

**FLINT HILLS RURAL
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

News



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Electric co-op members: 42 million strong

The Our Energy, Our Future™ campaign helps unify electric co-op members across America

When electric cooperatives began to spread across America 75 years ago, President Franklin D. Roosevelt made the point that electricity in this country was no longer a luxury. It had become, as it is today, a necessity.

In these difficult economic times, a lot of Americans are struggling to make ends meet. As not-for-profit, consumer-owned and controlled electric co-ops, we want to make certain that each and every citizen in this country can continue to receive affordable electric power. We want to make certain we don't step back from the commitment that FDR made.

Congress is currently working to address issues related to climate change and debating federal mandates regarding renewable energy development and energy efficiency. Even if Congress doesn't act, the U.S. Supreme Court has given the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency a green light to put new rules curbing emissions of carbon dioxide from power plants in place.

As a result of these efforts, there's little doubt electric bills are going to rise. The only question is whether higher electric bills will be kept affordable.

Electric co-ops are dealing with a very different situation than we have in

the past. Electric bills will go up because of the climate change and energy policy decisions of U.S. senators and representatives on Capitol Hill — or worse, unelected federal bureaucrats. Higher electric bills will become the norm as we are all forced to comply with these government mandates.

At Flint Hills RECA Electric, we're talking to our members of Congress, trying to convince them to work with us to make sure that we not only deal with climate change, but do so in a way that keeps electric bills affordable. To accomplish this goal, we need your help.

Nationwide, 42 million consumers are served by electric cooperatives. If every co-op consumer contacted their senators and representatives, we could make a real impact on the final shape of any energy or climate change legislation.

Over the last year, electric co-op consumers have made their voices heard on keeping electric bills affordable through the Our Energy, Our Future™ grassroots awareness campaign. More than 1.6 million messages have been sent to Congress so far — you can add to that list by visiting www.ourenergy.coop.

Make certain that those who lead us in Washington, D.C., hear from you today.

| CO-OP Connections Update | | Have you taken advantage of your Connections Card yet? | |
|---|------------|--|---------------------------------|
| | | Prescriptions Filled | Savings to Flint Hills' Members |
|  | April | 36 | \$617.32 |
| | 2009 Total | 123 | \$1625.37 |

Play up outdoor electrical safety to children

Warm, sunny days beckon the child in all of us to head outside and play. Flint Hills RECA recommends that families review and stress to children to follow simple electrical safety rules for safe outdoor play.

“Help keep your kids out of harm’s way when they play outdoors,” said Bill Wessel, Flint Hills RECA’s Director of Member Services. “Children often do not understand the dangers of electricity. Make them aware of overhead power lines and electrical equipment, and emphasize they should never climb or play near them.”

Flint Hills RECA recommends that children be taught to follow these rules:

- Never climb trees near power lines. Even if the power lines are not touching the tree, they could touch when more weight is added to the branch.
- Fly kites and model airplanes in large open areas like a park or a field, safely away from trees and overhead power lines. If a kite gets stuck in a tree that’s near power lines, don’t climb up to get it. Contact Flint Hills RECA for assistance.
- Never climb a utility pole or tower.
- Don’t play on or around electrical equipment.
- Never go into an electric substation for any reason. Electric substations contain high-voltage equipment, which can be deadly. Never rescue a pet or retrieve a ball or toy that goes inside. Call Flint Hills RECA instead.



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When designing an outdoor play area for your children, do not install playground equipment or swimming pools underneath or near power lines. Protect all family members from serious shock and injuries by installing and using outdoor outlets with ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI). Use portable GFCIs for outdoor outlets that don’t have them. Be careful using electrical appliances outdoors, even if plugged into GFCI-equipped outlets.

“Water always attracts kids, but water and electricity never mix,” warns Wessel. “Teach older children to exercise caution before plugging in a radio, CD player, or any electrical gadget outdoors, and keep all electrical appliances at least 10 feet away from hot tubs, pools, ponds, puddles and wet surfaces.

Make sure all of your family members know to stay away from downed power lines and wires, and tell children to report to an adult any fallen or dangling wires.

How can I help my co-op control cost?



The amount of energy your household and family use at any given time is known as “load”. All of the electric consumption from all our members is added up at any given time to determine the load for the entire cooperative system.

With summer approaching, Flint Hills RECA is coming into its peak load season. And the higher our peak, the more we have to pay for electricity in the winter. That’s why it is so important to try to control our peak load. Each kilowatt shaved or shifted during peak load is a cost savings for all of us.

When does peak load occur? It occurs in the summer, during the months of June, July August and September. These are the month when Flint Hills RECA experiences its maximum

Energy commandment no. 2:

“Thou shalt invest”

BY DOUG RYE

There are a lot of things happening in our country today that I do not understand. I don't understand how wealthy corporations now have to have billions of dollars from the taxpayers to stay afloat. And I could mention many other things I simply don't understand.

know that your home will be more comfortable as a result of these improvements.

Last week Mr. Tom Hunt, who is my co-host on the *Home Remedies* radio show, said he is saving \$50 per week on the cost of gasoline compared to a few

months ago. He said that added up to \$200 per month. “What if we took that \$200 per month and made energy improvements to our house?” he said. I responded: “Tom, you are a genius.”

Well, folks

both Tom and I don't need these commandments because we built our houses to be super efficient from the beginning. So, please remember that these columns are for you and we, like your electric co-op, want to help you.

Energy Commandment No. 2:

“Thou Shalt Invest.” Whether it is \$5 per month or \$200 per month, start setting some money aside for energy improvements. It is perfectly all right to do the least costly items first. For \$20, you can buy and install several compact fluorescent lights (CFLs). For \$40, you might buy all the caulk you need to seal up air leaks.

Now open your mind and think of this. For an investment of less than \$100 and a few hours of elbow grease, you might well reduce your average monthly utility bill by \$10, \$20, \$30 or more a month. Where else could you invest \$100, get your money back in three to 10 months and continue getting that savings forever?

So start putting that money aside now, continue reading this column and you will be a genius of energy efficiency, just like Tom.

Doug Rye, is a licensed architect and the popular host of the “Home Remedies” radio show. You can contact Doug at 1-888-Doug-Rye. Source: Arkansas Electric Cooperatives Corporation.

“For an investment of less than \$100 and a few hours of elbow grease, you might well reduce your average monthly utility bill by \$10, \$20, \$30 or more a month.”



It is better that I stay with the things I do understand. I know that making energy improvements is the best investment in the country today. I know that it is the only thing in your house that will save you money month after month and will have a payback. I also

peak load on the system.

The maximum peak load usually occurs between the hours of 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. and on the days that the temperature reaches 95+ degrees. On these days, anything you can do to avoid using electricity between these hours will help tremendously. Some possibilities are:

- Move your laundry time to earlier in the day or late at night.
- Use your dishwasher overnight or in the early morning.
- Use a slow cooker instead of the electric stove

for cooking dinner.

- Save the ironing for later.
- Shut the grain dryer off for a few hours.
- Stop the irrigation pumps in the heat of the day.

When peak load occurs, Flint Hills REC will post a notice on the home page of our web site letting you know which days are peak load days.

If you have any questions about load management or what you can do to help, just give us a call.

Using energy wisely helps to keep our cost down, the electric rates stable and reduces the need to invest in new power sources.

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