

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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FLINT HILLS
RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

**FLINT HILLS RURAL
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

NEWS

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 - ▶ 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

FROM THE MANAGER

Know the Signs of a Scam

It's no secret that consumers with a water, gas or electricity connection have long been targets for utility scams, but fraudsters have changed their tactics since the COVID-19 pandemic. As consumers became more reliant on technology for work, school and commerce, scammers noted these shifts and adapted their tactics to this changed environment.

Imposter scams are the No. 1 type of fraud reported to the Federal Trade Commission. While scam artists may come to your door posing as a utility worker who works for the "power company," in today's more connected world, attempts are more likely to come through an electronic device, via email, phone or text.

Common Types of Scams

A scammer may claim you are overdue on your electric bill and threaten to discon-

nect your service if you don't pay immediately. Whether this is done in-person, by phone, text or email, the scammers want to scare you into immediate payment, so you don't have time to think clearly.

If this happens over the phone, simply hang up. If you're concerned about your bill, call us at 620-767-5144. Our phone number can also be found on your monthly bill and on our website, flinthillsrec.com. If the scam is by email or text, delete it before taking any action. If you're unsure, you can always contact our Customer Service Representatives at 620-767-5144, or use flinthillsrec.smarthub.coop to check the status of your account. Remember, Flint Hills REC will never demand immediate payment after just one notice.

Some scammers may falsely claim

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Chuck Goeckel



HAPPY
★
4TH OF JULY
★★★
INDEPENDENCE DAY
Our office will be closed on
Monday, July 4, for the holiday.

Know the Signs of a Scam Continued from page 12A ▶

you have been overcharged on your bill and say they want to give a refund. It sounds easy. All you have to do is click or press a button to initiate the process. If you proceed, you will be prompted to provide banking or other personal information. Instead of money going into your bank account, the scammers can drain your account and use personal information such as a social security number for identity theft.

If this “refund” scam happens over the phone, just hang up and block the phone number to prevent future robocalls. If this scam attempt occurs via email (known as a “phishing” attempt) or by text (“smishing”), do not click any links. Instead, delete it, and if possible, block the sender. If you do overpay on your energy bill, Flint Hills REC will automatically apply the credit to your next billing cycle. When in doubt, contact us.

Defend Yourself Against Scams

Be wary of calls or texts from unknown numbers. Be suspicious of an unknown person claiming to be a utility worker who requests banking or other personal information.

Never let anyone into your home that you don't know unless you have a scheduled appointment or reported a problem. If you are uncertain call the company to confirm the name and location of their employees and contractors. Flint Hills REC employees wear uniforms and when we perform work on our members' property or come into your home, our employees are professionals and will always identify themselves.

We want to help protect our community against utility scams, and you can help create the first line of defense. Please report any potential scams to us so we can spread the word to prevent others in the community from falling victim.

Flint Hills REC Youth Attend KEY Leadership Conference



Karl Zimmerman

KARL ZIMMERMAN was among 17 Kansas student delegates to attend the Kansas Electric Youth (KEY) Leadership Conference, held June 5-8 in Topeka. Zimmerman a sophomore from Council Grove High School was selected to represent Flint Hills REC

at this exclusive leadership conference through a competitive application process that evaluated the leadership ability, community involvement and academic accomplishment of each candidate.

The KEY Leadership Conference was created as an alternative to the long-standing Electric Cooperative Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., as a safer alternative during the pandemic.

“Flint Hills REC is honored to sponsor our co-op's youth in developing their leadership capabilities at the KEY Leadership Conference,” said Travis Griffin, member services manager. “We continue to look to programs like these to provide our future leaders tools to advocate for their cooperative communities throughout their professional lives.”

The four-day conference focused on the fundamentals of leadership and

hands-on engagement with students representing Kansas communities. Activities included a night tour of the State Capitol, electric safety demonstration at FreeState Electric, and tour of the Brown v. Board of Education National Historical Site. The students attended interactive workshops to help prepare them for success as future leaders, including seminars on online reputation management, budgeting and investment, energy efficiency, and the transition between high school and higher education.

Student leaders explored how to be a force for political action with state legislators Rep. Steven Johnson and Rep. Kyle Hoffman, alumni of the electric cooperative youth programs who participated as guest speakers and gave the students a night tour of the Kansas State Capitol. They answered questions from the students ranging in topics from describing a typical day in the life of a legislator, why they decided to enter public service, and school and career advice for the students.

Other speaker highlights included Kansas City Chiefs Mascot Dan Meers with an inspiring presentation titled Wolves Can't Fly.

For Zimmerman, attending the conference as a representative of his cooperative was a motivating experience, saying, “being able to go up in the bucket truck and looking at all the linemen gear during our co-op visit was the highlight of the conference.”

