



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Bluestem Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
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# Bluestem NEWS

## BLUESTEM ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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## FROM THE CEO

# Lineworkers Are Wired for Service

In the quiet hours before dawn breaks, while many of us are still in our beds, lineworkers begin their day, often clad in flame-resistant clothing, safety goggles, rubber gloves and thick, heavy boots.

They are the individuals who embody dedication to service in its purest form. As we celebrate Lineworker Appreciation Day on April 14, this is an important moment to reflect on the essential role they play in our daily lives.

Amid towering utility poles and power lines, lineworkers exhibit a strength that goes far beyond the physical. Whether battling inclement weather, troubleshooting technical problems or navigating treacherous heights, lineworkers demonstrate resilience and a quiet determination to keep our lights on, our homes comfortable, and our communities connected.

Bluestem Electric crews travel across our 11-county service territory, building, maintaining and repairing parts of our local system. Their extraordinary skills ensure our homes remain connected to the grid, businesses stay operational, and emergency services remain accessible — a lifeline that connects us all.

In moments of crisis, when the lights go out and we find ourselves in the dark, lineworkers emerge as beacons of



Michael Leitch

*In moments of crisis, when the lights go out and we find ourselves in the dark, lineworkers emerge as beacons of hope.*

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**WIRED FOR SERVICE**

We thank electrical lineworkers for their commitment to powering our local communities.

**LINWORKER APPRECIATION DAY**  
APRIL 14, 2025

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

**2** Visit <https://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.

## Lineworkers Are Wired for Service

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hope. Their swift response restores normalcy, offering reassurance in times of uncertainty. Whether repairing storm-ravaged power lines or ensuring continuity during emergencies, their unwavering commitment illuminates life when we need it most.

Bluestem Electric lineworkers also answer the call for mutual aid beyond the boundaries of home. Our crews travel to fellow co-ops, near or far, when widespread outages occur and additional support is needed. Cooperation Among

Cooperatives is one of our seven guiding principles, and no one embodies this core commitment better than lineworkers.

This month, as we celebrate the remarkable men and women who ensure reliable power, let's recognize their unwavering dedication to the local communities they serve.

The next time you flip a switch, please take a moment to remember those who make it possible — lineworkers, who are wired for service and dedicated to illuminating life.

### Help Keep Our Work Crews Safe



Slow down and move over when approaching workers on the road. Lives depend on it!

### ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Turn your suds into savings. Lower your energy use in the laundry room by washing clothes with cold water whenever possible, as heating water accounts for most of the energy used in a laundry cycle. Wash full loads to make the most of energy savings, and use high-efficiency detergent designed for cold washes. For drying cycles, clean the lint filter before each load to improve airflow and use dryer balls to reduce drying time. **SOURCE: NRECA**



### NOTICE TO IRRIGATORS

## Contract Begins June 1

The contract year for all irrigation services is June 1, 2025, through May 31, 2026. If you need to change the rate for any of your irrigation services, please notify the office by May 1. Horsepower charges will appear on your May bill.

The appropriate equipment must be installed for the load management rate by the beginning of the contract year. If you have any questions about the load management options, any current irrigation service, or any new irrigation service, please contact our office at 800-558-1580.

Keep IRRIGATION EQUIPMENT and **water streams** 20 feet away from overhead power lines.



# The Growing Demand on the Power Grid and What We Can Do About It

## An Earth Day call to action

With Earth Day around the corner, it's time to reflect on the systems that sustain us. This includes the power grid that keeps our homes comfortable and our modern world running. As climate patterns shift and extreme weather events increase, the grid faces new pressures to meet our growing energy demands. From heatwaves to hurricanes, today's changing conditions test the limits of an infrastructure first built in the late 1800s.

The first power grid, developed in 1882 in New York City, laid the foundation for the modern grid that powers our world. The systems we depend on today were built for past and current weather conditions. However, these conditions are changing. Extreme weather is now the No. 1 cause of blackouts in the U.S., accounting for 80% of major power outages.

### HOW DOES EXTREME WEATHER IMPACT THE GRID?

Regions across the U.S. face extreme weather that strains infrastructure not built for extreme conditions. In Texas, limited winterization led to power outages and frozen pipes during the 2021 winter storm, often referred to as Winter Storm Uri. The Pacific Northwest's record heat dome in 2021 increased electricity demand to record highs, causing grid equipment to overheat. In California, utilities routinely implement public safety shutoffs during dry, windy conditions to prevent wildfires.

Extreme weather impacts the grid in several ways. Sometimes, power is still being produced, but it can't reach homes because power lines are down or damaged by fallen trees and debris during storms. During hurricanes or heavy rainstorms, substations — facilities that control and distribute electricity — can flood, causing widespread outages. Other times, when demand spikes during heatwaves or winter storms, the grid can become overwhelmed, leading to rolling blackouts or outages as supply struggles to meet increased energy demands.

### WHAT IS CAUSING THE INCREASED DEMAND FOR ELECTRICITY?

While extreme weather is one source of growing energy demand, development and technology are increasing the demand for energy. This demand is projected to rise 15-20% in the U.S. over the next decade, according to the Department of Energy.

