



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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**FLINT HILLS RURAL  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**



# NEWS

## Flint Hills RECA

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**This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer**

## FROM THE MANAGER

# Volunteer to Make a Difference

Sometimes we all need to pause for a moment and remember to appreciate the simple things, like people helping people and how getting involved often makes a lasting difference in our lives.

Think about all the things that nurture and strengthen our local communities. They begin with family, follow through to faith and forge the bonds that foster civility and create wholesome and healthy societies.

Even when so many of us are preoccupied with vacations, hobbies and all the summer activities that break up our regular routine, that commitment to community involvement can be part of nearly everything we do.

Coaches and referees keep summer youth sports leagues running, smiling senior volunteers quietly patrol our favorite parks and teenage counselors help create summer memories for younger kids with games, crafts and field trips.

Some of us take a week or so of our vacations to chaperone a youth outing, help out at scout camp or support a church group outreach mission. Others answer the call when help is needed for

storm response or community cleanups.

Many of us know at least one person who is so committed to a particular cause that they find ways to make an impact throughout the stages of their lives.



**Chuck Goeckel**

Think about that volunteer firefighter who for decades after active roster years, still turns out to help “fill the boot,” dispatch calls or drive the canteen truck, ready to help parched first responders and victims recover at the scene.

Flint Hills’ staff consistently live up to the seventh cooperative principle—concern for community, with employees donating their time and talents throughout the communities we serve and our linemen routinely volunteering to help other co-ops in Kansas and surrounding states affected by storms and widespread outages.

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## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



When it's warm out, avoid using the oven. Try cooking on the stove, using the microwave or grilling outside instead. **Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)**

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



# Della Orton

If the land that contains the electric system of Flint Hills RECA could talk, oh the stories it would tell. It would tell stories of the native people once the sole inhabitants. It would tell stories of wagon trains that ventured into unknown lands and created a trail for international commerce. It would tell stories of immigrants who set down roots, farmed and raised families.

**DELLA ORTON** has been a member of Flint Hills RECA since 1979, but her family's roots go back to the 1890s when her grandfather, Alfred Richards, moved to the area and purchased land in the Rock Creek area east of Council Grove—land that had once been part of the Kaw Indian Reservation from 1846-1873. The house he built was finished in 1912 and still stands today as Della's residence.

Electrification came to the farm in 1945, and Alfred became one of the early directors on the board of trustees, serving from 1945-1951. Upon Alfred's death, ownership passed to Della's father, Floyd Richards, then to her mother, Dorothy Richards, and ultimately split between Della and her sister, Diane, after her mother's death. Della's son, part of the family's fourth generation on the land, also lives on the family property in what was once the hired man's house. While Della still lives on the farm, she currently rents the farm ground and pasture.

Della's home filled with heirlooms reflect her pride in her family history, and she is eager to tell their stories. There are washboards, one from a grandmother on each side of the family, along with a hedgewood cane hanging in the kitchen made and used by her great-grandfather after he was injured in the Civil War. There's the piano her grandfather got in trade for a horse.

There's a sod cutter plow that was found mostly buried on the property. She has abstracts for her land that include names of note from Council Grove history such as Conn, Huffaker, Baker and White. A large library of books about the Santa Fe Trail, Native Americans and local history, as well as a collection of Indian artwork make clear her great interest in history and Indian culture. She is an active member of the Friends of Kaw Heritage, serves on its board of directors and is a regular volunteer at the Kaw Mission State Historic Site.

Della's interest in history coupled with her desire to promote education about the Santa Fe Trail, in particular, led her to join forces with the Santa Fe Trail Association and the National Park Foundation. She donated some land to create the new Rock Creek Crossing Trail. Dedication of the trail was held June 8, 2019. Visitors to the new site are able to walk a 3/4 mile trail loop on the old Santa Fe Trail route. Included at the entrance to the trail and along the path are seven interpretive panels to provide information about the Santa Fe Trail and the crossing.

"I was able to walk on the trail and enjoy the area every day as a child," Della said. "I especially want to see today's school children learn about the Santa Fe Trail and experience a bit of what it might have been like."

The trail is located 6 miles east of Council Grove on Highway 56 and 1/4 mile north on 200 Road.

"We must be stewards of the land," Della said.

She certainly has been a steward of her family's land, and her partnership with the National Park Service will ensure that a piece of our nation's history will be available for the enjoyment and education of generations to come.

**Flint Hills RECA plans to periodically highlight a member in our "Member Spotlight" series. Do you have a suggestion of an individual, organization or business for our spotlight? If so, email [mail@flinthillsrec.com](mailto:mail@flinthillsrec.com) with the member's name and a brief statement about why you think we should feature them in an upcoming issue of *Kansas Country Living*.**



Della Orton in front of her family home built in 1912.

## Stay Clear of Downed Power Lines

Overhead power lines carry thousands of volts of electricity. If a line is down, always assume it is energized and dangerous, even if the power is out in your area. Touching or getting near a live power line injures and kills.

Never approach an accident scene where a line is down or damaged. If you run toward the accident to help, you too could become a victim by entering the energized area.

Power lines can come down or sag for a few reasons, including severe weather or damage, possibly due to a car accident. And a downed line isn't always visible. After severe weather, lines can lurk underneath water or debris.

