



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 
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**FLINT HILLS RURAL
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

NEWS

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**This institution is an equal
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FROM THE MANAGER

Electricity Brings Everyday Value



Chuck Goeckel

Even though I work in the energy industry, like most people, I don't think much about the electricity I use. I expect the lights to turn on when I flip the

switch and the coffee maker to work each morning. Because electricity is so abundant, we don't think much about it. Since many of us have been spending more time at home over the past few months, we have likely been using more energy. And yet, we still expect an endless supply of power with uninterrupted service 24/7. The only time we really think about electricity is when the power goes out or perhaps when the monthly bill arrives.

Given how electricity powers our modern lifestyle every day, it's a great value, especially when compared to other common services and expenses. For example, consider the cost of groceries or a cup of your favorite specialty coffee from a few years back. In comparison, the cost of electricity has remained largely flat, unlike most consumer goods.

Like many of you, I have a cell phone to stay connected, and I subscribe to cable channels so I can enjoy more viewing options. Many of us consider these necessities for modern-day life. We can see what we're getting for our money, and we pay the price for those services. In contrast, when we use electricity, we don't necessarily "see" all that we're getting for our money.

But considering what electricity does

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Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Installing a smart power strip is a quick and easy way to start saving money while making your home more energy-efficient. Smart power strips actually cut power off to save energy since they are able to detect when a device is in standby mode.

Source: energy.gov



Electricity Brings Everyday Value

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for us, it's a tremendous value for our quality of life as well as our budgets. For comparison, consider that the average rent increase was nearly 4% from 2014-2019, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index (CPI). The cost of medical care increased 3% during this time, and education was not too far behind at 2.6%. So, where did electricity rank? According to the CPI, electricity increased by less than half a percentage point, 0.4%.

The bottom line: electricity brings everyday value. Considering that electricity is something we all use around the clock, I am very proud of our reliability and track record. At the same time, we are striving to increase our service reliability, reduce those brief interruptions and reduce costs. We are continually working to improve our operations to ensure a smarter grid and exploring more renewable energy options where possible.

Flint Hills REC provides the reliable service you expect and deserve as valued members of the co-op. And as your trusted energy adviser, we want to help you save your energy and money.

We recognize that the past few months have been challenging for many of our members and we're here to help. If you have questions about your account or are looking for ways to save energy at home, please call us at 620-767-5144. Flint Hills REC is your electric co-op and our sole purpose is to serve you and the needs of our community. That's everyday value.



Be Aware of Electrical Hazards Around the Farm

- **DO NOT STACK OR STORE** items under power lines.
- **NON-METALLIC MATERIALS** (such as tree limbs, ropes and hay) can conduct electricity, depending on dampness and dust/dirt accumulation.
- **MAP OUT WHERE EQUIPMENT** will be moved to ensure it will clear power lines.
- **IF YOUR MACHINERY OR VEHICLE COMES IN CONTACT WITH A POWER LINE**, do not get out. Once contact has been made with a live line (even when your tractor or truck makes

contact), you are now a “pathway to ground” and you could get electrocuted if you step out. Instead, stay where you are and call 911 to dispatch the appropriate utility to de-energize the power.



- **IF YOU COME ACROSS AN ACCIDENT OR INCIDENT NEAR A DOWNED POWER LINE**, alert individuals (from a distance, at least 50 feet away) to stay in the tractor or vehicle as long as there is no imminent danger. Do not approach the scene.
- **ALWAYS LOOK UP** to avoid contact with overhead power lines.
- **ELECTRICAL CURRENT CAN JUMP** or arc so have 20 feet of clearance surrounding power lines at all times.
- **VISUALLY INSPECT FROM A SAFE DISTANCE OVERHEAD LINES**. If a wire is hanging low or is on the ground, consider it energized and stay away; call 911 to have the operator dispatch the utility.
- **ALWAYS USE A SPOTTER** who has a broad vantage point when working near power lines.
- **TRAIN WORKERS** to be aware of power line locations and teach them proper clearance distance.

ENERGY STAR Appliances: Do They Really Save You Money?

If you are in the market for a new appliance, you might wonder if buying an ENERGY STAR®-certified version will make a difference in your energy bills.

THE SHORT ANSWER IS YES, when you compare its estimated energy costs to its less efficient counterpart.

In fact, there are really two costs to consider before buying an appliance: the purchase price and the projected monthly energy costs.

The energy-conscious appliances displaying the ENERGY STAR logo use 10-15% less energy and water than standard models, according to Energy.gov. For example, ENERGY STAR clothes washers use about 40% less energy than conventional clothes washers while also reducing water bills.

AND THE LONGER ANSWER IS YES, if you consider the appliance's lifespan.

ENERGY STAR appliances and other products used throughout your home can save you a collective \$750 over their lifespan, according to Energy.gov. Besides appliances, there are other ENERGY STAR-certified products, such as lighting and electronics.

