



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

P.O. Box B  
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620-767-5144  
[www.flinthillsrec.com](http://www.flinthillsrec.com)

## FLINT HILLS RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

# NEWS



### Flint Hills RECA

#### Board of Trustees

**Roger Zimmerman**  
President

**Shawn Potts**  
Vice President

**Korby Effland**  
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Trustee

**Terry Olsen**  
Trustee

**James Witt**  
Trustee

#### Staff

**Chuck Goeckel**  
General Manager

### Member Services

- ▶ Viasat Internet Services
- ▶ Online Payment Options
- ▶ Outside Security Lighting
- ▶ Power Surge Protection
- ▶ Rebate Programs

For more information, call us at 620-767-5144 or visit our website at [www.flinthillsrec.com](http://www.flinthillsrec.com)

**This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer**

### FROM THE MANAGER

## Making Washington Work for You

Electric cooperatives are deeply connected to the communities they serve and are focused on meeting consumers' energy needs today and into the future. Providing our consumer-members with safe, reliable and affordable power will always be our highest priority, but this requires much more than simply maintaining overhead power lines and other infrastructure.

It requires us to focus on what our elected leaders are doing in Washington to ensure they are acting in our best interest. Here are some of the things we're keeping an eye on in the nation's capital.

#### RURAL Act

Congress created a problem for electric co-ops when it made changes to the tax code in 2017 that inadvertently put co-ops' tax-exempt status at risk if they received government grants. This could have stuck co-op members with the cost of paying taxes had Congress not fixed the problem by passing legislation known as the RURAL Act making it clear electric co-ops won't lose their tax-exempt status just because they receive government grants. At press time, the bill was awaiting President Trump's signature.

#### Wind Energy

Recently, the U.S. Department of Energy selected the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) —

our national trade association — to research small-scale, community-based wind energy solutions that can be deployed by electric co-ops. This research, to be conducted in partnership with Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, is critical to helping co-ops meet their members' desire for affordable renewable energy solutions.



**Chuck Goeckel**

#### Carbon Capture

In response to public policy discussions in Washington about ways to reduce emissions, electric co-ops are participating in cutting-edge research to capture and use carbon emissions to make commercial products. This work is underway at the Integrated Test Center, just outside of Gillette, Wyoming, where researchers will strive to advance technologies and expand understanding of what's possible in this new arena.

#### Rural Broadband

Many electric co-ops are working to help close the digital divide by bringing broadband to unserved and underserved areas. NRECA called on Congress to make

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## Griffin Joins Flint Hills Staff



Travis Griffin

**TRAVIS GRIFFIN** has joined the staff at Flint Hills RECA as the member services manager. He comes to us from Butler Electric Cooperative where he served as the director of member services in El Dorado for 13 years. He has a bachelor

of science in agribusiness from Kansas State University and has experience in a wide range of industries including agriculture, technology, broadcasting and industrial. He grew up on a ranching operation in the Flint Hills where his family continues to live.

## Nominations for Trustee

Nominations for a qualified, Board of Trustee of Flint Hills RECA, made by petition will be open for 15 days following the Nominating Committee meeting on Jan. 2. Nominations must be filed at the Council Grove office on or before the close of business on Jan. 17.

For more information on the cooperative's voting process, please visit Article V of the Member Bylaws that is located on our website at [www.flinthillsrec.com](http://www.flinthillsrec.com).

## Making Washington Work for You

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more funds available for rural broadband deployment. Congress answered the call and funded ReConnect, a pilot program that supports efforts to make broadband possible in rural communities. The first grants were announced late last year, with several co-ops and their communities the beneficiaries.

These are just a few of the ways that electric co-ops are working in Washington to meet the needs of the communities we serve. Because our commitment to you extends far beyond the edge of our service territory.

## DIY Efficiency Projects to Tackle This Year

A New Year brings new opportunities to save energy — and money. You may think energy efficiency upgrades require a great deal of time and expense, but that's not always the case.

If you're interested in making your home more efficient but don't want to break the bank, there are several do-it-yourself projects you can tackle to increase energy savings. Let's take a look at three inexpensive efficiency upgrades that can help you save energy throughout the year.

### Trim Dryer Vent

**LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY:** easy

**SUPPLIES NEEDED:** tin snips, gloves, measuring tape and masking tape

**ESTIMATED COST:** about \$25 depending on the supplies you already have.

If your dryer vent hose is too long, your dryer is working harder than it has to, using more energy than necessary. The vent hose should be long enough for you to pull the dryer out a couple of feet from the wall, but the shape of the hose should form a line — it should not have a lot of slack, with twists and curves. A shorter, unobstructed vent hose increases the efficiency of your dryer, dries clothing faster and reduces lint buildup, which can create potential fire hazards.

Simply measure, mark and trim the hose to the desired length, then reattach the hose to your dryer and exterior vent. If you're unsure about the hose length, check out YouTube.com for a quick video tutorial.

### Seal Air Leaks

**LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY:** moderate

**SUPPLIES NEEDED:** caulk and caulk gun, weatherstripping, gloves, putty knife, paper towels

**ESTIMATED COST:** \$25-\$50 depending on the materials you purchase

Sealing air leaks in your home can help you save 10%-20% on heating and cooling bills. Apply caulk around

windows, doors, electrical wiring and plumbing to seal in conditioned air. You should also weatherstrip exterior doors, which can keep out drafts and help you control energy costs. Types of caulking and weatherstripping materials vary but ask your local hardware or home store for assistance if you're unsure about the supplies you need. For more information, the Department of Energy provides step-by-step instructions for caulking and weatherstripping: <https://bit.ly/2Kesu6W>.

