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NEWS

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THIS INSTITUTION IS AN
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY
PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER.

FROM THE MANAGER

Shaping Our Energy Future Through Innovation

The energy industry is undergoing significant change driven by technology and the transition to more sustainable forms of energy. Innovation is essential in addressing these challenges and ensuring a continuous, reliable and affordable power supply.

Electric co-ops are no strangers to adapting to the needs of the local communities we serve. Flint Hills Rural Electric Cooperative (Flint Hills REC) has always leaned into change as we explore new ways to meet your energy needs.

ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES

By using advanced equipment like drones that inspect our local grid, sensors that provide real-time data on the condition of power being delivered to our system along with our automated metering system, we can pinpoint potential problems

before they even occur and ultimately improve service for all.

Investing in smarter technologies also can enhance the monitoring and control of electricity flow so we can respond swiftly to changing needs. Smart electric meters remotely collect data on how electricity is being used. This helps in promptly prioritizing and dispatching crews during an outage, reducing restoration time during weather-related disruptions.



Chuck Goeckel

PREPARING FOR INCREASED ENERGY USE

Today, we depend on electricity more than ever before. From vehicles to farming equipment to home heating options, more products and appliances that we depend on run on electricity.

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ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

A well-designed landscape can add beauty to your home and reduce home heating and cooling costs. Plant deciduous trees with high, spreading crowns to the south of your home to block sunlight in the summer and reduce the need for air conditioning. Deciduous trees lose their leaves in the winter, allowing sunlight to warm your home. Plant evergreen trees and shrubs to block winter winds. Dense evergreen trees and shrubs planted to the north and northwest are the most common type of windbreak and can help lower energy used for home heating. **SOURCE: ENERGY.GOV**



Shaping Our Energy Future Through Innovation

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Interest in electric vehicles (EVs) is growing. Flint Hills REC is available to help our members make informed decisions about EVs, including electric charging options and capacity requirements for the home.

Automakers are transitioning many or all new vehicles to electric-only models in the next 10 years. Flint Hills REC, like all electric providers, must plan now to have the necessary infrastructure in place to meet future EV charging needs — without jeopardizing the ability to provide reliable power.

Additionally, we are exploring innovative technologies like new community solar projects to help address the increasing demand for electricity.

COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES

You may not realize it, but Flint Hills REC is part of a larger network of 900 electric co-ops nationwide. While we are locally owned by you, the members of the co-op, we also have the advantage of working with co-ops across the country to share ideas and leverage the innovations our colleagues might have tried out first. As cooperatives, we're collaborators instead of competitors — it's a unique aspect of our business model, and we're stronger because of it.

Our energy future will look different than it has in the past, but Flint Hills REC is prepared to adapt for the members we serve. Our mission and commitment to you remain steady — to provide reliable power at a cost local families and businesses can afford.

Thank a Lineworker on April 8



Flint Hills Rural Electric linemen. **FROM LEFT, BACK ROW:** David Epp, Brock Nieman, Tim Jirak, Lloyd Anderson, John Stohs, Dylan Jirak and Riley Hake. **FRONT ROW:** Scott Kelsey, Travis Hirt, Drew O'Mara, Kerry Zimmerman, James Blue and Trevor Kruse.

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 WHAT THEY DO. You can send your letter or card to Flint Hills REC, attn: Travis Griffin, P.O. Box B, Council Grove, KS 66846. We will 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 8, you can use #ThankALineworker on social media to show your support for the brave men and women who power our lives.

SAFETY TIP

Know how to manually open your powered garage door after a power outage. Refer to manufacturer's instructions and teach other drivers and older kids in your home how to operate an electric garage door during a power outage, especially if there is an emergency.



SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.COM

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.



Make safety a priority and take special considerations when burning near electric utility lines.

FLINT HILLS HOSTS LEGISLATIVE FORUM

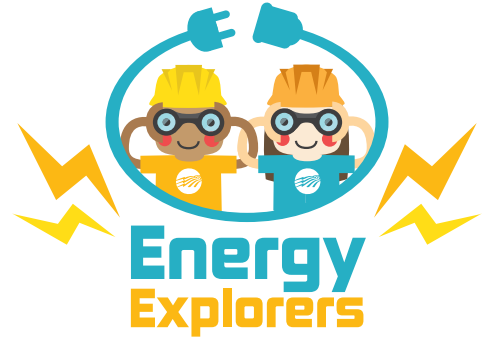
In February, Flint Hills Rural Electric Cooperative and Bluestem Electric Cooperative hosted a legislative forum in Alta Vista. **SENATOR BRENDA DIETRICH**, from the 20th District; **REPRESENTATIVES NATE BUTLER**, from the 68th District; and **REPRESENTATIVE KENNY TITUS**, from the 51st district, were on hand to answer questions and give an update on the current legislative session.

The legislators gave an update on the different bills that were being worked in the Kansas Legislature and also answered questions from the those in attendance. Topics covered were the current tax relief bill that was vetoed by Governor Kelley along with the importance of reaching across the aisle to work with their counter parts on a variety of bills. Other topics that came from those in attendance was the lack of broadband internet service in rural areas and taxes.



From left: Representative Nate Butler, Senator Brenda Dietrich and Representative Kenny Titus spoke with community members about the current legislative session.

LINeworker SAFETY GEAR WORD SEARCH



Lineworkers use a variety of gear to stay safe while working near power lines and other electrical equipment.

Read about their safety gear below, then find and circle the **BLUE** words in the puzzle.

- ▶ Safety **GOGGLES** keep debris out of a lineworker's eyes while they work.
- ▶ Rubber **GLOVES** are insulated and protect lineworkers from electric shock.
- ▶ Steel toe **BOOTS** provide extra protection when lineworkers lift heavy objects.
- ▶ **HARD HATS** protect lineworkers from potential head injuries.
- ▶ Lineworkers wear a safety **HARNESS** to prevent falls while climbing poles or working in a bucket.
- ▶ Lineworkers use a **HOT STICK**, an insulated tool made from fiberglass, when working on energized lines.

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

