



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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FLINT HILLS RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

NEWS



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FROM THE MANAGER

Let's Connect



Chuck Goeckel

When we say that we live in a “connected” world, most of us think about technology, like our smartphones and other devices and gadgets. But when you're a consum-

er-member of an electric co-op (that's you!), there's so much more to being part of our connected co-op community.

We depend on you because you power our success, and when Flint Hills REC does well, the community thrives because we're all connected.

We greatly value our connection to you, the members we serve. And we'd like to help you maximize the value you can get from Flint Hills through a variety of programs, products and services

we offer our members. For example, we can help you save money on your energy bill through our Peak Alert Savings Program and offer rebates on heat pumps and water heaters. When you download our SmartHub app, you can monitor and manage your home energy use, pay your bill online and access a menu of additional options for potential savings and more.

When you follow Flint Hills Rural Electric Cooperative (@fhreca) on social media, you can stay up to date on power restoration efforts, tree trimming planning, co-op director elections, giveaways and more. You'll also see photos of our line crews in action and our employees helping with community service projects — and who doesn't enjoy seeing good things happening in our community!

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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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer



There is no such thing as 100% safe ice.

Apply Now for the Virtual 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 in Colorado.

Despite the programs being canceled in 2020, plans were in place to host nearly 2,000 students representing 44 states for the DC 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 REC 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

“While we know that a virtual conference is not an ideal substitution for the trips, we are proud to offer this leadership development opportunity to our winners.”

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 as well as fun virtual activities. In addition, 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.

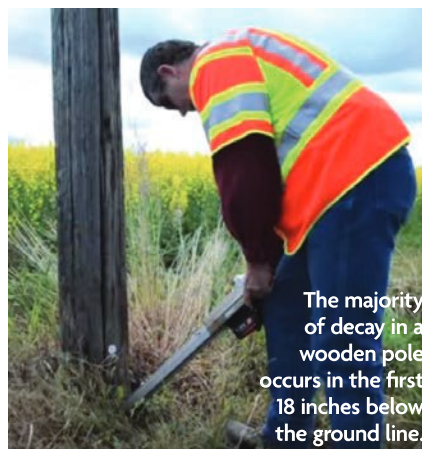
For more information or to apply for the youth leadership conference, contact Travis Griffin. **DEADLINE TO APPLY IS FEB. 5, 2021.**

Flint Hills REC Conducts Pole Inspections

As is the case with most electric utilities, Flint Hills REC uses wooden poles. Even though the poles are initially treated to resist decay, over time all wooden poles will deteriorate and ultimately need to be replaced. The decay rate varies depending upon soil type, moisture levels, temperatures, and the type of wood the pole is derived from.

To help maintain system reliability, a sample of Flint Hills REC's power poles are tested periodically. Sundance Power Pole Inspectors, a contractor for Flint Hills REC, has been conducting the pole inspections, which involves a visual inspection of poles in which they search for significant cracks, signs of termite and carpenter ant activity, or other defects that may result in pole failure and/or rejections.

While a visual inspection is valuable and essential in evaluating the overall condition of the pole, any internal



decay below the ground line would go undetected if not for our pole inspections. The majority of decay in a wooden pole occurs in the first 18 inches below the ground line. Inspectors complete a sound and bore test of the pole, where they expose the pole below the ground line, bore it at an angle in two different locations

to determine the size of any decayed pocket below the ground line, and sound the pole above the ground line with a hammer observing if a decayed pocket extends above the ground line.

The inspectors also report broken or missing guy guards and fix broken pole grounds. By regularly testing and inspecting electric pole integrity and strength, Flint Hills REC lowers total risk and increases the reliability and safety of our electric system. It also helps ensure that poles are safe and any problems can be addressed before the poles break.

Once the inspection was complete, Flint Hills REC crews began the process of replacing any poles and infrastructure identified as needing to be repaired or replaced. If the integrity and strength of a pole were compromised and considered dangerous, Flint Hills REC crews were notified to replace the pole(s) immediately.

Flint Hills REC Provides Mutual Aid to Co-op in Need

Providing world-class service doesn't end at our territory lines. When other cooperatives send the call for help, Flint Hills REC is there to answer. Portions of Oklahoma were left without power due to freezing rain, ice and high winds that damaged power lines and poles during an October ice storm. Four linemen departed Flint Hills REC's garage on Friday, Oct. 30, enroute to assist in the restoration of damaged power lines.

