



Current

News from Floresville Electric Light & Power System

Volume 20, Number 4

July/August 2018

Utility Was Founded in 1943 and Is Locally Owned

FELPS Celebrates 75 Years of Municipal Utility Service

2018 marks 75 years that Floresville Electric Light & Power System has provided Wilson and Karnes counties with affordable electric service as a municipal utility. Founded in January 1943, FELPS is owned by the cities of Floresville, Poth and Stockdale and governed by a seven-member Board of Trustees representing the owner cities and the cities of Falls City and La Vernia.

As a municipal utility or not-for-profit, FELPS reinvests in the system that distributes electricity and the communities it serves. FELPS has made cash distributions to the owner cities in each year since 1943, distributions that total \$20,137,561 through 2017. Approximately 50 percent of these distributions have occurred since 2000. These transfers allow the cities to provide essential services and help keep taxes lower than would otherwise be the case.

Supporting the community continues to be an important aspect of FELPS's work. The utility contributes

to local festivals and helps fund youth sports programs and scholarships. This support is possible since, as a municipal utility, FELPS does not have to pay dividends to stockholders.

In 2014, FELPS launched the Helping Hands program for customers who need assistance paying their utility bills. Funds are donated by customers who round their bill payment to the next whole dollar each month. The program has helped hundreds of customers and enjoys solid support from those who fund it.

With 75 years in the rearview mirror, FELPS looks ahead to a future focused on enhanced customer service. Advanced metering, known as "smart meters," will offer new options, such as viewing usage history on an hourly basis, rather than just once a month. Smart metering also can improve outage responses by helping pinpoint trouble locations.

Technology will make possible other payment options, such as prepaid billing and enhanced customer service response through remote access to the meter while FELPS representatives are on the phone.

Solar power will continue to be explored for future adoption. Community solar installations appear to be attractive, both financially and environmentally, and could be added to the FELPS system in the future.

FELPS Briefs

- Please note that the FELPS office will be closed on Sept. 3 for Labor Day. Regular office hours will resume at 8 a.m. the following day. To report outages, including on holidays and after business hours (Monday-Friday 8 a.m.-5 p.m.), please call 830-216-7000 and select sub-option 2. Report outages online at www.felps.us and select the tab labeled "Report Outage."
- Your call is easy with the FELPS telephone system. When calling the office, first press 1 for English or 2 for Spanish. Then select one of five sub-options: 1 to make a payment or for Customer Service, 2 for outages or emergencies, 3 for new construction, 4 for street or security light repair or 5 for field service maintenance.
- Mark your calendar and plan to attend the 74th Annual Floresville Peanut Festival starting on Oct. 9 with the Goober Games and continuing through Oct. 13 in downtown Floresville. Check online for information about activities for the whole family.

Five Easy Ways to Save on Air Conditioning

1. Set the thermostat at 78-80 degrees in the summer.
2. Change the air conditioner filters every two weeks to reduce the strain on your equipment.
3. Reduce moisture-producing activities, such as long showers using hot water. The air conditioner must take that moisture out of the air to make you feel comfortable.
4. Close the blinds and drapes to keep out the sun.
5. Use fans to circulate the air. Fans cost only pennies a day to circulate the air, making you feel cooler.

Note Rules for Transferring and Discontinuing Service

Before existing service can be transferred to a new owner or tenant's name, FELPS must receive either the approval from the current occupant to transfer service to the new occupant or proof of occupancy from the new occupant. FELPS will not transfer service into the new occupant's name unless all requirements are met.

Energy Depot Helps Save Energy

Information is power—the power to reduce your electric bills. Check out Energy Depot® on the FELPS home page at www.felps.us for help in saving money.

The “Energy Snapshot” will provide a report about your energy usage based on the answers to eight questions. Based on your answers to the questions, it gives you a comprehensive analysis of energy use and personalized cost-saving opportunities. The information can be saved for future reference and for updating.

The buying decisions you make can have a long-term effect on your electric bills. The energy comparison tool lets you compare costs of purchasing and operating large electricity users in your home, such as heating and cooling systems, water heaters and lighting. By providing information about the purchase price and installation, you can get an estimate of the amount of time required for payback.

The appliance calculator provides information about annual energy use and operating costs for most household appliances so you can see where your energy dollars go.

The energy library has fact sheets on everything from insulation to appliances so you can make informed buying decisions. A glossary of terms and frequently asked questions also are included.

Outdoor Lighting Offers Pleasure and Security

The warm evenings of summer mean outdoor gatherings. Outdoor lighting can extend these activities into the night and also helps provide security after the gathering ends.

You can light the exterior around your home or business to extend its use at night and to give an added measure of security at reasonable costs. For activity areas, you may want to consider floodlights or spotlights to direct illumination to the area for work or play. Those same lights also can serve for illuminating the area for security.

Areas, such as the sides of the house or less frequented areas around a business, may not need continuous lighting. In these areas, the floodlights can be companioned with a motion detector so the lights operate only when motion is sensed. The result is lighting when you need it without paying for continuous operation.

Porch lights and decorative lighting along walks also can be equipped with photoelectric cells so the lights come on as daylight fades and can use florescent bulbs, which require only 20 watts of power to produce 125 lumens.

Keep Food Cool When the Electricity Goes Off

Summertime can bring electrical storms that can cause the electricity to go off. Then keeping your food cold in the refrigerator and freezer can present a challenge. The key is to keep the doors of refrigerators and freezers closed. Resist the temptation to check the temperature until the electricity is restored.

Most refrigerators and freezers purchased during the last dozen years are insulated well enough that food will remain cool for several hours during an outage. You can check with the manufacturer to determine the standards for your models.

Consider also that a fully loaded refrigerator or freezer insulates the contents better than a partially filled one.

If you have concerns about the food, check to see how cold it is after the electricity goes back on. You can use a thermometer specifically for the refrigerator.

If frozen foods are partially thawed, they can be defrosted in the refrigerator and eaten within a couple of days. In most cases, frozen foods that have defrosted should not be refrozen.

Don't Forget to Turn Out the Lights

You can save with occupancy sensors that turn lights on when motion is detected, such as when a person is in the room. They often are used in closets to turn off the light, even if you forget. They also can be used in rooms where people come and go.

For more tips to save money on lighting and to see the latest ideas for lighting your home, check the American Lighting Association Web site at www.americanlightingassoc.com.



Contacting FELPS

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Business hours: Monday-Friday 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

After 5 p.m.: (830) 216-7000 (for outages, press sub-option 2, or report outages online)

The Floresville Electric Light and Power System Board of Trustees meets the last Wednesday of each month at 8 a.m. in the utility offices, 1400 Fourth Street, Floresville.