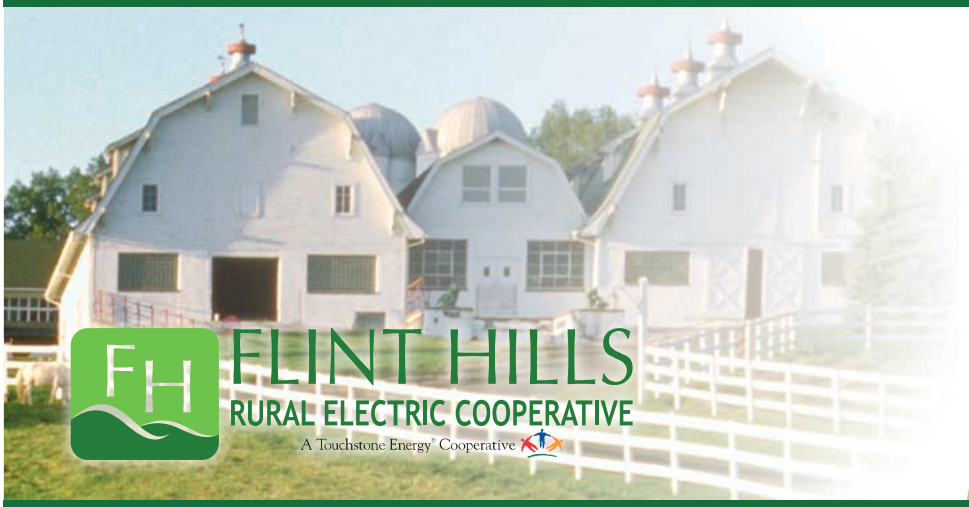

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FLINT HILLS RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE NEWS

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FROM THE MANAGER

It's a Matter of (Co-op!) Principles Part II

Chuck Goeckel

For me, this is a time of year for reflection, and topping my list of things I'm grateful for is our wonderful community. I feel I speak for all Flint Hills REC employees when I say we are thankful to be in such an incredible community. We are fortunate to live in the same place where we work, which makes our ties to this community that much stronger.

You may recall last month, my column touched on the first three Cooperative Principles, so this month, I'd like to tell you about the remaining four principles. The Cooperative Principles are essential to the co-op business model and benefit all members of the co-op.

Autonomy and Independence

The fourth principal, Autonomy and Independence, means that the co-op operates in an autonomous way that is solely directed and guided by its members, reflecting the values and needs of our local community. This means the co-op is not being influenced by leaders or shareholders several states away. Instead, the co-op is led by the local members it serves.

Education and Training

The fifth principle, Education and Training, focuses on enhancing the knowledge of co-op employees and board members, which enables them to contribute to the development of the co-op.

By investing in continuous learning for our employees and board members, our co-op is making a commitment not just to individual professional and personal growth, but to the future of the co-op and the high quality of service our members expect and deserve. It's a win-win situation.

We also strive to inform our members (that's you!) and the public about the mission and operations of the co-op. In fact, that's why you receive this magazine every month, so we can share the latest co-op news and updates, as well as energy efficiency and safety tips.

Continued on page 16B ▶

It's a Matter of (Co-op!) Principles Part II *Continued from page 16A* ▶

Cooperation Among Cooperatives

Cooperation Among Cooperatives is the sixth principle and fosters the way co-ops work together to address bigger challenges. While this principle applies to all types of cooperatives, it is especially relevant in the energy industry. In our case, we put this principle in action after major storms and disasters that cause widespread power outages. When this happens, we call on nearby co-ops to come to our aid and assist with restoration efforts — and we of course extend the same help to them when they are in need. I can't think of a better example of Cooperation Among Cooperatives.

In addition, because we are part of the national electric co-op network, we can connect and collaborate with other electric co-ops to tackle industry-related challenges, like cybersecurity and an everchanging energy landscape.

