



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

P.O. Box B
1564 S. 1000 Rd., Council Grove, KS 66846
620-767-5144
www.flinthillsrec.com

**FLINT HILLS RURAL
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

NEWS

Flint Hills RECA

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For more information, call us at 620-767-5144 or visit our website at www.flinthillsrec.com.

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

FROM THE MANAGER

Our Pledge to Promote Culture of Inclusion



Chuck Goeckel

Over the years, you've heard me expound on why and how Flint Hills RECA is different — because we're a cooperative. Our business model sets us apart from other utilities because we adhere to seven guiding cooperative principles that reflect core values of honesty, transparency, equity, inclusiveness and service to the greater good of the community.

Electric cooperatives, including Flint Hills RECA, have a unique and storied place in our country's history. We democratized the American dream by bringing electricity to rural areas when for-profit electric companies determined the effort too costly. Back then, cities were electrified, and rural areas

were not, creating the original rural-urban divide. Newly established electric lines helped power economic opportunity in rural areas. Today, that spirit of equity and inclusion is a vital part of our co-op DNA.

Equal Access for All

When our electric co-op was founded, each member contributed an equal share to gain access to electricity that benefited individual families as well as the larger local community. Each member had an equal vote in co-op matters. That sense of equity and inclusion is still how we operate today. Flint Hills RECA was built by and belongs to the diverse communities and consumer-members we serve. Membership is open to everyone in our service territory, regardless of race, religion, age, disability, gender identity, language, political perspective or socioeconomic status.

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Annual Meeting Canceled

Due to the uncertainty surrounding COVID-19, the decision was made to cancel the 2021 Annual Meeting that was scheduled for April 13, 2021. Please look for your mail-in ballot for board of trustee elections to be delivered in March. We will continue to share information in *Kansas Country Living* magazine and on our website at www.flinthillsrec.com.

Our Pledge to Promote Culture of Inclusion

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By virtue of paying your electric bill each month, you're a member of the co-op, and every member has an equal voice and vote when it comes to co-op governance. This ties back to our guiding principles of equitable economic participation and democratic control of the co-op.

We encourage all members to vote in Flint Hills RECA's director elections every year, and we invite all members to weigh in on discussions that set co-op policies and priorities, such as broadband access, community solar and electric vehicle programs.

We know members of our community have different needs and perspectives, and we welcome diverse views on all issues under consideration by the co-op. The more viewpoints we hear, the better we are able to reflect the needs of all corners of our community.

Inclusion

While our top priority is providing safe, reliable and affordable energy, we also want to be a catalyst for good in our community. Because we are your local electric cooperative, co-op revenues stay right here in our community. In turn, we invest in our diverse community base through scholarship programs, charitable giving, educational programs and more. We strive to make long-term decisions that improve and enrich the communities we serve.

While today's world is radically different than it was when Flint Hills RECA was founded, our cooperative values have stood the test of time and remain just as relevant today. We recognize that today's co-op members expect more, and my pledge to you — the members we proudly serve — is to promote a cooperative culture of inclusion, diversity and equity for all.

Apply by Feb. 19 for the Kansas Electric Youth Leadership Conference



For the past 60 years, electric cooperatives from across the country have selected student leaders to take part in the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. In addition, for the past 40 years, co-ops have selected a second group of student leaders to participate in the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp held in Colorado.

Despite the programs being canceled in 2020, plans were in place to host nearly 2,000 students representing 44 states for the D.C. trip and nearly 100 students from four states for the Colorado camp. However, due to continued concerns with the pandemic, the decision was made to cancel both youth programs for 2021.

With the cancellation of the youth programs, Flint Hills Rural Electric Cooperative will now offer the 2021 student winners a virtual youth leadership conference.

"We are sad for the youth who will miss the tour and camp experiences, but we know that the safety of our youth delegates and our chaperones is paramount," said Shana Read, KEC

director of education and training, who coordinates the youth programs. "However, we are planning a meaningful and engaging youth leadership experience tailored specifically to these students."

"While we know a virtual conference is not an ideal substitution for the trips, we are proud to offer this leadership development opportunity to our winners," said Travis Griffin, Flint Hills REC member services director. "And we look forward to resuming the youth program trips as soon as we can safely travel."

