

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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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



Chuck Goeckel

ACE Hardware, State Farm, REI, Land O'Lakes and Flint Hills REC all share something in common: We're all cooperatives.

We may be in different industries, but we all share a passion

for serving our members and helping our communities to thrive. In fact, all cooperatives adhere to the same set of seven principles that reflect our core values of honesty, transparency, equity, inclusiveness and service to the greater community good. October is National Co-op Month, so this is the perfect

time to reflect on these principles that have stood the test of time but also provide a framework for the future. Let's take a look at the first three cooperative principles.

Voluntary and Open Membership

Just like all co-ops, Flint Hills REC was created out of necessity — to meet a need that would have been otherwise unmet in our community. So in 1938, a group of neighbors banded together and organized our electric co-op so everyone in our community could benefit. For a modest membership fee to the co-op, any



VOLUNTARY AND OPEN MEMBERSHIP

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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



**Community born.
Community led.
Focused on YOU.**

October is
National Co-op Month!

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

farmer could get electricity brought to his farm. Neighbors came together to tackle a problem that they all had but couldn't solve alone. They worked together for the benefit of the whole community, and the newly established electric lines helped power economic opportunity in our community.

While this history may be forgotten, key parts of that heritage remain — the focus on our mission and serving the greater good. We call on everyone to improve the quality of life and economic opportunity for the entire community. Membership is open to everyone in our service territory, regardless of race, religion, age, disability, gender identity, language, political perspective or socioeconomic status.

Because we are guided by the Seven Cooperative Principles, it's not just about dollars — it's about opportunity for all and being fair when engaging with our members.

board members have been elected by neighbors just like you. We know our members have a valuable perspective, and that's why we are continually seeking your input and encourage you to weigh in on important co-op issues and participate in co-op elections.

Our close connection to this community ensures we get a first-hand perspective on members' priorities, thereby enabling us to make more informed decisions on long-term capital investments required to serve those priorities.



DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL

Democratic Member Control

Our co-op is well suited to meet the needs of our members because we are locally governed. Each member gets a voice and a vote in how the co-op is run, and each voice and vote are equal. Flint Hills REC's leadership team and employees live right here in the community. Our board of directors, who helps set long-term priorities for the co-op, also live locally on co-op lines. These



MEMBERS' ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

Members' Economic Participation

As a utility, our mission is to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to our members. But as a co-op, we are also motivated by service to the community, rather than profits. Members contribute equitably

to, and democratically control, the capital of Flint Hills REC. At least part of that capital remains the common property of the cooperative. Members allocate surpluses for co-op programs, initiatives, capital investments and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

Because we are guided by the Seven Cooperative Principles, it's not just about dollars — it's about opportunity for all and being fair when engaging with our members. The cooperative way is a values-based business model.

Flint Hills REC is a reflection of our local community and its evolving needs. We view our role as a catalyst for good and making our corner of the world a better place. This sums up the Seventh Co-op Principle, Concern for Community, which our cooperative routinely celebrates.

Did You Know?

Electric cooperatives have retired \$18 billion to members since 1988 — \$1.3 billion in 2019 alone. Because electric co-ops operate at cost, any excess revenues (called margins) are allocated and retired to members in the form of capital credits.

Source: National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation



Get Familiar with Cyber Basics

October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month

This year has already seen more than a fair share of cyberattacks and breaches, including the high-profile attacks on the Colonial Pipeline and other critical infrastructure. As these recent breaches have shown, cyberattacks are becoming more sophisticated with more evolved bad actors cropping up each day. Luckily, we can take several steps each day to mitigate risks and stay one step ahead of malefactors. Here are a few quick tips:

Enable Multifactor Authentication

Multifactor authentication (MFA) adds that necessary second check to verify your identity when logging in to one of your accounts. By requiring MFA, your account is further protected from being compromised, even if a bad actor hijacks your password. In this way, MFAs make it more difficult for password cracking tools to enable attackers to break into accounts.

Use Strong Passphrases/Password Manager

This may seem obvious, but too often securing strong passphrases/password managers is overlooked. People spending more time online during the pandemic has certainly contributed to more bad actors prowling for accounts to attack. Using long, complex and unique passwords is a good way to stop your account from being hacked, and an easy way of keeping track and remembering your passwords is by using a password manager.

Perform Software Updates

When a device prompts that it's time to update the software, it may be tempting to simply click postpone and ignore the

message. However, having the latest security software, web browser, and operating system on devices is one of the best defenses against online threats. So, don't wait — update.

Do Your Research

Common sense is a crucial part of maintaining good online hygiene, and an intuitive step to stay safe online is to do some research before downloading anything new to your device, such as apps. Before downloading any new learning app on your device, make sure it's legitimate by checking who created the app, what the user reviews say, and if there are any articles published online about the app's privacy and security features.

Check Your Settings

Be diligent to double check your privacy and security settings and be aware who can access your documents. This extends from Google documents, to Zoom calls, and beyond. For meetings on Zoom, for example, create passwords so only those invited to the session can attend, and restrict who can share their screen or files with the rest of the attendees.

Being cyber smart and maintaining stellar online hygiene is the best way to protect yourself and others from cyberattacks. No single tip is foolproof but taken together they can make a real difference for taking control of your online presence. Following these tips is also easy and free. By taking preventive measures and making a habit of practicing online safety, you can decrease your odds of being hacked exponentially — and prevent lost time and money, as well as annoyance.



PASSWORD DO'S AND DON'TS

A strong password can make all the difference in protecting your personal information. Follow these tips for stronger passwords.

DO

- ▶ Change the manufacturer's Wi-Fi password on your router.
- ▶ Use two-factor authentication.
- ▶ Use unique phrases (like lyrics to your favorite song) to remember passwords.

DON'T

- ▶ Don't use common words or numbers like "password" or "1234."
- ▶ Don't use personal details like your date of birth in a password.
- ▶ Don't use the same password for multiple accounts.

**October is
Cybersecurity
Awareness Month.**

Do Your Part. #BeCyberSmart

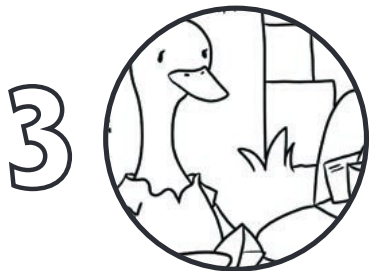
SEVEN COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES



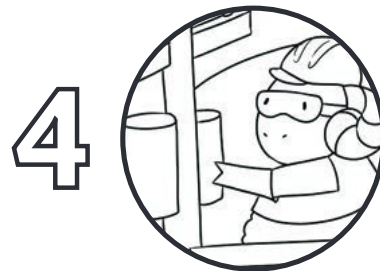
Open and Voluntary Membership



Democratic Member Control



Members' Economic Participation



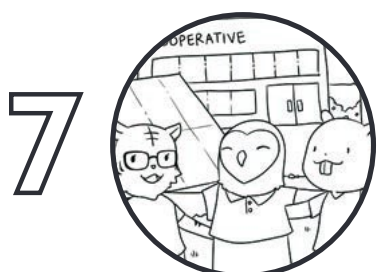
Autonomy and Independence



Education, Training and Information



Cooperation Among Cooperatives



Concern for Community

Did you know all co-ops use the same set of seven principles to guide their work?