Concern for Community

The seventh principle, Concern for Community, is essential to who we are as cooperatives. We serve our community not only by being an essential service, but by helping to power our local economy. Whether through economic development, volunteerism, or donations to local causes, we invest in this community because it's our home too.

I think you'll find that most cooperatives bring good people together to make good things happen in the community. We hope you feel that way about us, your local electric co-op.

On behalf of everyone at Flint Hills REC, we're thankful for your membership, and we hope you have a wonderful Thanksgiving.

PEAK ALERT SAVINGS PROGRAM A BIG SUCCESS!

This year's Peak Alert Program was again another big success thanks to you, our members. We want to thank all those that participated in the program. The Peak Alert Rebate Program is designed to share the savings that Flint Hills Rural Electric Cooperative (Flint Hills REC) receives when we have members reduce their usage during our peak load hour.

We had 632 members that were successful in reducing their usage on our peak load hour. This resulted in Flint Hills REC returning over $63,000 in savings to those members. This is an average rebate of $101 that program participants received on their Oct. 1 electric bill.

This savings also helps Flint Hills REC members as a whole because of the reduction in our wholesale power bill that occurs when our members act. We will continue with this program again next year so if you participated this year, you are already signed up, if you missed out this year, you will have the chance to participate next summer, again thank you and great job.

Is Your Home's Envelope Well Sealed?

Energy audits can save you money

When we think of the word "envelope," we think of the outer covering our mail comes in or we might push the envelope when attempting something radical or risky.

The term also refers to your home's outer walls, windows, doors and other openings. A well-sealed envelope, coupled with the right amount of insulation, can reduce your energy use — and, in turn, your utility bills. According to EnergyStar.gov, a whopping 9 out of 10 homes in the U.S. are under-insulated. Homeowners can save an average of 15% on heating and cooling costs (or an average of 11% on total energy costs) by air sealing their homes and adding insulation in attics, floors, crawl spaces and basements.

To determine if your home's envelope is in good shape, Flint Hills REC and Safe Electricity recommend having a home audit conducted to pinpoint the leaks that allow energy to escape your home — air-conditioned air in the summer and heated air in the winter. A qualified energy auditor will include an insulation check as part of a whole-house energy assessment and will identify areas of your home that need air sealing or insulation repairs.

DIY Home Energy Audit

If you would like to complete your own audit, find out the following:

- The type of insulation in your home.
- The R-value (rate of thermal resistance) of your insulation. Typically, the higher the R-value, the more effective it is at insulating. Depending on where you live, you do not necessarily need the highest value; it depends on your local climate.
- The thickness or depth (inches) of the insulation you have.

In a newer home, the builder can help identify the type of insulation used and where it is located. In an older home, you will need to perform the inspection yourself. To complete a DIY energy assessment, you will need to check the following items.

In the Attic

- A general rule of thumb when inspecting the attic insulation is that if the insulation is level with or below the attic floor joists, you probably need to add more insulation.
- If you cannot see any of the floor joists because the insulation is well above them, you probably have enough, and adding more insulation may not be cost-effective.
- Insulation should be evenly distributed with no low spots; be sure to check throughout the attic to determine if there are any thin spots.
- Make sure the insulation in your attic has the appropriate R-value for where you live. Check the value printed on your existing insulation. If you cannot find the value, measure the depth of the insulation in inches. Multiply the depth by the insulation type. Then check EnergyStar.gov's recommended R-values. If your calculated value is less than the recommended levels for your region, you should consider adding more insulation to your attic. Insulation types include:
  - 3.2 for fiberglass batting,
  - 2.5 for loose fiberglass,
  - 2.8 for rock wool and
  - 3.7 for cellulose.

Behind the Walls

- Turn off the power to the outlet before beginning this check. Then use a voltmeter or voltage tester to confirm there is no power at the socket before beginning work.
- Remove the outlet cover and shine a flashlight into the crack around the outlet box. You should be able to see if there is insulation in the wall and possibly how thick it is.
- Pull out a small amount of insulation if needed to help determine the type of insulation.
- Check outlets on all floors, as well as old and new parts of your home. Just because you find insulation in one wall does not mean it is uniform throughout your home.

