



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



NEWS

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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

How Severe Winter Weather Impacts Reliability

When outdoor temperatures drop, our electricity use increases. We're doing more activities inside, and our heating systems are running longer and more often to counteract colder outdoor temperatures. Factor in that we all tend to use electricity at the same times — in the morning and early evenings — and that equals a lot of strain on our electric grid.

At Flint Hills Rural Electric Cooperative (Flint Hills REC), we work closely with our local generation and transmission (G&T) cooperative in resource and infrastructure planning to ensure you have the power you need whenever you flip a switch, but the electric grid is much larger than your local co-op and G&T.

In winter months, when even more electricity is being used simultaneously across the country, it is possible for electricity demand to exceed supply, especially if an unexpected event like a sudden snow or ice storm or equipment malfunction occurs. If this happens, which is rare, the grid operator for our region of the country may call for rolling power outages to relieve pressure on the grid, and Flint Hills REC will inform you about the situation.

Flint Hills REC and our G&T take proactive steps to create a resilient portion of the grid and ensure electric reliability

in extreme weather, including regular system maintenance, grid modernization efforts and disaster response planning; but it takes everyone to keep the grid reliable.

To help keep the heat on for you, your family and neighbors, here are a few things you can do to relieve pressure on the grid (and save a little money along the way):

- ▶ Select the lowest comfortable thermostat setting and turn it down several degrees whenever possible. Your heating system must run longer to make up the difference between the thermostat temperature and the outdoor temperature.
- ▶ **PRO TIP:** Seal air leaks around windows and exterior doors with caulk and weatherstripping. Air leaks and drafts force your heating system to work harder than necessary.
- ▶ Stagger your use of major appliances such as dishwashers, ovens and dryers.
- ▶ **PRO TIP:** Start the dishwasher before you go to bed and use smaller countertop appliances like slow cookers and air fryers to save energy.



Chuck Goeckel

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How Severe Winter Weather Impacts Reliability

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- ▶ Ensure that your heating system is optimized for efficiency with regular maintenance and proper insulation.
 - ▶ **PRO TIP:** Make sure your furnace filter isn't clogged and dirty. Replace it as needed. Experts recommend replacing your furnace filter at least every three months or every two months if you have pets or allergies.
- ▶ When possible, use cold water to reduce water heating costs.
 - ▶ **PRO TIP:** Setting your water heater thermostat to 120 degrees can help you save energy and reduce mineral buildup and corrosion in your water heater and pipes.
- ▶ Unplug devices when not in use to eliminate unnecessary energy use. Even when turned off, electronics in standby mode consume energy.
 - ▶ **PRO TIP:** Plug devices into a power strip so you can turn them all off at once with the push of a button.

As we face the challenges posed by winter weather, understanding its impact on energy demand is crucial for maintaining a reliable power supply. By adopting energy conservation practices during periods of extreme cold, not only can you save money on your electric bills, but you can also contribute to the resilience of the power grid, keeping our local community warm and connected.

Horses Gallop and so Can Power Lines

How can galloping lines impact power transmission and distribution?

Galloping power lines are typically caused when ice and high winds occur at the same time. Freezing rain creates icicles and odd-shaped ice formations on power lines and conductors. The ice buildup changes how wind and air impact the now misshapen, ice-covered line. This change in airflow can cause the power line to begin bouncing.

They can bounce and buck enough to hit another line, damage themselves enough to cause a power outage or even fall to the ground.

Flint Hills REC can't prevent galloping lines since the wild motion is caused by Mother Nature. However, some power lines have special mechanisms, such as twisted wire or round or angular pieces of metal, attached to the line to minimize the motion. While they can help, sometimes they are no match for severe ice and whipping wind.

Aside from ice storms, year-round storms can cause damaging winds, which can knock down power lines and blow trees and limbs onto power lines. Keep the following safety tips in mind:

- ▶ When you see power lines on the ground, stay away, warn others to stay away and contact the electric utility or call 911. Lines do not have to be arcing or sparking to be live.
- ▶ Any utility wire, including telephone or cable lines that are sagging or

down, could be in contact with an energized power line, also making it dangerous. Do not try to guess the types of lines — stay away from all lines.

- ▶ Be alert to the possibility that tree limbs or debris may hide electrical hazards. Downed power lines can energize objects around them, such as chain-link fences and metal culverts.
- ▶ Keep in mind that a deenergized line could become energized during power restoration efforts or improper use of generators.
- ▶ Never drive over a downed line. It could start a chain reaction and cause additional poles or other equipment to collapse.
- ▶ If you are in a car that has contacted or is near a downed power line, stay in your vehicle. Wait until the utility crew has arrived and deenergized the line. Warn others not to approach the car.
- ▶ Only exit a car or cab near or on downed lines if there is a fire. If this happens, cross your arms over your chest and make a solid jump out and away from the car with both feet together. Then hop away at least 50 feet or more while continuing to keep both feet together. For more electrical safety information, visit www.SafeElectricity.org.

