



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative   
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## FLINT HILLS RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

# NEWS

### Flint Hills RECA

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## Our Marching Orders: Affordable Power

When a person visits Washington, D.C., they would be impressed by the long-range planning and precision of our nation's military. No matter how prepared they might be, the military can't make a move without marching orders from the top.

It reminds me of the bind electric cooperatives are in right now. We excel at long-range planning—most of the power you use today was designed three or four decades ago. We stand at the ready with plans for new infrastructure, power plants, and innovative technologies to provide electricity for the next 30 years. But there's a problem—we're waiting on marching orders from our nation's leaders.

Thousands of electric co-op representatives met in our nation's capital this spring. Our elected officials were told that now more than ever we have to plan for a safe, reliable, and affordable energy future. To get there, we need to know the rules for power generation—and we need to know now. Rolling blackouts in Texas earlier this year reminded all of us that electricity must be used as quickly as it's produced; we don't have the technology yet to store large amounts of power to fall back on when resources like wind turbines don't work.

For our children and grandchildren's sake, we need to make some tough decisions soon—and we need to get them right.

With a flurry of proposed regula-

tions being discussed for power plants (and more to come), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been following their own set of marching orders and deadlines set by the courts. However, what the final regulations will look like remains unclear. Co-ops need to know the rules—our marching orders—for power generation. Until the government provides more certainty, we can't enact our plans for the next three decades. As our appetite for electricity grows and threatens to outstrip our nation's generation capacity, we need to build more power plants. But what type of facilities should they be that will make the most sense financially?

Flint Hills RECA's mission was set by you, our members, 73 years ago. You charged us to provide safe, reliable, and affordable power. Where this power comes from impacts a sizable portion of your electric bill. A large percentage of each dollar you pay us goes to buying wholesale power. Bucket trucks, poles and wire, right-of-way trimming, payroll, and other operating expenses are covered by the rest.

Although expensive, power plants and expanded transmission systems are an investment in a better future for all of us. We'll keep our ultimate mission at the forefront of our efforts as we work with Congress to get our marching orders and keep the lights on for the next 30 years. It's one more way we're looking out for you.

## Summer is Almost Here Make Sure You Enjoy it Safely

Youngsters are eager to say goodbye to school for the summer, suit up and jump in the backyard pool, play in the sprinkler or spray their playmates with water from a garden hose. Whether it's fun around home, at a nearby park, or other gathering place, be alert for potential electrical hazards, make repairs or upgrades where necessary and make sure everyone knows how to play safely.

"The loss of a family member is devastating, and all family members should be on the lookout for potential danger," says Molly Hall, program executive director. "Remember the story of 12-year old Caitlyn Mackenzie, who had enjoyed a day of swimming and was electrocuted as she attempted to move an electric lamp. Her tragic accident underscores the importance of ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protection on outdoor outlets, as well as avoiding contact with electrical appliances when you are damp or wet."

If you have water sprites around your home this summer, protect them with either permanent GFCIs, or extension cords with a GFCI to ensure their safety.

For safe outdoor play, Safe Electricity recommends that children and adults follow these rules:

- ▶ Water and electricity never mix! Keep electronics like radios away from pools and hot tubs, and watch for overhead power lines when cleaning pools, sailing or fishing.

Never install pools underneath or near power lines. Never touch an electrical appliance if you are wet; always dry off completely.

- ▶ Stay away from electrical equipment on the ground and overhead. Never climb a utility pole or tower. Don't play on or around pad-mounted electrical equipment. Electrical power poles and utility equipment should never be used as a playground.
- ▶ Fly kites and model airplanes safely away from trees and overhead power lines. If a kite gets tangled in a tree that's near power lines, don't climb up to get it. Contact your electric utility for assistance.
- ▶ Never go into an electric substation. Electric substations contain high-voltage equipment, which can kill you. Don't retrieve a toy or rescue a pet that goes inside. Call your electric utility instead.
- ▶ Look up and around you. Always be aware of the location of power lines, particularly when using long metal tools like ladders and pool skimmers.

"Use caution when plugging in electrical appliances outdoors," says Hall. "Such handy items as radios or bug zappers can generate an electric shock. Exterior outlets should have



**Never climb trees near power lines. Even if the power lines aren't touching the tree, they could touch when more weight is added to the branch.**

weather proof covers as well as GFCIs to prevent serious injuries. Electrical items should be kept at least 10 feet away from water or wet surfaces, like wet or dew-covered grass."

