



## FLINT HILLS RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

# NEWS

## Flint Hills RECA

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General Manager

## FROM THE MANAGER

# Sustaining a Reliable Electric System



**Chuck Goeckel**

We've all heard the phrase, "Don't put all your eggs in one basket." This popular adage is often used in conversation or a story when someone is

about to do something foolish or risky. If they heed this advice, it means they did not commit to "one basket," but instead hedged their bets with multiple options.

This strategy is how I describe Flint Hills REC's common-sense approach to the current energy transition. We know that consumer interest in renewable energy continues to grow. We've seen this trend here in Kansas.

Recent innovations and advances in renewable energy technologies have led to decreases in costs, making renewables seem more feasible, accessible and scalable. Over the last few years, Flint Hills REC's fuel mix has changed by utilizing more renewables. Today, 36% of our fuel mix is comprised of renewable energy, the majority of which is hydro/wind. That's an increase of 11 percentage points compared to seven years ago.

Nationally, there is increasing reliance on renewable energy sources at the

same time that we're seeing fossil fuel and nuclear plants taken offline, often ahead of schedule. Additionally, there is more pressure on the electric grid due to rising electricity demand.

### Competing Pressures

So how do we reconcile these challenges of grid pressure and a changing fuel mix? Solar and wind energy are limited resources because the sun does not always shine, and the wind does not always blow. Our primary responsibility is to provide electricity 24/7 to you and our community. To do this, we need reliable sources of power that will meet all the peaks and valleys of on-demand energy in our connected world.

So where are we netting out? That's where our familiar adage comes into play. While utilization of renewables is increasing, we still need to incorporate other forms of energy in the mix to ensure reliable service. Remember, solar and wind are intermittent power sources. This fact coupled with the growing demand for renewables creates its own challenges.

That's why we put our eggs into multiple baskets. There is great value in maintaining a diverse mix of fuel sources — fossil fuels and renewables work together to ensure reliability and

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## 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**

## NOTICE TO MEMBERS

## Board to Consider Adding a New Commercial/Public Electric Vehicle Charging Rate

The Flint Hills REC Board of Trustees will discuss and vote on a General Service Large Commercial/Public Electric Vehicle Charging Rate. This is an added rate for large electric vehicle charging stations for use in public areas. This meeting is open to the membership and will be held on April 17, 2023, at 7 p.m. at the cooperative's office at 1564 S. 1000 Road in Council Grove.

### Sustaining a Reliable Electric System

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resiliency and meet the growing demand for electricity.

Reliability also means repairing and replacing utility equipment to prevent wear-and-tear, ensuring our equipment can withstand severe weather. We are laser-focused on providing our Flint Hills REC members with safe, reliable, and affordable energy. That's why fuel diversity — or placing our eggs in multiple baskets — is essential to reliability.

#### The Bottom Line

Lowering the overall carbon footprint in this country means we're going to electrify more and more of our economy. Solar and wind power are an important part of a broader energy portfolio, but they are not available 24/7. In today's ever-connected world, people need power around the clock.

As our nation increasingly depends on electricity to power the economy, Flint Hills REC is working to anticipate, plan and respond to market trends and policy shifts. That's how we can power your home and our economy, while continuing to serve as your local energy provider.

## Take Control of a Controlled Burn

Properly controlled burns can have many benefits for agricultural land. However, if these burns are not managed safely, they can result in property damage, power outages, injury and even death. Flint Hills REC urges you to make safety a priority and take special considerations when burning near electric utility lines.

First, make yourself aware of laws and regulations. Burns should only be conducted by those who are experienced with fire and burn paths. Avoid burning near public roads or airports as this can create a potentially dangerous visibility hazard. Alert all those who may be potentially affected by the burn — including neighbors, the local fire department, and law enforcement. Ensure that you have the proper clothing, equipment, and tools. For personal safety, all those near the flames should wear clothing made of natural fibers or approved for firefighting.

Take special note of electric utility poles and lines. Burning a pole could result in a widespread power outage and be costly for those responsible for the fire. The cost to replace just one utility pole can range from \$2,500 to \$3,500. Remove grass and weeds around the utility pole prior to burning and water down the area near the poles as to not encourage fires to encroach. While controlling the fire keep water away from electric lines.