While selecting energy-saving designated appliances could have a slightly higher price tag, they don't always. Compare prices and don't assume they cost substantially more than less efficient models.

The biggest bang for your energy-savings buck

WHAT IF ALL APPLIANCES WERE ENERGY STAR?

According to EnergyStar.gov, if every appliance purchased in the United States this year earned the ENERGY STAR designation, Americans would:

- ▶ Prevent greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to the emissions from 225,000 cars.
- ▶ Save more than 1.3 billion kWh/year of electricity.
- ▶ Save \$425 million in annual energy costs.
- ▶ Save more than 28 billion gallons of water per year.*

*INCLUDES ENERGY STAR-CERTIFIED CLOTHES WASHERS, DISHWASHERS, AND REFRIGERATORS. DOLLARS SAVINGS REFLECT SAVINGS GENERATED FROM THE REDUCTION OF ENERGY AND WATER USAGE.

might be your refrigerator, especially if it is 15 years old or older. By replacing your old fridge with a new ENERGY STAR-certified model, you can save more than \$200 over a 12-year lifespan.

TIP: EnergyStar.gov offers a "Flip Your Fridge" calculator to estimate savings depending on the size and age of your largest kitchen appliance.

BOTTOM LINE? The typical U.S. family spends around \$2,200 a year on home utility bills. Switching to ENERGY STAR products can help lower these costs over time.

What's Your Appliance Safety IQ?

Clothes Dryer

Children have been electrocuted when hiding behind dryers; some pets also like to nap there.

Install a childproof lock on the laundry room door, as well as on your washer and dryer—especially front-loading models.

Clean lint screen between loads, and thoroughly clean the vents and duct system at least twice a year.

Make sure hoses, seals and connections do not leak and are secure.



Refrigerator

Follow the manufacturer's instructions for maintenance.

Clean the coils every six months to a year.

Keep an eye out for dust or lint under or behind your fridge and remove it to let your refrigerator breathe.

If you have young children in your home, make sure your refrigerator is not a tipping hazard. Consider using an appliance anchor that secures your tall appliance to the wall.



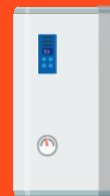
Water Heater

Make sure your hot water heater is well-maintained.

Make sure it does not have excessive pressure buildup by testing the relief valve (or have it tested) at least once a year.

Ensure vents are connected securely and that the correct parts are used to avoid carbon monoxide production.

Have all components of the appliance inspected regularly (at least once a year) by a technician.



POWER RESTORATION FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

When the power goes out, line crews work hard to restore service as quickly and safely as possible. Complete the fill-in-the-blank activity below to learn about the steps of power restoration. Use the word bank if you need help, and check your work in the answer key.

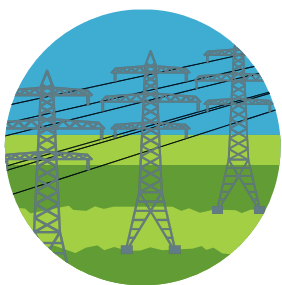


WORD BANK:

distribution
pads

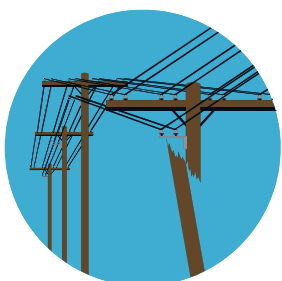
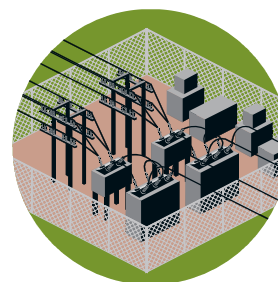
transformer
substations

transmission



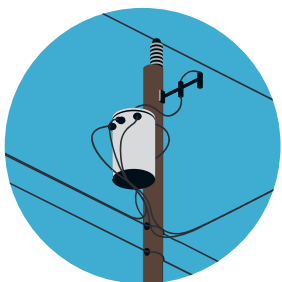
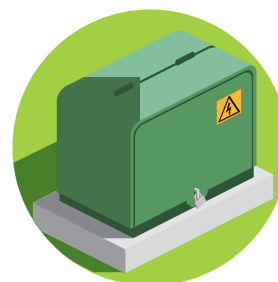
1. High-voltage _____ lines are the large towers and cables that supply power to the greatest number of consumer-members. They rarely fail, but if they do, they have to be repaired first.

2. Next, crews inspect distribution _____ for damage. They determine if the problem stems from the lines feeding into the equipment itself, or if the problem is further down the line.



3. If the problem still can't be pinpointed, _____ power lines are inspected. These are the lines you typically see on the side of the road that deliver power to communities.

4. If the power outage persists, supply lines (also known as tap lines) are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers that are either mounted on poles or placed on _____ for underground electric service.



5. If your home remains without power, the service line between the _____ and your home may need repairs.

Answer Key: 1. transmission 2. substations 3. distribution 4. pads 5. transformer