



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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FLINT HILLS
RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

**FLINT HILLS RURAL
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

NEWS

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FROM THE MANAGER

Rate Study: Cost of Service



Chuck Goeckel

The past couple of months we have been discussing the rate study process. The rate study is a necessary responsibility of management and the board of

trustees of the cooperative to ensure that the cooperative continues to operate in financially sound manner. In the September issue we discussed the study of the cooperative's revenue requirements. This month, we will examine the cooperative's cost-of-service study.

The cost-of-service study is simply an analysis of the cooperative's costs identified during the revenue requirement study. While the revenue

requirement study will determine what the costs are, the cost-of-service study will examine how and why the costs are incurred. Answering that question allows for the costs to be assigned fairly and appropriately to each rate class using traditional rate making principles.

The costs and expenses of the cooperative are examined in a number of different ways as part of this study. For example, there are costs associated with the generation and transmission of power and energy. These costs are paid to our power supplier, Kansas Electric Power Cooperative (KEPCo). There are also costs incurred in distributing the electric power and energy to you, the member, including poles, wire, trucks, office and warehouse buildings, substations, maintenance and repair, repayment of loans and employee costs. An attempt is made to assign and

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Member Services

- ▶ Viasat Internet Services
- ▶ Online Payment Options
- ▶ Outside Security Lighting
- ▶ Power Surge Protection
- ▶ Rebate Programs

For more information, call us at 620-767-5144 or visit our website at www.flinthillsrec.com.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer

ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month

With winter weather on the way, now is the time to seal drafty windows. If you can see daylight around a window frame or if you can rattle a window, the window likely needs to be sealed. Visit www.energy.gov/energysaver to learn how and where to seal air leaks.

SOURCE: WWW.ENERGY.GOV



WHEN POWER LINES COME DOWN



Collisions with a pole or pad-mounted transformer can cause the ground and objects to become energized. Always consider a downed line or damaged equipment energized and deadly.

If you are in a car accident involving a downed line:

- ▶ Stay in the vehicle.
- ▶ Call 911 to report the downed or damaged line.
- ▶ Wait until someone from the electric utility says it is safe to get out.

If you see a downed or damaged power line or pole or a dislodged electrical cabinet:

- ▶ Do not go near it.
- ▶ Do not touch it.
- ▶ Do not try to move it with another object.
- ▶ Do not touch items that could be energized.
- ▶ Warn others to stay away.



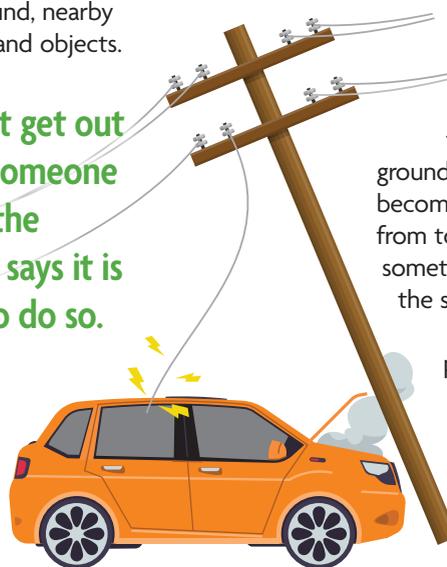
Encountering a Downed Power Line

Storms, fires, car accidents or animal interference are all examples of events that can damage overhead power lines, pad-mounted transformers (green boxes) or other electrical equipment. While these are not examples of everyday occurrences, it's important to know what to do if you encounter downed power lines.

(Spoiler alert. Do not do any of the following in these scenarios.) If you were in an accident involving a downed overhead power line, would you get out of the car and run? If you saw a car accident involving a downed line or damaged green box, would you run to the scene to help? If you saw a downed line across a road, would you approach it or try to move it?

ANY OF THESE ACTIONS CAN CAUSE SERIOUS INJURY OR ELECTROCUTION (DEATH). Downed lines and other damaged equipment can energize the ground, nearby people and objects.

Do not get out until someone from the utility says it is safe to do so.



Never go near a downed power line or try to move it with an object. Electricity can jump from a wire or object to you to find the quickest path to ground.

The safest place to be after getting into an accident involving a downed power line is inside your vehicle or cab. Unless your vehicle is on fire or giving off smoke, here is what you should do:

- ▶ Stay inside your vehicle or cab.
- ▶ Call 911 and report there are downed or damaged power lines.
- ▶ Try to remain calm.
- ▶ Wait for the utility crew to arrive to deenergize the power.
- ▶ Do not get out until someone from the utility says it is safe to do so.

