



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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FLINT HILLS RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

NEWS

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FROM THE MANAGER

We're Thankful for Our Sister Cooperatives

When you think about Flint Hills RECA, you probably associate us with the local community. And you would be right.

Our leadership team, board of directors and employees all live and work here in the community we serve. But you may not realize Flint Hills RECA is actually part of a much larger cooperative network bringing additional value, tools and knowledge that benefit you, the members of the co-op.

Cooperation Among Cooperatives

A defining characteristic of a cooperative is "cooperation among cooperatives." Mutual aid is a way co-ops work together to meet bigger challenges such as power restoration after a severe weather event.

When a severe weather event is predicted for our region, we call on our sister co-ops in areas unaffected by the approaching storm. Through this system of mutual aid, we coordinate with other co-ops to bring additional trucks, equipment and manpower to our area. We work together and share resources to efficiently and safely restore power to our community. And Flint Hills RECA reciprocates by assisting other electric co-ops when they request help.

Flint Hills RECA's ability to tap into the larger electric cooperative network and access tools, products, resources and leading practices from

across the nation ultimately makes our co-op and our community stronger.

Global Impact

Lastly, communities across the globe have benefited from the lessons learned and experience of co-ops in the electrification of rural areas in the U.S.

NRECA International has provided access to reliable and affordable electricity to 120 million people in 43 countries. This effort is made possible through the support of electric co-ops in this state and across the country.

Hundreds of lineworkers, engineers and other co-op employees have served as volunteers to bring first-time access to electricity and train local partners to help utilities be sustainable in their own communities.

November is a time of year for reflection and giving thanks. I am grateful for our sister co-ops who enable us to better serve you and our broader community. When electric co-ops collaborate, we strengthen each other and the communities we serve — and that is something to be truly thankful. Happy Thanksgiving, everyone.



Chuck Goeckel



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Honoring Their Service

Spotlight on E. Malcolm Strom, Damien Hebert
and Ron Stopfer

Honoring the sacrifices many have made for our country in the name of freedom and democracy is the very foundation of Veterans Day. **CHARLES B. RANGEL**

Veterans Day is observed every year on Nov. 11 to honor all those who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces. It evolved from Armistice Day, which recognized the end of World War I that ceased on Nov. 11, 1918, at 11 a.m.

Veterans Day was made a national holiday in 1954 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, after a bill changing the name of Armistice Day to Veterans Day, proposed by Kansas Congressman Ed Rees from Emporia, was passed by Congress.

Veterans Day provides an opportunity to thank the men and women who sacrificed to serve our country, leaving everyday life with family and friends to peril on the battlefield.



E. Malcolm Strom

Flint Hills RECA salutes all America's veterans as they are the people who have been the protectors of our freedom and ideals. We thank all those who have served and those who continue to serve our country. Flint Hills' Member Spotlight salutes three veterans who are Flint Hills RECA members.

E. Malcolm Strom

In November 1941, **MALCOLM STROM** had just started work for the Soil Conservation Service in South Dakota when he received notice to report for physical examination prefacing induction into the U.S. Army. He boarded a bus for Ft. Leavenworth on Dec. 7, 1941. It was on that bus that Strom heard the news that the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor.

"Right then I knew I was going to be in the Army a long time," he said.

He was sworn into the Army on Dec. 8, 1941. His service in World War II had begun. Private Strom went to work immediately at the Ft. Leavenworth Reception Center, processing inductees and was later permanently assigned to the medical unit eye specialists to perform eye exams for new recruits.

We arrived in New York Harbor and sailed past the Statue of Liberty on Dec. 2, 1945. Everyone was thrilled to see her!

E. MALCOLM STROM

The next three years brought 13 weeks of training for the Medical Administrative Corps in Officer Candidate School, where Strom graduated with the rank of second lieutenant, assigned to the 102nd Evacuation Hospital as the Transportation Officer, and deployed to Europe. In Europe he spent time in France, Belgium and Germany including Normandy just after D-Day and the Belgian Ardennes during the Battle of the Bulge.

"Our first casualties received in the hospital were Germans because German planes bombed a prisoner of war compound holding German soldiers," Strom said.

The 102nd Evacuation Hospital ended operations in July 1945 in Giessen, Germany, so then 1st Lt. Strom transferred to the 95th Evacuation Hospital until the end of the war.

He came home to the U.S. by ship and recounts, "We arrived in New York Harbor and sailed past the Statue of Liberty on Dec. 2, 1945. Everyone was thrilled to see her!"

He was released from duty on Dec. 8, 1945, exactly four years after he had

The people I met and served with remain the most cherished memories of my time serving my wonderful country. God bless America! **RON STOPFER**

been sworn in. However, military life was not quite over for Strom, as he enlisted in the Army Reserves and was again called for active duty in Korea in May 1951. Strom served as Commander of the 7th Infantry Medical Battalion Ambulance Company until August 1952. He was officially removed from active duty and from the Army Reserves on Sept. 19, 1952.

Today, Strom lives near Dwight, has been a member of Flint Hills RECA since 1973, and is going strong at 101 years of age. Strom has written two books about his war experiences, "My World War II Experience" and "My Korean War Experience."