SAVE THE DATE – APRIL 2

ANNUAL MEETING

MAKE PLANS TO ATTEND THE FLINT HILLS RECA ANNUAL MEETING

REGISTRATION AND MEAL 5:30 P.M. | MEETING AT 6:30 P.M.

HERINGTON COMMUNITY BUILDING

Your annual report and ballot will be mailed separately in March.

JOIN US
APRIL 2

YOUTH PROGRAM TRIPS

Summer 2024



Students invited to apply for leadership opportunities

Flint Hills REC has a strong tradition of promoting youth leadership and that tradition will continue with two all-expenses-paid leadership programs this summer. Flint Hills REC will select one winner for each trip below:

► **ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE YOUTH TOUR**
JUNE 14-20, 2024

Students will join 1,700 youth from across the nation in Washington, D.C. They will see the monuments and other attractions, as well as visit Capitol Hill to learn more about how our government works. Those selected for this experience may also apply for the Kansas seat on a national youth leadership council.

► **COOPERATIVE YOUTH LEADERSHIP CAMP**
JULY 12-18, 2024

High school students from electric cooperative communities in Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma and Wyoming participate in this leadership camp located near Steamboat Springs, Colorado. Campers will create a candy cooperative, hear from dynamic speakers, and raft down the Colorado River.

If you know of a student that is a junior or sophomore in high school with strong leadership potential who is ready for new experiences, would like to network with other student leaders, and is willing to learn more about themselves and their communities, encourage them to apply for these incredible leadership opportunities.

To apply, call our office at 620-767-5144, email us for an application at memberservices@flinthillsrec.com or visit www.flinthillsrec.com/youth-tour.



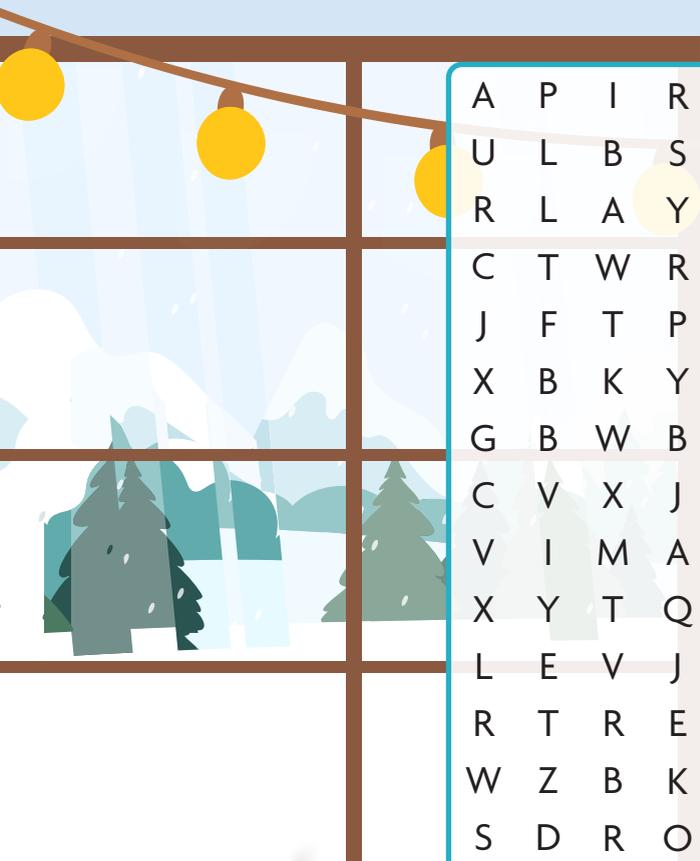
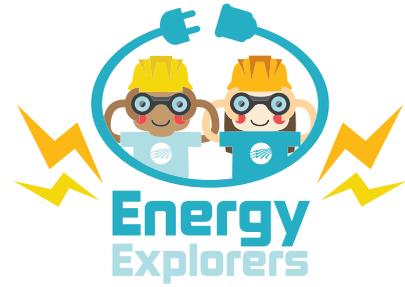
SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION BY
FEB. 2, 2024



WINTER Safety Word Search

Did you know most home fires happen during colder months? Play it safe this winter season.

Read the safety tips below, then find and circle the **BOLD BLUE** words in the puzzle.



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



- ▶ Never overload electrical outlets with too many **ELECTRONICS**.
- ▶ Test smoke and carbon monoxide **ALARMS** every month.
- ▶ Never leave a **CANDLE** burning in an empty room.
- ▶ Keep flammable items at least 3 feet away from a **SPACE HEATER**.
- ▶ **EXTENSION CORDS** should only be used temporarily. Damaged or frayed cords should be thrown away.