If you must get out of the vehicle because it is on fire, cross your arms over your chest and make a clean, solid jump out, then intentionally hop with your feet together as far away as you can. If you are unable to make solid hops, shuffle with your feet close together.

When you exit, do not touch the vehicle and the ground at the same time. You could become electricity's path to ground from touch potential (touching something energized and the ground at the same time).

Hopping helps avoid step potential (placing each foot at a different voltage). When electricity escapes into the ground, it is likened to ripples in a pond, with each ripple representing a different voltage.

FALL BACK
Don't forget to turn your clocks back one hour on Nov. 6.

4 Ways to Boost Your Cyber Hygiene

October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month

In today's digital world, cyberattacks are unfortunately commonplace. Cyber criminals can attack on a multitude of levels, from large-scale attacks targeting corporations to smaller phishing attacks aimed to gain an individual's personal information.

October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month, but good cyber hygiene should be practiced year-round. When we hear about massive data breaches, it can feel overwhelming and lead us to think we're powerless as individuals to stop cyber criminals.

The truth is, there are several practical steps we can take to safeguard our devices and data. Here are four easy ways to boost your cyber hygiene:

1 ENABLE MULTI-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION. Also known as two-step verification, multi-factor authentication adds a second step when logging into an account (to prove you're really you), which greatly increases the security of the account. This second step could include an extra PIN, answering an extra security question, a code received via email or a secure token. Regardless of the type of authentication, this additional step makes it twice as hard for cyber criminals to access your account. Not every account offers multi-factor authentication, but it's becoming increasingly popular and should be used when available.

2 USE STRONG PASSWORDS AND A PASSWORD MANAGER. Remember, passwords are the "keys" to your personal home online. Your passwords should always be long, unique and complex. Create passwords using at least 12 characters, never reuse passwords for multiple accounts and use a combination of upper- and lower-case letters, numbers and special characters. If you have a lot of accounts, consider

using a password manager to store them easily and securely in one place.

3 UPDATE SOFTWARE. It may seem obvious, but regularly updating software is one of the easiest ways to keep your personal information secure. Most companies provide automatic updates and will send reminders so you can easily install the update. If you're not receiving automatic software updates, set a reminder to do so quarterly. Be aware that some cyber criminals will send fake updates; these typically appear as a pop-up window when visiting a website. Use good judgement and always think before you click.

4 RECOGNIZE AND REPORT PHISHING ATTACKS. Don't take the bait when cyber criminals go phishing. The signs of a phishing attack can be subtle, so take the extra time to thoroughly inspect emails. Most phishing emails include offers too good to be true, an urgent or alarming tone, misspellings and poorly crafted language, ambiguous greetings, strange requests or an email address that doesn't match the company it's coming from. Most platforms like Outlook, Gmail and Mac Mail allow users to report phishing emails. If you suspect a phishing attempt, take an extra minute to report it.

Cyber criminals are here to stay, but when we all take a risk-based approach to our cyber behavior, we're creating a safer internet for all. Visit www.staysafeonline.org for additional cybersecurity tips.



Rate Study: Cost of Service *Continued from page 12A* ▶

apportion those costs according to the appropriate category and rate class.

Costs are also analyzed by function. Each month, your energy bill includes a fixed customer service charge and an energy charge amount. The customer service charge is identical for each member of the particular customer rate class. The cost-of-service study will identify the appropriate, fair, customer service charge costs for each rate class. The remainder of your bill is typically represented by a per kilowatt-hour charge, demand charge, power cost adjustment, and sales tax.

Allocating the rate base revenues and expenses to each of the member rate classes allows the cooperative to then

project the rates of return of each member class. One goal of any rate is to have a fair rate of return for each of the member classes at the cooperative.

Members may question why a rate for one type of service is different from another type of service. How much energy you use, when you use it, and how your usage varies all have an effect on the cost to provide you with electric service. Those varying costs are examined as part of the cost-of-service study.

The next step will be designing rates to meet the cost recovery obligations, to recover the revenue fairly from each member class, and to meet any other strategy or goals identified by the board in the rate study process.



ENERGY VAMPIRES WORD SCRAMBLE

Energy vampires could be lurking in your home! These are electronic devices that consume energy even when they're not being used.

Unscramble the **bolded words** to identify common energy vampires. Check your work in the answer key below.



When you're finished playing that new video game, unplug your **eagm oncloes**.



Tell your parents to unplug the **efcfeo kmrea** when they're finished brewing.



When you're done watching your favorite show, unplug the **seotnivile**.



If your phone is juiced up, unplug your **nophe rahrgce**.

Answer Key: game console, coffee maker, television, phone charger