The virtual leadership conference will take place this summer and will be a combination of top-notch speakers and fun virtual activities. Additionally, Flint Hills REC will also offer a \$500 scholarship for their student winners who complete the weeklong program. Students who participate in the virtual conference will also be eligible to apply for future statewide and national awards designed for the youth program alumni.

For more information or to apply for the youth leadership conference, contact Travis Griffin. **DEADLINE TO APPLY IS FEB. 19, 2021.**

What Happens Behind the Scenes During a Power Outage?

Here in the U.S., we are fortunate to have an advanced power grid in place. Power transmission and distribution is reliable in our country, and we are proud to deliver the electricity you depend on each day. Excluding outage times attributed to major weather or other catastrophic events, electricity consumers in our country typically experience only about two hours of total power interruptions per year, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. When outages due to major events are taken into consideration, the EIA reports the total outage time at six hours a year.

What happens on our end when your power goes out? We swing into action in a safe and efficient manner to ensure your power is restored. How long that takes depends on several factors: the extent of the storm's destruction, the number of outages, and how long it takes for our work crews to safely access the storm-damaged areas. We are careful to follow standard restoration

procedures to ensure safety and to get the job done right by:

- ▶ Assessing damage to utility equipment.
- ▶ Addressing immediate safety risks, including downed power lines.
- ▶ Ensuring that essential public health and safety facilities are operational.
- ▶ Prioritizing repairs that will restore power to the greatest number of people first.
- ▶ Evaluating power plants for damage and restore them to working order.
- ▶ Repairing transmission lines that carry power to large areas.
- ▶ Assessing and repairing (in this order) substations, distribution lines, and service lines to properties.

Thank you for your patience during power outages. Know that in the event of an outage, we are working hard to restore power as safely and efficiently as possible, day and night.

For more information about preparing for outages or storms, or about electrical safety, go to SafeElectricity.org.



STAY COMFORTABLE

Space heating and cooling account for a large portion of the average home's energy use. A programmable or smart thermostat can help you control the temperature of your home and save energy.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month

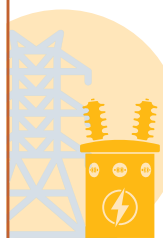
Use wool or rubber dryer balls in the clothes dryer to reduce drying time and static. Wool dryer balls can also absorb extra moisture. These are an efficient alternative to dryer sheets, which can create buildup on the dryer's filter and reduce air circulation. If you prefer dryer sheets, scrub the filter once a month to remove buildup.

SOURCE: ENERGY.GOV



ONCE THE POWER IS OUT HOW IS IT SAFELY RESTORED?

When conditions are favorable for a storm, severe weather can take down power lines or disrupt your electric service in several ways. Please know that when the power goes out, we are doing all we can to safely and efficiently restore power. Here are a couple of steps we take in the assessment and restoration process:



STEP 1: ASSESS THE DAMAGE

We assess the damage to utility equipment and power lines across the service area.

STEP 2: ADDRESS SAFETY RISKS

We address immediate safety risks, including downed power lines.



STEP 3: RESTORE ESSENTIAL SERVICES

We ensure that public health and safety facilities are operational.

STEP 4: PRIORITIZE REPAIRS

We repair (usually in this order): transmission towers and lines, substations, distribution lines, and then service lines and properties.



WINTER ENERGY-SAVINGS WORD SEARCH

This winter, you can pitch in at home to help save energy! Read the energy-saving tips below, then find and circle the **orange** bolded words in the puzzle.



WORD BANK

- ▶ Open curtains and blinds during the day to allow **sunlight** in to warm your home.
- ▶ Instead of turning up the thermostat, add more layers of **clothing** to keep your body warm.
- ▶ If you have a **fireplace**, ask an adult to close the flue when a fire is not burning.
- ▶ Unplug **chargers** when they're not in use. They consume energy even when they're not charging phones and other devices.
- ▶ Ask an adult to check the **air filter** for your home's heating and cooling system. Filters should be replaced regularly to help the system run more efficiently.
- ▶ Always turn off **lights** when you leave a room.

