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FLINT HILLS RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

NEWS

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Annual Meeting Notice

The Flint Hills RECA Annual Meeting will be March 23, 2010, at the Centre High School. The meal will be served at 5:30 p.m. with the meeting following at 7 p.m.

Here's your chance to take part in YOUR Electric Cooperative's Annual Meeting. Plus get a free meal!

Lots of door prizes will be given away, including a HD LCD television!

We hope to see you there!



Trustees to be Elected at Annual Meeting

The 72nd Annual Meeting of the Flint Hills Rural Electric Cooperative Association, Inc., will be held on March 23 at the Centre High School Gymnasium in Lost Springs.

Registration and meal serving will be from 5:30 to 6:30 pm, with the meeting starting at 7 p.m. Entertainment will be provided by the "Bob & the Boys" from Aulne.

All members are invited to attend this annual meeting. By virtue of the fact that you purchase electricity from Flint Hills RECA, you are a member and an owner of the cooperative. This membership affords you the privilege of participating in this meeting and voting for Trustees of the Board. If you have never been to an annual meeting before, come and see what it's all about. You'll get a free meal and a chance to win some great prizes.

The meal will be served in the north gym, and the main gym will be used for the entertainment and meeting. The north gym will be set up with tables and

2010 Trustee Nominees

- | | |
|--|---|
| ▶ District 3
Shawn Potts, Elmdale
Dennis Koch, Elmdale | ▶ District 5
Duane Kaiser, Durham
Loyal Wedel, Tampa |
| ▶ District 4
Duane Carlson, Lincolnvillle
Richard Brenzikofer, Marion | ▶ District 6
Bill Hein, Hillsboro
Gerald Jost, Hillsboro |

chairs to assist us in serving you the meal.

As usual, there will be many prizes to be given away along with the grand prize of a 32" HD LCD television. Members must be present to win any prizes.

Part of the meetings' business will be to elect four Trustees for three-year terms and to consider a proposed bylaw change.

The nominating committee met February 2, 2010, to review the bylaws and policies concerning the nomination of candidates to be placed on the official notice of the Annual Meeting of the Flint Hills Rural Electric Cooperative Association, Inc., for the purposes of election to the Board of Trustees.

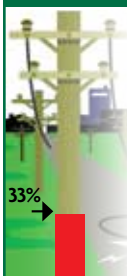
DIY Project Safety

Spring is the time of year when many individuals begin work on home improvements. While making a to-do-list, keep in mind that there are many federal tax incentives to include efficiency improvements during repairs and new construction. Before people start tackling do-it-yourself projects, Safe Electricity asks everyone to take precautions before starting renovations or construction projects, especially when working around electrical equipment and overhead power lines.

Safety tips to keep in mind:

- ▶ **Make sure you have the right tools and equipment for the job.** Use only extension cords that are rated for outdoor use when working outside. Keep your work area tidy and don't allow your power cords to tangle. Make sure outlets have ground fault protection. Use a portable ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) cord if your outdoor outlets don't have GFCIs.
- ▶ **Look up and around you.** Be sure to lower your long equipment when you are moving it. Carry ladders and other long items horizontally whenever possible. Remember, aluminum ladders, as well as wooden ladders, can conduct electricity. Fiberglass provides better protection against electric shock.
- ▶ **Be especially careful when working near power lines attached to your house.** Keep equipment and yourself at least 10 feet from lines. Never trim trees near power lines—leave that to the professionals. Never use water or blower extensions to clean gutters near electric lines. Contact a professional maintenance contractor.

FEMA Restoration Update



As of February 1, Flint Hills RECA has completed 161 miles of our 492 miles of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) rebuild work. Just 331 miles remain.

(Energy) Star-Crossed Consumers BY MEGAN MCKOY

Lots of folks are cutting down energy use, improving a home's insulation, turning lights off, or exchanging traditional light bulbs for more efficient lighting options. So when consumers shop for new appliances it's common to focus on finding a product with an Energy Star rating.



of the program. A survey by the Consortium for Energy Efficiency discovered 76 percent of American households recognize the Energy Star brand. Of these consumers, 73 percent purchased an Energy Star-labeled product within the last year.

How do appliances get this rating? Why don't all appliances have them? The answer may surprise you.

Computers and monitors were the first products to receive an efficiency rating from Energy Star, a program launched in 1992 by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Department of Energy. Since then, more than 60 product categories have been added, from dishwashers to windows and DVD players. According to the program, Energy Star-rated products deliver the same or better performance as comparable models while using less energy and saving money.