Damien Hebert

DAMIEN HEBERT has been a member of Flint Hills RECA since 2003, residing in the White City area, and is also an employee, serving as Operations Manager.

Hebert said although his father served in World War II and retired as a lieutenant colonel, that did not influence his decision to join the Army. He had been going to college and was in the Air Force ROTC program, but



Damien Hebert

decided to leave school and enlist in the Army instead. He served in the U.S. Army Military Police and was stationed in Mannheim, West Germany, for 32 months from 1973-1976 and then served in the Army Reserves from 1976-1979.

He attained the rank of sergeant within two years and was awarded the National Defense Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal and Expert Pistol Badge during his service.

Some of Hebert's favorite duties came when he flew escort duty in a Huey helicopter protecting a caravan carrying cash payroll funds for troops and as part of an armed escort for troop trains travelling from West Germany to West Berlin through East Germany.

"The Army was the best thing that ever happened for me," Hebert said. "It taught me motivation, leadership, and a true sense of duty."

Ron Stopfer

RON STOPFER, a member of Flint Hills RECA since 1983, lives in the Junction City area. His father, who enlisted in the army at 15, used to tell him stories about his service in World War II as a combat medic.

"I joined the Army one day after my 17th birthday," Stopfer said. "I lived in Chicago and was willing to do anything possible to get out of that place."

It turned out to be a great decision as he went on to serve for 21 ½ years attaining the rank of master sergeant. During that time he was stationed overseas for 14 years in Germany, Korea, Japan and Thailand. Stateside he was stationed at Ft. Ord, California and Ft. Riley.

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Ron Stopfer

During his military career, he served first in a ground-to-ground field artillery unit, then in a ground-to-air air defense artillery unit and lastly as senior advisor to the Army National Guard and Army Reserve. In that final capacity, he was responsible for training and advising 25,000 personnel in 237 units across North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas.

He was awarded two Meritorious Service Medals, three Army Commendation Medals, seven Good Conduct Medals, the National Defense Service Medal, and six minor service ribbons. He was also selected for the Army Sergeants Major Academy but chose to retire from military service. He once worked directly for Lt. Gen. Roscoe Robinson, Jr. who eventually became the U.S. Army's first black four-star general.

Looking back on his career, Stopfer recalls that at the time he enlisted, he earned \$78 per month for hard work under difficult conditions.

"The people I met and served with remain the most cherished memories of my time serving my wonderful country," Stopfer said. "God bless America!"

OUTDOOR HOLIDAY LIGHTING SAFETY



When using extension cords, make sure they are rated for outdoor use.



Use outlets with GFCI protection when decorating outdoors.



Never hang lights using tacks, nails or screws; instead use insulated or plastic hooks.



Only use outdoor-rated lights. Strands designed for indoor use cannot withstand the elements.



Avoid using aluminum ladders when hanging lights outdoors and always steer clear of power lines.

What are GFCIs and are They Required Outdoors?

Did you know ground-fault circuit interrupter or GFCI protection is required for all outdoor outlets, which are also known as outdoor receptacles?

The National Electric Code (NEC) began requiring GFCI installation on all outdoor outlets in 1975. Today, that rule stands with one uncommon exception — when homeowners have a dedicated branch circuit for outdoor outlets.

GFCIs serve as important electrical system protection since they automatically trip as soon as anything goes wrong in a circuit. When working properly, they keep us from getting shocked or electrocuted. This is especially important around the home where water and electricity have the chance to mix, such as bathrooms, basements, kitchens, garages and, of course, outdoors.

If you are planning a new outdoor space (or a remodel in any area of your home) that requires additional outlets, consult a licensed electrician. Outdoor outlets must be installed in outdoor-rated electrical boxes and must have special covers based on type and location, among other requirements.

If you are still not convinced about the importance of GFCIs, consider this easy-to-understand explanation by “This Old House,” a home-improvement TV series:

A ground fault happens whenever electricity escapes the confines of the wiring in an appliance, light fixture or power tool and takes a shortcut to the

ground. When that shortcut is through a human, the results can be deadly. About 200 people in the U.S. alone die of ground faults each year, accounting for two-thirds of all electrocutions occurring in homes.

The ground-fault circuit interrupter was invented in 1961. Most of the time, it does nothing and just monitors the difference in the current flowing into and out of a tool or appliance. But when that difference exceeds 5 milliamps, an indication that a ground fault may be occurring, the GFCI shuts off the flow of electricity in an instant — in as little as 0.025 seconds.

So with the advent of the GFCI, how do people become electrocuted by ground faults? Probably for one of several reasons:

- ▶ Their GFCIs are not working properly. Test GFCIs monthly to make sure they are working and if not, have new ones installed.
- ▶ They live in an older home built prior to GFCI requirements or in a dwelling that is not up to code.
- ▶ They took on an electrical DIY project and were not qualified to do so. “Take GFCIs seriously. Oftentimes, they are only as reliable as the person who installs, services and tests them,” said Energy Education Council Board Member Sam Adair.

For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Fall Back on Nov. 3

On Sunday, Nov. 3, remember to turn your clocks back one hour.



Happy Thanksgiving

Our offices will be closed Thursday, Nov. 28, and Friday, Nov. 29, in observance of the holiday. Happy Thanksgiving!

