

**FLINT HILLS RURAL  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

# NEWS



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## Online Bill Pay Fee Eliminated

Flint Hills RECA is now able to offer online bill pay for all of its customers at no charge.

Previously, if you went to our online e-bill Web site—<https://ebill.flinthillsrec.com/css>—to pay your bill, you were charged a fee for each transaction. This fee was dictated by the credit card processing company that we were using. We have recently changed to a company which has allowed us to drop this fee.

There are two methods to pay your bill online—credit card or electronic check. The credit card payment option is for residential customer use only. The electronic check option is open for either residential or commercial customers.

To use a credit card for payment, you will need the credit card number and the expiration date on the card. The electronic check uses your bank's routing number

and your bank account number—both of which are printed on your current paper checks.

If you have not taken advantage of our e-bill Web site, there is a lot of information you can obtain by logging on. Not only can you pay your bill, but you can also check the history of your account.

To get started, all you need is the Flint Hills account number and the last name on the account. If you have questions or problems on this, give us a call at 620-767-5144 or e-mail us at [ebill@flinthillsrec.com](mailto:ebill@flinthillsrec.com).



Flint Hills RECA is now able to offer online bill pay at no charge to our members at <https://ebill.flinthillsrec.com/css>.

CO-OP Connections Update		Have you taken advantage of your Connections Card yet?	
	Prescriptions Filled	Savings to Flint Hills' Members	
July	23	\$541.17	
2009 Total	205	\$3,121.47	

## Do-It-Yourself Home Energy Audits

One of the first steps to making your home more efficient involves understanding how it uses energy. Just as a doctor has to do a thorough examination of a patient before writing a prescription, your home will need a good inspection before most inefficiencies can be identified and corrected.

You can easily conduct a basic home energy audit with a simple but diligent walk-through. When auditing your home, keep a checklist of areas you have inspected and problems you find. Full lists are available online at the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives® Home Energy Saver web site at [www.touchstoneenergysavers.com](http://www.touchstoneenergysavers.com) or search for Home Energy Checkup at the Alliance to Save Energy's site at [www.ase.org](http://www.ase.org). Most trouble spots can be found in a few key areas.

### Heating/Cooling Equipment

Inspect heating and cooling equipment annually, or as recommended by the manufacturer. If you have a forced-air furnace, check filters and replace them as needed.

Generally, you should change them about once every month or two, especially during periods of high use. Have a professional check and clean your equipment once a year.

### Insulation

Heat loss through the ceiling and walls in your home could be very large if insulation levels are less than the recommended minimum. When your house was built, the builder likely installed the amount of insulation recommended (if any) at that time.

Given today's energy prices (and future prices that will probably be higher), your insulation might be inadequate, especially if you have an older home. Online energy audits will provide more details on checking insulation levels in the attic, walls, and basement.

### Locating Air Leaks

First, make a list of obvious air leaks and drafts. The potential energy savings from reducing drafts in a home may range from five to 30 percent per year, and result in a more comfortable home.

Check for indoor air leaks, such as gaps along a baseboard or edge of the flooring and at junctures of walls and ceiling.

Inspect windows and doors for air leaks. If you can rattle them, movement means possible air leaks. If you can see daylight around a door or window frame,



Home energy audit checklists can be found online at [www.touchstoneenergysavers.com](http://www.touchstoneenergysavers.com).

then the door or window has a leak; you can usually seal these through caulking or weather stripping.

On the outside, inspect all areas where two different building materials meet, including all exterior corners, siding and chimney junctures, and areas where the foundation and the bottom of exterior brick or siding join. You should plug and caulk any holes or penetrations for faucets, pipes, electric outlets and wiring.

Also, look for cracks and holes in the mortar, foundation and siding, and seal them with the appropriate material. Check the exterior caulking around doors and windows, and see whether exterior storm doors and primary doors seal tightly.

When sealing any home, be aware of indoor air pollution and appliance "backdrafts." Backdrafting occurs when various appliances that burn fuels and exhaust fans in the home compete for air. An exhaust fan may pull combustion gases back into the living space. This can obviously create a very dangerous and unhealthy situation.

### Lighting

On average, lighting accounts for about 10 percent of a home's electric bill. Examine the wattage size of the lightbulbs in your house. You may have 100-watt (or larger) bulbs where 60 or 75 watts would do.

You should also consider compact fluorescent lightbulbs for areas where lights are left on for hours at a time.

More information on both do-it-yourself and professional energy audits can be found at [www.energysavers.gov](http://www.energysavers.gov).

## Kansas Electric Cooperatives Prepare for the Kansas State Fair

Kansas Electric Cooperatives and Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Kansas are co-sponsoring a high-voltage line safety demonstration in combination with the Kansas State Fair, September 14-18.

Cooperative linemen from Midwest Energy, CMS Electric, Victory, Heartland and Lane Scott have volunteered to help spread the message.

Teaching the public to stay safe around power lines is the focus of the electric cooperatives' message at this year's fair. The demonstration, which is part of "Kansas' Largest Classroom," is a half-hour in length and will incorporate a full-size electric safety demonstration, which is on loan from Midwest Energy.

Journeymen linemen from the electrical cooperatives will demonstrate proper safety precautions and teach viewers what protective gear linemen use and why, what happens to a person when they come into contact with an energized line and why birds

can land safely on power lines.

The public demonstration will operate from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. and is free of charge for all fair attendees. The demonstration will be located in the Beef Judging building, east of the Oz Gallery.

Touchstone Energy and Discovery Channel School "Get Charged" kits will be distributed to teachers who pre-register their fifth through ninth grade classes for the demonstration. "Kansas' Largest Classroom" is a one-of-a-kind educational event that features various items from crafts to agriculture and animals. This program provides teachers with materials like lesson plans and lists of activities to assist with their trip to the Kansas State Fair.

The Kansas State Fair is the largest event in the state and attracts over 350,000 people annually. The fair has approximately 1,000 commercial exhibits and over 30,000 exhibits for competition for attendees to experience.



Cooperative employees present the High Line Safety Demonstration at the State Fair.



Les Loker, Midwest Energy, (left) and Josh Schmidt, Victory, teach students at the fair how to stay safe around electricity.

## Attaching Signs to Utility Poles is Unsafe—And It's Illegal

Although seemingly innocent enough, putting signs or other items on utility poles creates serious safety hazards.

Staples, nails, and tacks used to hang signs—as well as the signs themselves—pose dangers to Flint Hills RECA's linemen who must climb poles when either restoring power following storms or while performing routine maintenance to ensure system reliability.

Posters or other objects (birdhouses, balloons, flags, and even basketball nets) can

create dangerous obstacles. Also, the nails and tacks left behind from signs can snag utility workers' boots or puncture safety clothing, making linemen vulnerable to slipping or even electrocution.

In addition to being hazardous, tampering with utility poles can be costly. Posting signs or attaching other objects to utility poles is illegal. Flint Hills RECA encourages co-op consumers to contact local zoning officers to inquire about where signage can be posted legally.



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