Stay clear of all types of utility lines. Even if you think lines might be designated for telephone or cable service, they may have contact with damaged and energized power lines nearby. Flint Hills RECA offers these reminders:

- ▶ Call 911 to report fallen or damaged power lines.
- ▶ Power lines do not have to be arcing, sparking or making a humming noise to be live.
- ▶ Do not attempt to move a downed

line or anything it is touching with another object such as a stick or pole. Even materials that don't normally conduct electricity can do so if they are slightly wet.

- ▶ Do not step in water or walk in debris near a downed power line.
- ▶ Stay at least 10 feet away from the downed power line.
- ▶ Do not attempt to drive over a downed power line. If a power line falls on your vehicle while driving, do not attempt to drive away or get out. Call for help and **STAY INSIDE THE VEHICLE** until utility crews say it is safe to get out. If there is a fire or you smell gasoline, hop out without touching the vehicle at the same time and **DO NOT WALK**, but hop away to safety.
- ▶ Line properties can change: Any power line that is dead could become energized at any moment due to power restoration or backfeed from backup generators.

Always consider all lines, regardless of the type, energized at deadly voltages. For more information about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

## Volunteer to Make a Difference *Continued from page 16A* ▶

What about the moms and dads who take their teenagers along for a day of service making sandwiches or sorting clothes for the local shelter? They're likely to be the same ones who pull canned goods from the pantry to place in the mailbox for the national Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger event or before heading out the door to any community event where donations are being accepted.

Then, of course, there are those who will take a half-hour or so to donate a pint of blood, which is especially important in the summer months when corporate drive participation slows down.

All of these things are fine ideas that lead to great actions and produce lasting results. What makes them really special is that they cost little more than our per-

sonal decisions to look around, see what's needed and jump in to get involved.

You really don't have to look far. It seems like every fair or community festival includes booths filled with enthusiastic volunteers more than happy to get you involved in some terrific cause. At fun runs, parades and other events, it's often the volunteers who've done the planning, organizing and marching that bring us all together.

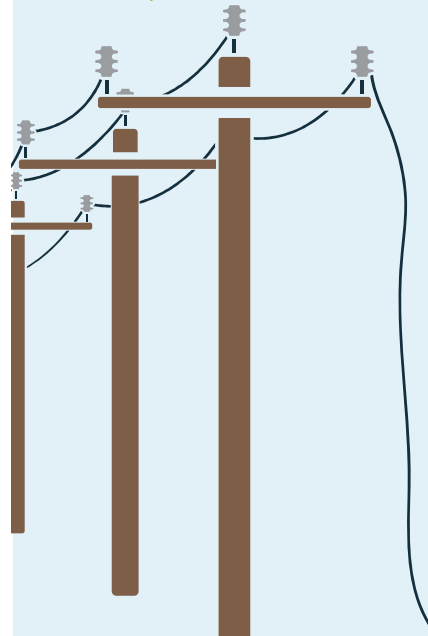
With technology cutting back on our personal connections to people, maybe we need to look for ways to touch the lives of those close by, and volunteering is a great way to start. If you think about it, we all can choose to give a bit of ourselves to help make things better. Volunteer to serve, and see for yourself.

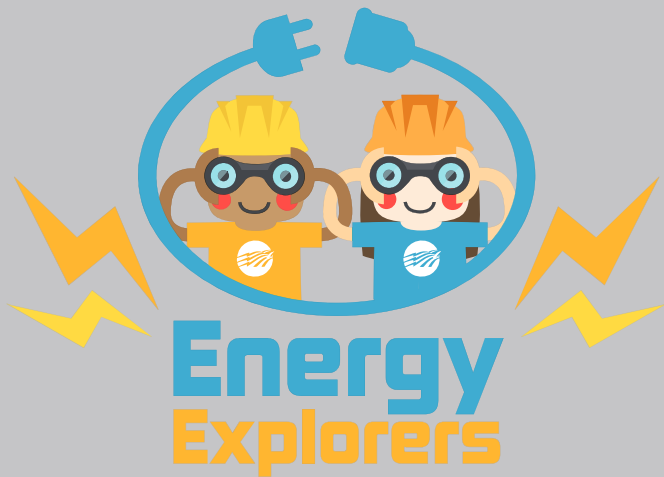
## KNOW WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU SEE A DOWNED POWER LINE

**When power lines go down, take these precautions to stay safe:**

- ▶ Call 911 to report fallen or downed power lines.
- ▶ Know that power lines do not have to be arcing or sparking to be live.
- ▶ Stay at least 10 feet away from power lines.
- ▶ If the line is down because a vehicle has struck it, remain in the vehicle until emergency crews say it is safe to exit.
- ▶ If there is a fire or you smell gasoline, hop out of the vehicle without touching the vehicle and **DO NOT WALK**, but hop to safety at least 50 feet away.

**Always treat a downed power line as live and never touch any wire that is down.**





## ELECTRICAL SAFETY QUIZ

Test your electrical safety knowledge by taking the quiz below!

Use the answer key if you need help.

1. Smoke alarms in your home should be tested \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. Once a week
- B. Twice a year
- C. Once a month

2. Overloading electrical outlets and power strips can create an electrical fire hazard.

- A. True
- B. False

3. What's the most dangerous place to use electricity?

- A. Outdoors
- B. Near other electrical equipment
- C. Near water

4. It's safe to run an electrical cord under a rug or carpet as long as the cord is not damaged.

- A. True
- B. False

5. Which is safest to play near?

- A. Power lines
- B. Pad-mounted transformers
- C. Neither A or B – both are dangerous

Answer Key: 1.C 2.A 3.C 4.B 5.C