"We're recognizing the top performers when it comes to energy efficiency," explains Katharine Kaplan, Energy Star program manager. She notes the initiative works closely with folks in a wide variety of areas, including industry experts, governments, non-profit organizations, and utilities. "We agree on a fair way to test products. Manufacturers test products using that procedure, submit the data to us, and we say, 'These are the top performers. This is how much energy you can use to be considered a leader by Energy Star.' Generally, that means you're in the top 25 percent."

Consumers are taking advantage

Not all products are rated by Energy Star. The program gauges the average energy efficiency of different appliance technologies and evaluates whether there's potential for increased efficiency—generally at least 25 percent higher than minimum standards. According to Energy Star, the most efficient electric resistance water heaters on the market have an Energy Factor of 0.95, about 5 percent more efficient than the minimum federal standard. Since there's little room for improvement, Energy Star does not have a category for the product.

Last October, the *New York Times* revealed some manufacturers of household appliances were testing products for Energy Star-certification internally instead of using independent laboratories. In response, Energy Star ramped up oversight of product ratings and by the end of the year had revoked the Energy Star label for some refrigerators while raising the bar for the efficiency expected from TVs.

Energy Star remains a driving force not just in the United States, but in other counties as well. Federal energy efficiency tax credits for appliances and home heating and air systems typically require qualifying products to be Energy Star-rated. To learn more about the Energy Star program, visit www.energystar.gov.

CO-OP Connections Update		Have you taken advantage of your Connections Card yet?	
	Prescriptions Filled	Savings to Flint Hills' Members	
January	14	\$151.79	
2009 Total	325	\$4,969.04	

Energy Efficiency or Conservation?

BY DOUG RYE

Is it energy efficiency or conservation and which should I do? Well, I can tell you that both are important as they relate to the comfort of your home and that monthly utility bill.

In the mid 1970s, our country experienced what we call an oil embargo. I was a young architect working for a government agency that helped provide homes for low and moderate income families. I remember watching television and seeing long lines at service stations as drivers waited to get their allotment of gasoline.

I remember seeing the president of the United States on prime time television, wearing a heavy sweater with a presidential seal telling Americans that energy resources could no longer be taken for granted. In fact, his exact quote was: "The energy crisis has not yet overwhelmed us, but it will if we do not act quickly. We simply must balance our demand for energy with our rapidly shrinking resources."

After President Carter's address, most folks I knew were quite nervous and concerned about energy availability. Families started purchasing automobiles that had good fuel economy. People added insulation to their attics and some even weather-stripped their exterior doors. This was, in fact, the time when I started trying to help find a way to help families have lower utility bills.

Do you know what? Americans were totally serious about this matter for almost a year. Yes, almost a whole year! It was over just about as fast as it started. As soon as the price of gasoline dropped and there were no longer shortages, Americans, for the most part, went back to their old wasteful ways. Some of us realized, however, that even if there were no shortages of energy supplies, energy efficiency and conservation made good sense. As our parents often said, "waste not, want not."

While our nation seems to be split on just about every decision, I'll bet you that 100 percent of the people would say they would like more comfortable homes and lower utility bills. Of course, that is the reason you read this column. What do you remember about the president's

energy speech? Most of you would answer that he said turn your thermostat down to 68 degrees and wear warmer clothes. When he said that, I knew I didn't like the idea of not being comfortable, but, at the same time, I realized that for many families, this might be their only solution. In short, being energy efficient and conserving was the real answer.

What is the difference between energy efficiency and conservation?

- ▶ Putting on a sweater would be considered being energy efficient while lowering the thermostat setting in the winter or raising it in the summer would be considered conservation.
- ▶ Purchasing an automobile with better gas mileage is an example of energy efficiency, while traveling less would be conservation.
- ▶ Installing a more efficient water heater would be an example of energy efficiency while using less hot water would be conservation.
- ▶ Buying compact fluorescent light bulbs would be energy efficient while turning the lights off when not in use would be conservation.

There are many other examples of these two principles. I have always thought that practicing both energy efficiency and conservation is how to make a really big difference. So why not take action and do both—be energy efficient and conserve. It'll pay off for you and our country.

DOUG RYE is a licensed architect and the popular host of the "Home Remedies" radio show. You can contact Doug at 888-Doug-Rye. Source: Arkansas Electric Cooperatives Corporation.



Doug Rye

“Why not take action and do both—be energy efficient and conserve. It'll pay off for you and our country.”



What is the difference between energy efficiency and conservation? Changing the thermostat setting (left) would be conservation while adding insulation (right) would be energy efficiency.

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