Significant factors impacting this growth are the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) and its expanding data centers, cloud storage, communication tools and much more.

The grid faces two significant opportunities for growth: adapting to extreme weather conditions and meeting the rising energy demand. The energy industry is working tirelessly to ensure the power grid meets these ever-growing challenges and provides a more resilient and sustainable energy system that supports affordability and reliability.

Utility companies, government agencies, regulators and other stakeholders are working to increase grid resilience. Efforts include raising substations that are vulnerable to flooding, deploying battery storage to supplement the grid, expanding renewable energy sources, and connecting regional grids to improve overall stability.

### WHAT CAN WE DO?

While the challenges facing the power grid are significant, there are steps we can all take to reduce strain and contribute to a more reliable energy system.

- ▶ Simple actions like staggering energy-intensive chores throughout the day, such as early in the morning or later in the evening to ease the pressure on the grid.
- ▶ Conducting a home energy audit can identify ways to improve your home's efficiency, reducing both your energy consumption and utility bills.
- ▶ Many utilities offer incentives for renewable energy and energy efficiency programs. Contacting your provider could open the door to helpful resources and savings.

### REFLECTING ON EARTH DAY

Earth Day reminds us of the essential systems that sustain us, including the power grid that powers our homes and businesses. By recognizing challenges like extreme weather, increasing energy demand and aging infrastructure, we can take action to make the power grid more sustainable. Every action, from reducing energy consumption to supporting new technologies, contributes to a more resilient future.

## TIPS TO AVOID UTILITY SCAMS



Don't fall for a power restoration rip-off. Some scammers will contact you and offer to restore power quickly or in a preferential order if you make an immediate payment. These scams typically occur after major storms or disasters that cause widespread outages. We will never request or require payment to restore power after a natural disaster or storm.

SOURCE: UTILITIES UNITED AGAINST SCAMS





## PAWS PLAN PREPARE:



### Build the ultimate pet emergency kit

Pets are beloved members of the family. Make sure they're prepared for emergencies by including these essential items in an emergency kit:

- ▶ **FOOD AND WATER:** Pack several days' supply in waterproof containers.
- ▶ **MEDICINE:** Include extra supplies of daily meds in a waterproof container.
- ▶ **ID TAG AND GEAR:** Add a backup leash, collar, ID tag and pet registration (hard copy and digital).
- ▶ **CARRIER:** Secure a sturdy travel crate or bag for each pet.
- ▶ **SANITATION:** Include litter, litter box (if needed), paper towels and trash bags.
- ▶ **PHOTO:** Save a picture of you with your pet for identification if separated.
- ▶ **COMFORT ITEMS:** Don't forget toys, treats or bedding to ease stress.

### Prepare Pets for Travel

First note your pet's favorite hiding spots to quickly find them during an emergency. Reduce stress when using a carrier with these tips:

- ▶ Feed your pets treats near or inside the carrier.
- ▶ Place treats, blankets or small beds inside so it smells familiar.

SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG

## Be Aware of Utility Poles When Burning!

Before burning, check the property for electrical equipment and power poles to avoid damage and potential outages.

Electrical power lines and transmission equipment can pose special hazards for prescribed burns. Special consideration during the planning and conducting of a prescribed burn can eliminate or greatly reduce injury and damage from these factors. When burning under or near electrical power lines or high voltage transmission lines, exercise extreme care. Mow or remove vegetation from around any poles or equipment. Back burn to create a fire break and keep people and equipment away from overhead power lines. The following situations can lead to injury or death.

#### **SMOKE BUILDUP**

Smoke consists of carbon particles, which can conduct electricity. If the concentration of carbon is high enough, an electrical discharge from the line to the ground, like lightning, can occur. The discharge hazard increases as line voltage increases, distance to the ground decreases, and the amount of smoke increases. Such discharges have killed firefighters. To reduce the potential for discharges, the fire front should not be allowed to cross under the lines in large areas. By properly coordinating the location of the burn with the wind direction or by lighting the fire parallel to the line, no major smoke buildup can occur.

#### **WATER AND POWER LINES**

When working below power lines with water hoses, extreme care must be taken to keep water streams out of overhead lines. Water will conduct electricity and the water stream will act as a conductor. Water should



**Before burning, check the property for electrical equipment — like this padmount transformer — and power poles to avoid damage and potential outages.**

never be directed toward the power line or poles.

#### **DOWNED POWER LINES**

Power lines can be downed during a prescribed burn, by vehicles colliding with poles or poles being burned. If power lines are downed, there are two hazards: the lines themselves and the combination of lines on wire fences, which can produce the potential for electrical shock for long distances. When lines are downed, they become hard to see and people or vehicles can run into them. Electrocutation or serious shock injury can occur. Also, wildfires can be started by the downed lines arcing. If lines fall on fences, a new hazard is created. Electricity will be conducted by the fence wires for long distances. As long as the wires contact each other, there is the potential for electrical shock or death.

Always assume any downed power line is energized. Keep everyone away and call 911 immediately. If any poles are damaged by a fire, the person starting the fire could be liable for the damage to Bluestem Electric's equipment and the cost associated with repairing the damage.