



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

NEWS

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

FROM THE MANAGER

We're Thankful for Your Membership



Chuck Goeckel

I like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for your membership in our electric cooperative. Because of your connection to Flint Hills RECA, we are able to make our community a better place.

I generally use this space to provide updates on new projects and developments, and report on the progress of ongoing initiatives. We share these updates so all of our consumer-members have a window into our priorities, progress and challenges. However, during this season of giving thanks, I think it's equally important to let you and other consumer-members

"Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it."

In the spirit of this quote by author William Arthur Ward, I'd

of Flint Hills RECA know just what an impact you have on our co-op and the greater community, likely in ways you may not even realize.

As part of the cooperative business model, one of our core principles is "Concern for Community." While our priority is always to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy, we view our role in the community as a catalyst for good.

We work closely with our local schools to provide safety demonstrations, and we participate in the annual Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp where we take our community's brightest young people to Colorado for a week-long immersion to experience leadership, teamwork, and inclusiveness. The trip is inspirational for many students, and we are both humbled and honored to be a part of this leadership development journey. Ultimately, the larger community benefits from these programs because of you. You empow-

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VETERANS
Nov. 11 DAY
 HONORING ALL WHO SERVED

KEEP SAFE AND WARM THIS WINTER

When the chill of fall and winter set in, be aware of potential fire hazards that are lurking in your home. Whether keeping warm with heat from your furnace, space heater, fireplace, or electric blanket, Safe Electricity offers these tips to prevent a fire in your home:



Always place your space heater on a **STEADY SURFACE** and away from curtains, tablecloths or other flapping fabrics. Use a space heater with an automatic shut-off switch.



Have your furnace **INSPECTED** annually.



INSPECT ELECTRIC BLANKETS for scorch marks or visible damage regularly.



Be sure your **CHIMNEY IS CLEAR** before each use, and cover your fireplace with a screen to keep children and pets away from flames.

For more tips, visit

**Safe
Electricity.org**

Button Up Your Home before Winter

Old man winter will soon come knocking on your front door. Now is a good time to make sure he won't be accompanied by a draft coming through your home. Use the mild weather now to improve your home's efficiency for greater comfort and less energy waste:

- ▶ Caulk and add weather stripping to doors and windows that leak air.
- ▶ Clean your furnace and replace your furnace filter.
- ▶ Replace door bottoms and thresholds with ones that have pliable

sealing gaskets.

- ▶ Use foam sealant on larger gaps around windows, baseboards, and other places where air may leak.
- ▶ Make sure your insulation is up to a foot or foot and half in your attic or crawl space.

If you want to do a little more than the basics, fall is a great time to call your electric cooperative for a home energy audit. For more information on preparing your home for winter, visit SafeElectricity.org.

We're Thankful for Your Membership

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er the co-op through your membership and through your participation in and support of these programs.

When you attend co-op events, alert us to problems, provide suggestions online or to our employees, you help us improve operations and thereby better serve the larger co-op membership.

Because we are locally governed by members of our community, we are able to get a firsthand perspective on community priorities, thereby enabling us to make more informed decisions on long-term investments, such as community solar programs, equipment and technology upgrades and electric vehicle programs.

We are thankful that our co-op board members carve out time to attend important training sessions, participate in planning meetings and keep abreast of industry trends. This investment in

time results in better informed advisers that serve the co-op's interests in a way that our consumer-members expect and deserve.

On a more personal note, we appreciate the countless acts of kindness our lineworkers and other employees receive when they are working in severe weather and dangerous conditions. Our employees are thankful for your patience and consideration when we are trying to restore power during challenging situations and prolonged periods.

Flint Hills RECA was originally established 80 years ago to bring electricity to our area when no one else would. The cooperative is a reflection of our local community and its evolving needs. Together, let's continue making our corner of the world a better place. We can't do it without you, and for that, we're thankful for your membership.

Offices Closed for Thanksgiving

Our offices will be closed Thursday, Nov. 22, and Friday, Nov. 23, in observance of the holiday. From our co-op family to yours, Happy Thanksgiving!



Be on the Hunt for Safety this Hunting Season

Wear a bright orange vest, keep your finger off the trigger until you're ready to shoot, and only point at your target. These are some of the safety measures associated with hunting, and electrical safety should be added to the list.

Never shoot near or toward power lines, power poles, transformers or substations. A stray bullet could not only damage equipment, potentially interrupting electric service, but could be deadly to the shooter. Damage to the conductor could drop the line to the ground, causing possible electrocution to those nearby.

Safe Electricity urges hunter's to follow these safety tips while hunting:

- ▶ Familiarize yourself with the location of power lines and equipment on land where you shoot.
- ▶ Be especially careful in wooded areas where power lines may not be as visible.
- ▶ Take notice of warning signs and keep clear of electrical equipment.
- ▶ Do not place deer stands on utility poles or climb poles. Energized lines and equipment on the poles can conduct electricity to anyone who comes in contact with them.
- ▶ Do not place decoys on power lines or other utility equipment. Anything attached to a pole, except for utility



When placing decoys, avoid power lines and utility equipment to keep you and your co-op's lineworkers safe.

equipment, is an obstruction and poses a serious hazard to electric co-op lineworkers.