### Insulate Attic Stairs Opening

**LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY:** moderate

**SUPPLIES NEEDED (IF YOU BUILD THE BOX YOURSELF):** rigid foam board,

faced blanket insulation, tape for foam board, measuring tape, utility knife, caulk and caulk gun, plywood

**ESTIMATED COST:** \$50-\$100

A properly insulated attic is one of the best ways to optimize energy savings and comfort in your home, but many homeowners don't consider insulating the attic stairs, or the opening to your attic space. Even a well-insulated attic can leak air through the stair opening, but luckily, there's an easy fix.

An insulated cover box can seal and insulate the attic stairs opening. You can build your own insulated cover box or purchase a pre-built box or kit from a local home improvement store like Home Depot or Lowe's for about \$60. If you decide to build your own, check out these step-by-step instructions from the Department of Energy: <https://bit.ly/36YNCYQ>. It should also be noted, if your attic opening is located in a garage you do not heat and cool, this upgrade will not be as effective.

Saving energy doesn't have to be hard. With a little time and effort, you can maximize energy savings and increase the comfort of your home. To learn about additional ways to save, contact Travis Griffin at Flint Hills RECA by calling 620-767-5144.



The 2019 Flint Hills RECA Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp winners (from left) Brandon Nguyen, Landry Hinkson and Caleb Stout.

# Apply to Win a **Free** Trip of a Lifetime

Flint Hills RECA is sponsoring two all-expenses-paid trips to Steamboat Springs, Colorado, on July 10-16, 2020. This trip is part of a four-state Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp, sponsored by rural electric cooperatives in Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma and Wyoming.

Contest winners will learn about electrification, cooperatives, energy challenges and interpersonal communications. The contest is open to all current high school sophomores and juniors in Flint Hills' service area, whose parents or guardians are members

of Flint Hills RECA. Contest entrants will be interviewed and required to take a brief written test covering material available to each contestant.

If you are a high school sophomore or junior and are interested in this trip, please complete the application form below and send by **FEB. 4, 2020** to: Flint Hills RECA, Attn: Travis Griffin, P.O. Box B, Council Grove, KS 66846. Once we receive this form, material will then be sent to you for the interview process.

## Contest Application for Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp – Due Feb. 4, 2020

Complete and return this application to Flint Hills RECA, Attn: Travis Griffin, P.O. Box B, Council Grove, KS 66846, or [travis@flinthillsrec.com](mailto:travis@flinthillsrec.com) by **Feb. 4, 2020**.

Name of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_ Year in School \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent(s)/Guardian(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

**I AGREE THAT ALL INFORMATION SUPPLIED IN THIS APPLICATION IS ACCURATE AND TRUE.**

Signature of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_

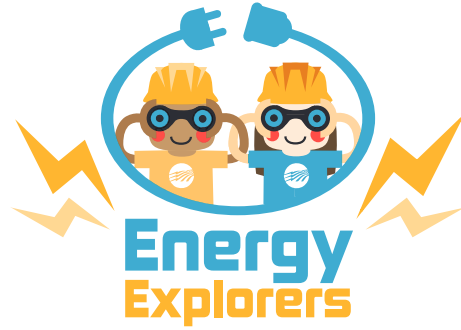
**I HEREBY GRANT PERMISSION FOR \_\_\_\_\_ TO APPLY FOR THE 2020 COOPERATIVE YOUTH LEADERSHIP CAMP SPONSORED BY FLINT HILLS RECA.**

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

# ENERGY SAVINGS WORD SEARCH

Did you know there are many ways you can help save energy in your home?

Read the energy efficiency tips below and circle the **bolded** words in the puzzle.



O	E	S	P	W	F	W	A	T	E	R	S	Y	E	S
A	L	L	R	S	A	E	T	D	E	I	A	L	S	R
T	E	X	K	E	J	T	O	G	H	C	E	P	X	E
L	C	O	O	G	G	Z	E	N	X	C	N	M	N	W
B	T	B	F	M	X	R	R	R	T	B	X	Q	K	O
G	R	I	S	M	M	R	A	R	H	C	L	I	D	H
X	I	S	Y	K	Y	E	O	H	X	E	V	A	F	S
I	C	B	X	X	I	N	Y	B	C	N	A	P	J	I
A	I	G	Y	Z	I	H	F	H	X	C	F	T	Y	E
U	T	U	N	C	W	U	Y	X	Z	O	M	B	E	S
U	Y	Z	S	E	M	F	P	O	R	V	N	V	T	R
R	E	F	R	I	G	E	R	A	T	O	R	H	E	Q
E	V	J	M	Q	S	D	M	D	F	V	G	N	Y	L
W	M	E	O	F	P	N	T	K	W	I	H	X	Q	I
G	N	I	H	T	O	L	C	R	L	S	S	B	R	D

- Turn off **lights** any time you leave a room.
- Keep the **refrigerator** door closed to save energy.
- Wash **clothing** in cold water to reduce the load on your **water heater**.
- Unplug items that consume **electricity** even when they're not in use, like cell phone **chargers** and coffee makers. These are known as "phantom load" **electronics**.
- Take **showers** instead of baths – showers require less **water** use.