership.*