If a pole catches on fire, call the fire



department and alert your electric utility to handle the possible electrical dangers. Even if you think you have been able to extinguish the fire yourself, alert your electric utility to the fact that it caught fire. The preservative on the inside could still be burning the pole from the inside out. In addition, if the pole catches on fire, it could

create shock or electrocution hazards to those who may be nearby or spark fires in unintended directions from the downed lines.

Carbon particles in smoke can conduct electricity. It is also possible for smoke produced during the burning to conduct electricity and cause an electrical discharge from the line. To reduce this risk, the fire should not cross under electric lines.

Keep environmental factors such as temperature, humidity and wind direction and speed in mind. The wind speed in the area should be low and in a steady direction as to not let the fire get out of control. As environmental factors are subject to change, check forecasts as well as actual conditions before you begin the burn.

Local resources, through conservation offices, are available to develop a plan and assist in training for a controlled burn. Depending on local regulations, you may need to obtain a burn permit. Preparation and timely planning will ensure a safe, controlled burn for you and all involved.

# Thank a Lineworker on April 10

Being a lineworker is not a glamorous or easy profession. It takes years of specialized training, ongoing education, dedication, and equally important, a sense of service and commitment. How else can you explain the willingness to leave the comfort of your home to tackle a challenging job in difficult conditions, when most are sheltering comfortably at home? This dedication and sense of service to the community is truly what sets them apart. That's why we set aside the second Monday in April to celebrate and recognize the men and women who work around the clock to keep the lights on.

Flint Hills REC is proud to honor the 13 lineworkers who maintain over 2,500 miles of power lines in our service territory.

To show our appreciation we would like for you to take the time to send a letter or card thanking our linemen for

## SHOW YOUR APPRECIATION

Send a letter or card thanking our linemen for what they do. Send to:

**FLINT HILLS REC  
ATTN: MEMBER SERVICES  
P.O. BOX B  
COUNCIL GROVE, KS 66846**

what they do. You can send your letter or card to Flint Hills REC, Attn: Member Services, P.O. Box B, Council Grove, KS 66846. We will make sure and share them with our linemen.

Flint Hills REC invites all co-op members to take a moment and thank a lineworker for the important work they do. On April 10, you can use #ThankALineworker on social media to show your support for the brave men and women who power our lives.

## REMEMBER TO LOOK UP WHEN OPERATING LARGE EQUIPMENT

Millions of workers operate large equipment every day. Examples include cranes, dump trucks, farm equipment, bucket trucks, hydraulic lifts and cement trucks. If the equipment you are operating raises or extends, make sure you follow OSHA's rules for the minimum approach distance to power lines.

- ▶ **IF YOU PLAN TO WORK WITHIN 20 FEET OF A POWER LINE,** contact the electric utility in advance to deenergize the line. On the farm, examples include loading, unloading or moving/relocating a grain bin within 20 feet of an overhead line.
- ▶ **ALWAYS USE A SPOTTER NEAR OVERHEAD POWER LINES.** A spotter's view from the ground provides a better vantage point than what you can see from the cab.
- ▶ **IF YOUR EQUIPMENT TOUCHES A POWER LINE OR UTILITY POLE,** stay in the cab, call for help and alert others to stay away until utility crews deenergize the power. Only exit the cab if it's on fire and do so by jumping clear, landing with both feet together and hopping away with feet together.
- ▶ **DO NOT OPERATE A HYDRAULIC/SCISSOR LIFT NEAR AN OVERHEAD POWER LINE.**



# SPRING EFFICIENCY WORD SCRAMBLE

Did you know there are several ways you can save energy during spring months? Read the efficiency tips below and unscramble the **bolded** letters to reveal how you and your family can save energy during springtime.

Don't forget to check your work in the answer key below!



Sealing air leaks around doors and **diwwson** saves energy and keeps your home comfortable.

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LED **hlgist** typically use 75% less energy than traditional incandescent lightbulbs.

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Unplug devices and electronics that consume energy even when they're not in use, like phone **scragher**.

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Planting shade **esrte** around your home can block unwanted heat from the sun.

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Ceiling fans cool people, not rooms. Turn them off when you leave the room to save **yengre**.

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Answer Key: 1. windows 2. lights 3. chargers 4. trees 5. energy