



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 
 P.O. Box B
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 620-767-5144
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FLINT HILLS RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

NEWS

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Prepay Service is a Popular Option

Food, gasoline, even some cell phone plans—we pay for those and a score of other goods and services before we actually use them. Now, pay-as-you-go electric service, also called prepaid metering, is growing in popularity for members at Flint Hills RECA. There are approximately 200 members currently taking advantage of this option.

Consumers pay a certain amount up-front, and an in-home display or our e-bill website lets them know when they're almost "out" of electricity. We also send out weekly e-mails notifying members of their balance. If they don't make another payment—over the phone, online, or even in person—electric service is disconnected when the account runs dry.

Prepaying offers a good solution for members who move frequently, own rental properties, are in college or the military, or are facing financial difficulties. It eliminates the need for deposits, late fees, disconnect and reconnect fees.

In addition, members who prepay generally use less energy than folks on traditional billing arrangement because they're more aware of how much power they're consuming.

Prepaying can also help consumers plan more accurate monthly budgets and provides an option to make smaller, incremental payments, rather than one large monthly payment.

"Members are empowered to manage electric use in a way that best suits their individual situation," said Bill Wessel Flint Hills Member

Service Manager. "Rather than getting hit at the first of each month with an unknown bill amount, they know day to day what they are spending on electricity."

Another feature of our prepay system is the ease of getting reconnected. If members need to get power restored after business hours, they can go to our e-bill website and apply an electronic payment on their account. Within five minutes after the posting process completes, power will be restored.

Flint Hills RECA is offering prepay as an optional service. If a standard rate service does not fit your lifestyle, you can voluntarily choose the prepay rate. If you have questions about this or any other services we offer, please contact our office at 620-767-5144.

Notice: PCA Rate Hearing Scheduled

The Flint Hills RECA Board of Trustees will conduct a hearing to discuss and possibly vote on a proposal to make changes to the Power Cost Adjustment (PCA) rate. The meeting is December 20, 2010, at 7 p.m. at the Council Grove office. The hearing is open to all Flint Hills RECA members.

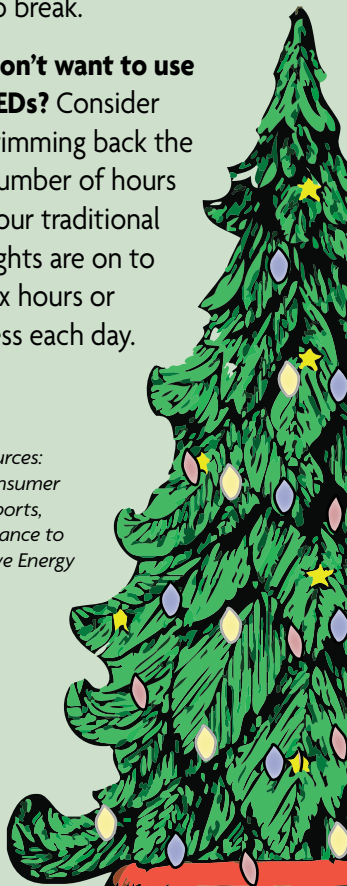
December 2010						
S	M	T	W	U	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	30	

Light up Holiday Savings with LEDs

Decorating with lights this holiday season? Consider light-emitting diodes (LEDs). They cost more initially but last twice as long as traditional lights, and you'll recover the difference in three to four years.

- **Efficient.** LEDs use between 1 kWh and 3 kWh of energy, compared to between 12 kWh and 105 kWh for traditional lights, saving \$11 every holiday season.
- **Durable.** LEDs last about 4,000 hours. They're also made of plastic and less likely to break.
- **Don't want to use LEDs?** Consider trimming back the number of hours your traditional lights are on to six hours or less each day.

Sources:
Consumer Reports,
Alliance to Save Energy



Cool Off Your Winter Energy Bill

You've budgeted for holiday gifts, meals, maybe a vacation—and with money tight, that doesn't leave much room for home energy efficiency upgrades. Does that mean you're powerless to lower your electric bill? Not at all. Keep your energy bill cool this winter with these tips and tricks:

- ▶ **Drape Delivery:** Are you using your curtains to capture heat? Make sure drapes and shades are open to catch free solar heat during the day. Close them at night to keep the heat inside.
- ▶ **Cool Food:** Don't make your fridge work too hard. Clean coils every year, and set the temperature between 34° to 37° F; leave the freezer between 0° to 5° F. Keep the freezer full—frozen food helps your freezer stay cool. When cooking keep lids on pots, and let hot food cool off before placing it in the refrigerator.
- ▶ **Fan it Up:** Run ceiling paddle fans on low and reverse the rotation to blow air up in winter. This keeps warm air circulating without cooling you.
- ▶ **Free Vents:** Your HVAC system will have to work twice as hard if your air registers and vents are blocked by rugs, furniture, or drapes. Keep them clear to allow air to flow freely.
- ▶ **Garage Drain:** Leave your garage door down. A warmer garage in winter will save energy.
- ▶ **Got Tape?** Though not as durable as foam, rubber, or vinyl, you can use non-porous tape (first aid cloth tape, for example) to keep cold air from squeezing into your home. Tape is good for blocking corners



Cold weather can mean increased electric bills. Find ways to save at www.TogetherWeSave.com.

and irregular cracks, and can be used at the top and bottom of a window sash; door frames; attic hatches; and inoperable windows. Reinforce with staples if needed.

