



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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FLINT HILLS RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

NEWS

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Local Fireman Learn Electrical Safety

Flint Hills RECA presented an electrical safety demonstration with its new safety demo trailer for the Chase County local fire departments and emergency personal at their March 9, 2016, meeting at the Strong City Fire station. Chase County Fire Chief, **MARK DAVIS**, is the coordinator for the fire departments safety meetings.

The presentation was conducted by **DAMIEN HEBERT**, Flint Hills Operations Manager, and **JORDY CLARK**, Area Maintenance Man. The new safety trailer is equipped with live power lines that can be used to show the dangers of contact to electrical lines.

Hebert and Clark explained the many dangers of electricity during house fires, storm related emergencies, and vehicle accidents that involve downed power lines. They also discussed the dangers of carbon smoke during pasture fires that occur near or under power lines.

In addition, they displayed the different types of meters that are connected to electric services. There was also discussion about ladder



Damien Hebert and Jordy Clark use Flint Hills' new safety trailer to demonstrate the dangers of contact with electrical lines to local rural fireman.

and fire truck equipment safety when used around power lines and electrical meters. The participating firefighters and emergency personal asked many questions, including how Flint Hills disconnects power during emergencies situations.

Flint Hills welcomes any local rural fire department that is interested in scheduling a safety class, to contact Diann Diehl, Flint Hills REC Member Service Manager at 620-767-5144 or e-mail at diann@flinthillsrec.com.

Sign Up Today for an Energy Credit

Flint Hills RECA is now offering a Peak Load Savings program that is a voluntary participation for all residential members to receive an energy credit of \$70 per kW of demand usage below the overall residential peak hour average. To sign up for this energy saving special or receive more information, please call our office at 620-767-5144 by June 20 to participate. Participants will be eligible to receive an energy credit by making a qualifying reduction of energy usage during our summer peak load hour. Load control hours will be between 3 and 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, during July and August. There will be no cost to you to sign up and participate.

Save Money with Peak Load Management

Electricity is a staple in our daily life. With the simple flip of a switch, a light is expected to shine. Flint Hills RECA's mission statement says that we will provide safe, reliable, and affordable power supply, while maintaining the Cooperative as a valuable business while preserving and ultimately returning member's patronage capital.

Over the next four months—June, July, August and September—the summer heat will be in full force, and Flint Hills RECA and its suppliers are challenged with providing power to meet the load requirements needed, while keeping the cost at an affordable rate for our members.

Any time your household and family members are consuming electricity, it is known as “load.” There are times when the system can reach its peak, which is when all of our members, all at once, are using the most electricity. The peak usually occurs on week days only between the hours of 3 and 6 p.m., when the temperature is in the high 90s.

Flint Hills RECA wants to help you conserve energy and save money. On these hot days, Flint Hills RECA will probably reach its peak load. If we determine that this might happen, we will post a notice on our Facebook page and on our website, www.flinthillsrec.com. When you see this message, Flint Hills RECA asks that you start conserving energy. This peak load is the determining factor in establishing the yearly rates at which the Cooperative has

to buy its power. By helping to keep the maximum electric load down, you can help us save on the cost of our total power purchase. In turn, this means lower cost on electric bills for our members.

The biggest energy user on a hot day is your air conditioner. You can help save on energy usage by turning your air conditioner off and using a fan during this time, or by turning it up by at least 5 degrees between 3 and 6 p.m. on these possible peak days. You can also cover south, east, and west windows to prevent the sun from warming your house, forcing your air conditioner to run excessively. Other ways you can help is to do your laundry, cooking, vacuuming and running the dishwasher in the morning or after six in the evening.

Small things like grilling outside and running your washer and dryer, oven or filtering system in the early morning or late evening can make a big difference.

Your help in watching energy usage during the peak load time frame will help with your cooperatives' power cost. By working together and voluntarily reducing electric usage, Flint Hills RECA will be able to continue to provide the best, and most affordable service possible, for you, the member.

For more information on ways for you to save money on your energy usage during the hot summer months please call us at 620-767-5144.

Reminder of Common Home Electrical Hazards

This May, Flint Hills RECA is teaming up with the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) for National Electrical Safety Month to spearhead the annual effort to raise awareness of potential home electrical hazards and the importance of electrical safety.

“Extension cord misuse and overburdened electrical systems are two of the main causes of home electrical fires,” said ESFI President Brett Brenner.

“It is important to be aware of these common and preventable hazards, as well as other safety measures you can take to ensure that your home is electrically safe,” added Brenner.

The National Fire Protection

Association estimates 47,700 home structure fires reported to U.S. fire departments each year involve some type of electrical failure or malfunction as a factor contributing to ignition. These fires result in 418 civilian deaths, 1,570 civilian injuries and \$1.4 billion in property damage. Awareness and education are critical to reduce the incidence of electrical fires, and ESFI sponsors National Electrical Safety Month each May to educate the public.

Flint Hills promotes safety tips in the monthly centerspreads in *Kansas Country Living* magazine.

ESFI encourages the sharing of its campaign resources and developed the National Electrical Safety Month Electrical Safety Advocate

Guide to provide the resources necessary to raise awareness of safe practices. Whether you want to educate a loved one or raise awareness in your community, school or workplace, this guide provides step-by-step instructions on how to be an Electrical Safety Advocate and help champion the cause of minimizing electrical related deaths and injuries. To view the Electrical Safety Advocate Guide, please visit the Resource Library at www.esfi.org.