How to Conduct a DIY Air Leak Audit

Before you repair or install more insulation, you need to identify and repair any potential air leaks in what is known as your home's envelope: outer walls, doors, windows and other openings. Potential problem areas include doors, windows, sill plates (the bottom piece of wall structure where wall studs are attached), top plates (supportive beams in the ceiling), crawl spaces, outdoor faucets, dryer vents, stove vent fans, roof eaves and overhangs, plumbing vent stacks, recessed lighting, attic hatches and air duct registers.

One way to have your home checked is by a qualified energy auditor. Or, if you want to address your own home, there are a couple of ways to do this:

By Yourself

One option is to perform a visual inspection on your own in daylight. All potential problem areas should be free from gaps and cracks.

While lights are on in the home, also observe from the attic, crawlspace or basement. Anywhere you can see light from the interior of the house shining through gaps and cracks is another air leak location in need of repair.

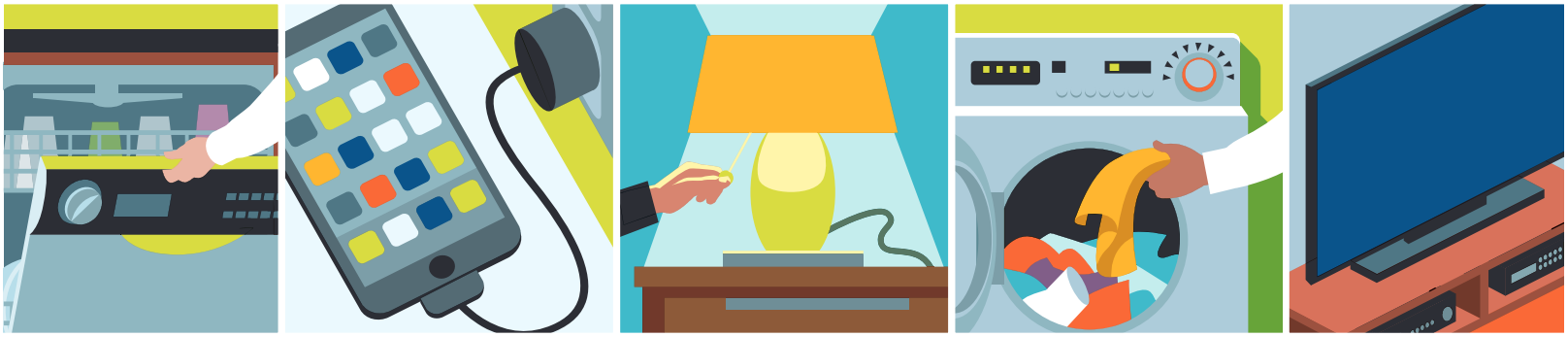
With a Partner

To conduct a more thorough inspection, work with a partner at night to shine a flashlight over all potential gaps while one of you observes the house from the outside. Anywhere you can see light shine through is an air leak that needs to be sealed properly.

ENERGY SAVINGS FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

Saving energy at home can help your family save money and help our environment. Test your energy efficiency knowledge by completing this fill-in-the-blank activity.

Tip: Use the word bank for help. Don't forget to check your answers in the key below!



1 Turning off the tap water while brushing your teeth can save up to four _____ of water per minute.

2 Energy vampires, like TVs and phone chargers, consume _____ even when they're not in use. Turn these devices off to save energy.

3 Turning off _____ every time you leave the room saves energy.

4 Wash clothes in _____ water to reduce the load on your water heater.

5 LED lightbulbs typically use 75% less energy than _____ lightbulbs.

6 To save energy, only run the _____ with full loads.

Word Bank

incandescent	lights	gallons
electricity	dishwasher	cold

Answer Key: *1. gallons 2. electricity 3. lights 4. cold 5. incandescent 6. dishwasher*