- ▶ **Hot Savings:** Heating water accounts for 12 percent of your home's energy use. Set your water heater temperature no higher than 120°F. For households with only one or two members, 115°F works.
- ▶ **Rug Relief:** Have a spare rug? Use it to cover bare floors for added insulation.
- ▶ **Thermostat:** Set your thermostat to 68°F (or lower if comfortable).

There are other ways to conserve energy, too. Remember, you don't pay for what you don't use. When you're not watching TV or using lights, computers, and other electronics, turn them off. Lower your room temperatures a bit and wear a sweater to stay warm, or place an extra blanket on the bed at night. Find more ways to save at www.TogetherWeSave.com.

Keep Holidays Bright & Safe with Electrical Awareness

The bright, festive holiday season can also be a time of potential hazards, injuries and even death. No not from a fracas at the mall over the last holiday necktie just before the family gift exchange, but from electrical holiday decorations. Those beautiful Christmas trees, holiday lights, and festive ornaments take a significant toll annually by contributing to fires, electrical burns, and even death.

On average, 5,000 people visit the emergency room each holiday season, says the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). More seriously, the holiday season will record an average of 400 fatalities and 130,000 fires that are attributed to electrical decoration mishaps. In 2009, the CPSC says there were 200 Christmas tree fires in US homes caused primarily by faulty electrical light strands, with 10 resulting fatalities.

Why do so many electrical fires occur at Christmas? Consumer research indicates that 76 percent of homeowners decorate their homes, and 70 percent will use electrical decorations. However more than 20 percent of those homes will leave decorations on throughout the night or when no one is home. Since Christmas trees usually cannot be blamed for spontaneous combustion, the National Christmas Tree Association says overloaded electrical outlets and faulty wires are the most common cause of fires. Holiday decorative lights are involved in more than 200 home structure fires per year, causing more

than \$7.5 million in direct property damage according to the National Fire Protection Association.

To avoid being part of the statistics, create a safety checklist to follow when preparing your home for the holidays:

- ▶ Carefully inspect each electrical decoration. Cracked or frayed sockets, loose or bare wires, and loose connections may cause a serious shock or start a fire.
- ▶ Always unplug electrical decorations before replacing bulbs or fuses.
- ▶ When hanging decorations, do not connect more than three light strings together.
- ▶ Never attach electrical decorations with nails or staples. Use plastic hooks.
- ▶ Turn off all indoor and outdoor electrical decorations before leaving home or going to bed.
- ▶ Plug outdoor electric lights and decorations into circuits protected by ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) to prevent electric shock.
- ▶ Before using any electrical decorations outdoors, make sure the product is approved for outdoor use.
- ▶ Look for ENERGY STAR qualified LED products to light interior and exterior environments.
- ▶ Opt for LED holiday lighting instead of traditional incandescent light strands.
- ▶ Always look for the Underwriters Laboratory (UL) or other testing agency label when shopping for new electronic devices.



I DON'T LEAVE THE TV ON FOR THE COFFEE TABLE. WHY HEAT AN EMPTY HOUSE?

It only makes sense. My house shouldn't have to work so hard when I'm taking it easy on vacation. So now I adjust my thermostat, turn off my water heater and unplug as much as I can before I pull away, and those simple acts save me some serious money. Money I can spend on things like vacations. What can you do? Find out how the little changes add up at TogetherWeSave.com.



TOGETHERWESAVE.COM

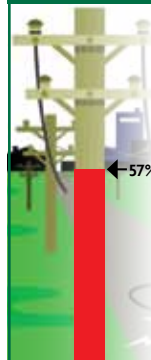
Holiday Office Closing

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

Flint Hill's offices will be closed on December 24 & 31 to celebrate the holidays.



FEMA Restoration Update



As of November 2010, Flint Hills RECA has completed 300 miles of our 503 miles of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) rebuild work. Just 203 miles remain.

CO-OP Connections Update

	Prescriptions Filled	Savings to Flint Hills' Members
October	27	\$591.27
2010 Total	302	\$3318.86

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advantage of your Connections Card yet?



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FREE Equipment until
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