Electrical safety awareness and education among consumers, families, employees, and communities will prevent electrical fires, injuries and fatalities. For more information about electrical safety, visit the Flint Hills website www.flinthillsrec.com.

Make the Most of Your Ceiling Fans

By turning on the fan, you can turn up the savings!

Ceiling fans are helpful tools in keeping your home's indoor temperatures comfortable and if used properly, they can also help lower your energy costs.

Use the following tips to make the most of your ceiling fans:

1 Flip the switch – Most ceiling fans have a switch near the blades to change the blade direction. In warm months, flip the switch so that the blades operate in a counterclockwise direction, effectively producing a “wind chill.” Fans make the air near them feel cooler than it actually is. In winter, move the switch so the fan blades rotate clockwise, creating a gentle updraft. This pushes warm air down from the ceiling into occupied areas of the room. Regardless of the season, try operating the fan on its lowest setting.

2 Adjust your thermostat – In the summer, when using a fan in conjunction with an air conditioner or in-

stead of it, you can turn your thermostat up three to five degrees without any reduction in comfort. This saves money since a fan is less costly to run than an air conditioner. In the winter, lower your thermostat's set point by the same amount. Ceiling fans push the warm air from the ceiling back down toward the living space, which means the furnace won't turn on as frequently.

3 Choose the right size – Make sure your ceiling fan is the right size for the room. A fan that is 36-44 inches in diameter will cool rooms up to 225 square feet. A fan with a diameter of 52 inches or more should be used to cool a larger space.

4 Turn it off – When the room is unoccupied, save electricity by turning the fan off. Fans are intended to cool people, not rooms.



Notice: New Pay-by-Phone

As of April 1, 2016, phone payments can only be processed through SmartHub or our toll free Pay-By-Phone number, **844-241-0264**.

This change was implemented to meet the worldwide requirements established by the Payment Card Industry in an effort to help prevent debit/credit card fraud.

Debit/Credit card and e-check payments can still be made through our website, www.flinthillsrec.com. Also check out other payment options available, including Auto Bank Draft or the Quick Pay option located on our website.

If you have questions or need help setting up your choice of payment options please call our office at 620-767-5144.



Office Closed for Memorial Day

In observance of Memorial Day, our offices will be closed on Monday, May 30, 2016.

Tip of the Month

Avoid placing lamps or TVs near your air-conditioning thermostat. The thermostat senses heat from these appliances, which can cause the air conditioner to run longer than necessary.

Estate Planning is for Everyone

You have an estate. Most people do. It comprises all your possessions, bank accounts, investments, life insurance and even your pet. No matter your wealth, you should have a plan for what happens to those assets at the time of your death. You should also plan for contingencies in case you become mentally or physically incapacitated. Creating a plan for the estate you have is a gift of guidance and peace of mind for both you and your loved ones. Without an estate plan, the state dictates the transfer of any assets that do not pass by joint ownership or beneficiary designation.

When death or tragedy occurs, you'll want control of how your money, medical care, funeral arrangements and possessions are handled, and to whom money and possessions are distributed to and when. An estate plan provides these instructions and can ensure your wishes are executed while minimizing costs and potential hassles for your heirs. Here are a few tips for getting started.

Involve those who may be included in your discussions.

Transitions and financial transfers will likely go more smoothly if heirs are informed of your estate decisions while you are available to explain your thought process. Additionally, caregivers for minor or disabled dependents, caregivers for pets and financial trustees should be consulted before you include them in your plan. Caregiving is especially important if any of your dependents have special needs. If you have a business, you also need to provide for its transfer upon your death or disability.

Organize and correct financial documents.

Before getting into the details of your estate plan with an estate planning professional, review and catalog all of



No matter your wealth, you should have a plan for what happens to those assets at the time of your death.

your financial assets. As you do this, check the beneficiary information, and make sure the contact information and allocations are still correct. If information and allocations are incorrect, gather the correct information and make time to correct the errors. If you haven't already, file these documents in a fireproof box or safe. Life insurance, retirement accounts (workplace accounts and IRAs) and annuities all transfer upon your death via beneficiary designation rather than through your will. Since these can represent a major share of your estate, it is important that such designations are kept up-to-date.

Start with the basics.

Most experts recommend beginning your estate plan with life insurance, a will, a durable power of attorney, a health care power of attorney and a living will. The life insurance should cover burial expenses and replace lost earnings, which is particularly important for young families. The will should specify how you would or would not like your assets divided and transferred following your death, as well as detailed arrangements for the financial and legal guardianship of minor children or dependent adults. You can also appoint a trustee to manage the distributions, sell assets and perform other fiduciary tasks. A

durable power of attorney appoints someone to make medical and other decisions on your behalf should you become incapacitated or disabled, and your living will should include detailed health directives.

Hire an estate planning professional.

If you already have a Certified Financial Planner™ (CFP®), they can guide you from the beginning of this process and refer you to an appropriate lawyer. Beginning with a CFP and allowing them to help guide and educate you can save you money on attorney's fees. Low-income individuals and families can contact their state's legal aid society and Bar Associations to find low- or no-cost consultations.

Periodically review your plan.

Your estate plan should continue to evolve as your life does. Review your plan at least every 10 years and more frequently if you experience major life events, such as births, deaths, marriages, divorces or retirements that could change your wishes. Using these milestones as reminders to review and update beneficiaries, allotments and health directives will guarantee your estate plan reflects your most recent wishes. Planning ahead ensures your loved ones will have guidance and reassurance.