At the conclusion of the conference, Landry George Sponsored by Heartland Electric Cooperative, was announced as the 2023 Kansas representative to the NRECA Youth Leadership Council based on a vote from the KEY Leadership student delegation. “I applied (to this conference) hoping to bring leadership back to my home community,” she said. “This conference, as a whole, has inspired me to be a part of helping other leaders create leaders.”

After attending the KEY Leadership Conference, students are eligible to apply for the KEC Auxiliary Scholarship and the NRECA Glenn English Scholarship.





**BEAT
THE
PEAK
THIS**

Summer

As temperatures begin to spike, there are steps you can take to save money on energy bills this summer.

According to the Department of Energy, a typical home uses a whopping 48% of energy expenditures just on the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system (HVAC) system. Although a majority of that figure is spent on heating, Americans still spend \$29 billion every year to power their air conditioners.

Aside from replacing your central air conditioner with a newer, high-efficiency model, there are some things you can do to increase efficiency and reduce your energy bills.

Besides weather stripping and caulking around windows and doors in your home (always a good idea regardless of the time of year), consider the following:

- ▶ Close curtains, blinds and shades during the hottest part of the day. Not only is about one-third of a home's energy lost around windows, but about 76% of sunlight that falls on standard double-pane windows enters the home to become heat, according to energy.gov.
- ▶ If you don't already have one, install a programmable or smart thermostat. You can save up to 10% a year on heating and cooling by adjusting your thermostat 7 to 10 degrees from its normal setting for 8 hours a day, according to energy.gov.
- ▶ Clean the filter and get your unit inspected by a HVAC professional.
- ▶ Consider changes to your landscaping. Greenery that includes shade

trees and plants that insulate the foundation can reduce energy costs.

- ▶ Ventilate the attic and check insulation. Adequately sized vents and an attic fan can help prevent hot air from building up. If your attic has less than 6 to 8 inches of insulation, consider adding more. By addressing air leaks around your home and adding insulation, homeowners can save around 10% annually on energy bills, according to energystar.gov.
- ▶ Get a pre-season checkup by a professional HVAC technician, which could help your air conditioner run more efficiently.
- ▶ Make sure your outdoor condenser unit is clean and free from debris. Ideally, the unit should be in the shade.
- ▶ Use your clothes dryer and oven during the cooler parts of the day.
- ▶ Consider a professional energy audit to reveal where your home is inefficient, including air leaks and exposed duct work.

Increased summer electric demand not only affects the monthly budget, but it can also seriously strain your home's electrical system, which can create dangerous shock and fire hazards. Flickering or dimming lights or frequent circuit breaker trips are signs of an overloaded electrical system or faulty wiring that should be checked immediately by a qualified electrician.

For more information about energy savings and electrical safety go to flintheillsrec.com/together-we-save and SafeElectricity.org.

Lightning Facts

1 Flashes of lightning between a thunderstorm and the earth are called cloud to ground.

2 There is roughly 5 to 10 times more intra-cloud lightning than cloud-to-ground lightning.

3 The vertical extent of cloud-to-ground lightning averages 3 to 4 miles.

4 Lightning often strikes up to 10 miles away from rainfall.

5 Lightning can occur in winter during heavy snowfalls.

6 Lightning can strike in the same place twice.

7 Lightning has 100 million to 1 billion volts and contains billions of watts.

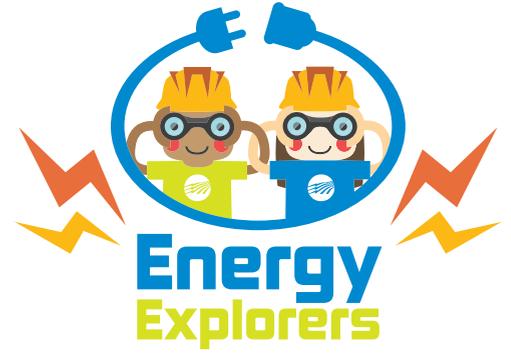
SOURCES: NATIONAL LIGHTNING SAFETY INSTITUTE, NOAA NATIONAL SEVERE STORMS LABORATORY

COOPERATIVE FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

As a member of an electric cooperative (also known as a co-op), you're part of something special!

Read the facts about co-ops below and use the word bank to fill in the blanks.

Check your work in the answer key.



Co-ops don't have customers. Instead, they have _____.

Co-ops are local organizations and businesses, so they understand the local _____ they serve.

All co-ops are guided by the same set of cooperative _____.

_____ are led by the members they serve.

You're a member of an _____ co-op, but there are also housing, grocery and other types of co-ops.

Word Bank:

Electric
Principles
Members
Communities
Co-ops

Answer Key: 1) members 2) communities 3) principles 4) co-ops 5) electric