Don't make linemen hunt for problems caused by unsafe hunting practices. Sometimes damage isn't noticed for several weeks or months, or unless an outage occurs. Keep yourself and your electric co-op workers safe this hunting season. For more electrical safety tips, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Give Your Extension Cord Some Respect

Next time you reach into the deep abyss of your junk drawer for an extension cord, what should you be thinking? (Besides the fleeting thought that it's time to clean out that junk drawer?) You should be giving your extension cord some love by inspecting it before you use it. Make sure it doesn't have signs of wear like cracks or fraying. And if you can't remember when you purchased it, it's probably time to replace it.

Safe Electricity offers additional tips to keep you and your family safe while using this common household item found in junk drawers everywhere.

Make sure

- ▶ The plug prongs and the slots of the extension cord match (two pronged versus three); never try to plug a three-pronged cord into a two-slotted outlet. If you have grounded

outlets (with three slots), it's time to upgrade to a three-pronged cord.

- ▶ The plug is fully inserted into the extension cord; unplug when not in use.
- ▶ You use the cord temporarily; have permanent wiring installed by an electrician if use is long term.
- ▶ The extension cord is certified by an independent testing laboratory.
- ▶ Cords used outdoors are plugged into a GFCI outlet.
- ▶ You store the cords indoors when not in use.

Conversely

- ▶ Never plug major appliances, such as a window air conditioner or refrigerator, into an extension cord ill-equipped for the job. Commonplace household extension cords (those that appear thin and flat and are often inexpensive) and power strips cannot handle surges in power.

- ▶ Never cut the bottom lone prong off to fit in a two-prong receptacle. This could create a shock hazard.
- ▶ Don't stretch an extension cord.
- ▶ Don't drape cords in walkways where people could trip over them.
- ▶ Don't use an indoor-rated extension cord outdoors.
- ▶ Don't use them near water sources (pools, sprinklers, puddles).
- ▶ Don't "string" or lengthen cords by plugging one extension cord into another.
- ▶ Don't overheat or overload an extension cord, place under rugs or carpets in high-traffic areas, or (when using one outside) drive over one. Don't take your trusty friend, the extension cord, for granted. Give it a once-over and take care when using it, and it should serve you well. For additional safety tips, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Holiday Lighting **SAFETY**

Carefully inspect all electrical decorations before you use them. Damaged sockets and loose or exposed wires can cause serious shock or start a fire.



Consider using LED lights for all your decorating needs this holiday season. LEDs use less energy and run cooler than traditional incandescent lights!



Stringing lights this holiday season? Never mount or support light strings in a way that might damage the cord's insulation.



Always unplug electrical decorations before replacing bulbs or fuses.



Turn off all indoor and outdoor electrical decorations before turning in or leaving home.



Save Some Green with LEDs This Holiday Season

The Clark Griswolds (*Christmas Vacation*) and Christmas-light-gun wielding Martha May Whoviers (*How the Grinch Stole Christmas*) of the world can rejoice a bit more this holiday season by switching to LED lights when decorating. While it's tempting to use the non-LED lights you have on hand, doing so can make your electric bill higher.

That's because LED lights consume 80 to 90 percent less power than incandescent lights, which could make your December and January energy bill look more like it belongs to the Grinch. LEDs last a lot longer too: 3,000 hours on average or about 10 times longer than the traditional type.

Safe Electricity offers these additional benefits of decking the halls with LED Christmas lights:

- ▶ You can connect numerous strings (20-plus) together while traditional lights are more limited in the amount you can link per outlet. (The number varies depending on the type of lights and what else is drawing energy on the circuit you're using.)
- ▶ They don't produce heat like their predecessors, making them more child and pet friendly.
- ▶ They pose almost no fire danger around dry trees or wreaths. According to the National Fire Protection Association, fires originating with Christmas trees cause six deaths, 16 injuries, and \$14.8 million in direct property damage each year.
- ▶ LED lights come in a wide range of



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LEDs can cost more up front, but they consume 80 to 90 percent less power than incandescent lights, saving you money on your energy bill.

colors, are usually brighter than the incandescent variety, and often offer more modern features such as dimmers, light pattern settings, and petite battery-operated versions for smaller indoor displays.

Although LEDs can cost a bit more to purchase, they'll save you money in the long run, especially if you go all out decorating your home for the holidays. The estimated electrical costs for a modest display (about 15 strands of lights) would cost about \$11 in electricity if you used incandescent bulbs for five hours per night for 30 nights. All things being equal, using LEDs would only cost approximately \$1.65.

With any type of lights, always refer to strand instructions and make sure your Christmas lights are endorsed by a reputable testing laboratory.

Those with modest displays who switch to LED lights can buy more stocking stuffers or eggnog this holiday season. Decorators extraordinaire who create a jaw-dropping display worthy of traffic jams could save hundreds on their energy bill. Either way, saving green is just one more reason to be jolly.

For additional holiday safety tips, visit SafeElectricity.org.