Extension cords are a necessity in every home to help get electricity to where it is needed. But they are only as good as their insulating quality. Inspect cords to ensure there are no bare wires or places where water could invade the cord. Use only extension cords that are rated and marked for outdoor use, and are large enough to handle the current needed for the device you are using. Check that the prongs on the extension cord plugs are clean, not broken or bent. Make sure the ground prong is intact in a three-prong plug, and avoid use of adapters.


Summertime brings storms that can sometimes create danger from both lightning and fallen power lines, Hall says. "It's a good idea to keep utility emergency numbers close at hand and know what to do after a storm."

- ▶ If you see a downed power line stay far away from it and anything touching it. Call your electric utility.
- ▶ Warn others to stay clear of the line. Assume that all downed power lines are energized.

Here's to a safe and enjoyable summer for your family. Learn more at [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org).

CO-OP Connections Update

	Prescriptions Filled	Savings to Flint Hills' Members
April	25	\$221.73
2011 Total	111	\$1007.31



Have you taken  
advantage of your Connections Card yet?

## Touchstone Energy® Co-op Connections® Program

Visit us online at [www.connections.coop](http://www.connections.coop)

As your electric cooperative, it's important for Flint Hills RECA to provide its member-owners with safe, reliable power. Yet our service goes beyond the wires. It's also important that we offer additional value that has an enormously positive impact on everyone in the community. And as a Touchstone Energy® co-op, we strive to meet that goal on a daily basis.

That's why Flint Hills RECA, in conjunction with the other Touchstone Energy co-ops serving 17 million member-owners nationwide, launched the Co-op ConnectionsSM program a few years ago. This card-based member benefit program is designed to deliver added value to our members—residential and business—by offering valuable discounts at participating local and national businesses. And it's free.

All of the Flint Hills RECA members should be in possession of a card. The original shipment went to all members a couple of years ago. If you have lost yours and need another one, contact our office and we will send one to you.

Whenever a Co-op Connections cardholder—whether from Flint Hills RECA or from one of the hundreds of Touchstone Energy co-ops across the country—shows the Co-op Connections card at a participating business, they receive a discount. Members will present their card each time they use it, but they won't leave it with the business. It's not like a coupon; it's a card that continues to help our members get more and more discounts.

This card can also be used for prescription discounts. The back of



the card will list the information needed to get your discount. (for a list of participating pharmacies, go to [www.locatepro-](http://www.locateproviders.com)

[viders.com](http://www.locateproviders.com)). If you have not used yours yet, simply present your Co-op Connections card at a participating pharmacy with your prescription and receive a discount at the time of purchase. The discounts will range from 10% to 60% on most prescriptions.

Equally, those businesses benefit from increased customer visits by co-op members participating in the program. And it's easy to find which local businesses are participating, simply log on to the Flint Hills RECA web site and check out the list of participants. (You can check available discounts nationwide now by going to [www.connections.coop](http://www.connections.coop))

If you have a local business and would like more information about participating in this program, contact our Member Services Manager, Bill Wessel at 620-767-5144 or email at [bwessel@flinthillsrec.com](mailto:bwessel@flinthillsrec.com). As a business, it cost nothing to join and it helps promote the "shop locally" theme that all rural communities are striving for.

Touchstone Energy is a national alliance of local, consumer-owned electric cooperatives providing high standards of service to customers large and small. More than 685 Touchstone Energy cooperatives in 46 states are delivering energy and energy solutions to approximately 22 million customers every day. Touchstone Energy cooperatives serve their members with integrity, accountability, innovation and longstanding commitment to communities.

## How Can I Help MY Co-op Control Cost?

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.

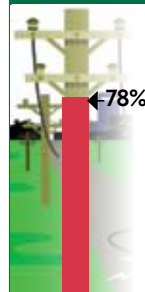
So when does this peak load occur? Summer time (June, July August and September) is when Flint Hills RECA experiences its maximum peak load on the system. This usually occurs between the hours of 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. and on the days that the temperature reaches 95+ degrees. On these days, anything you can 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 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 during the heat of the day.

When we are in a peak load period this summer, we will attempt to post a notice on the homepage 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.

## FEMA Restoration Update



As of May 1, 2011, Flint Hills RECA has completed 394 miles of our 503 miles of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) rebuild work. Just 109 miles remain.



# I DON'T LEAVE THE TV ON FOR THE COFFEE TABLE. WHY COOL 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](http://TogetherWeSave.com).



[TOGETHERWESAVE.COM](http://TOGETHERWESAVE.COM)