Flint Hills REC crew worked alongside crews from CKenegy in Binger, Oklahoma, about an hour southwest of Oklahoma City, and other crews from across the state of Kansas.

Our crew included **TIM JIRAK**, line foreman; **SCOTT KELSEY**, journeyman lineman; **TRAVIS HIRT**, journeyman lineman; and **BRENT UNRUH**, journeyman lineman. In addition to the crew, Flint Hills REC sent a foreman's pickup truck, digger derrick, pole trailer, and a large bucket truck.



Four linemen departed Flint Hills REC's garage on Friday, Oct. 30, enroute to assist in the restoration of damaged power lines.



Flint Hills REC also sent a foreman's pickup truck, digger derrick, pole trailer, large bucket truck, and enough materials to frame 100 poles.

Let's Connect

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When you sign up for text alerts, you can receive advance notices on outage and restoration information, billing updates, and changes to Flint Hills REC event details.

By connecting with us, you can get real-time updates from your co-op. That's why we want to make sure we have your most current contact information on hand. If we can't connect with you on these platforms or in person, you could miss out on potential savings or important information.

Flint Hills REC relies on data for nearly every aspect of our operations, and up-to-date contact information from our members helps ensure we can provide the highest level of service you expect and deserve.

Updated contact information can even speed up the power restoration process during an outage. That's because when you call to report an outage, our automated system recognizes your phone number and matches it with your account location. Accurate information helps our outage-management system predict the location and the possible cause of an outage, making it easier for Flint Hills REC crews to correct the problem.

We hope you will connect with us whenever and wherever you can — whether that means attending our annual meeting, providing feedback on a recent visit or call with our employees, or simply downloading our app.

Flint Hills REC exists to serve our members, and when we're better connected to you and our local community, we're better prepared to answer the call.

To update your contact information or to learn more about co-op products and services that can help you save, visit www.flinthillsrec.com, call 620-767-5144, or stop by our office at 1564 S. 1000 Rd., Council Grove, KS 66846. We look forward to connecting with you!

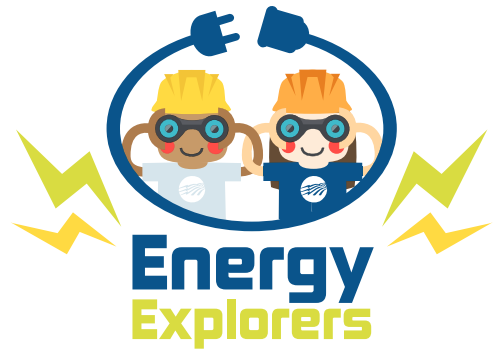
ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month

Replace standard power strips with advanced power strips to save energy. Advanced power strips look like ordinary power strips, but they have built-in features designed to reduce the amount of energy used by standby electronics that consume energy even when they're not in use (also known as phantom load). **SOURCE: WWW.NREL.GOV**



2021 ENERGY EFFICIENCY CALENDAR

There are so many ways you can save energy! Saving energy helps reduce your family’s monthly bills — and it helps our environment. Change your energy use habits by following the monthly tips below. Keep this calendar on your refrigerator to remind family members to be energy efficient throughout the year.



JANUARY

Take short showers instead of baths.



FEBRUARY

Instead of turning up the heat, put on an extra layer of clothing or stay cozy under a blanket.

MARCH

Turn off lights when you leave a room.



APRIL

Ask an adult to help you plant a tree to shade your home in the summer.

MAY

Decorate your backyard or porch with solar-powered lights.

JUNE

Turn off ceiling fans when you leave the room.



JULY

Dry heavy linens outside on a clothesline instead of using the dryer.

AUGUST

Ask an adult to help you schedule a reminder to change the HVAC filter every 60-90 days.

SEPTEMBER

Turn off running water while brushing your teeth.



OCTOBER

Unplug energy vampires, like chargers, gaming consoles and cable/satellite boxes.

NOVEMBER

Remind family members to use cold water when washing clothes.



DECEMBER

Decorate your home with energy-saving LED holiday lights.