



## News from Floresville Electric Light & Power System

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### Update Your FELPS Contact Information

Now is the time to be certain FELPS has your current contact information.

In many cases, customers have switched to a cell phone but FELPS has only the old land line number on record. This creates problems when there is a need to get in touch with a customer. So be certain the utility has on record the telephone that you currently use.

In addition to your current telephone number, FELPS needs your email address. This information is used if you have requested your bill by email and also is used for general communication.

Finally, you may want to consider whether to add names on your accounts. FELPS will provide information only to the person or persons listed on the account to protect the account holder. So if you want additional family members to transact business on your account, they must be listed.

To update your contact information, please visit the FELPS web site at [www.felps.us](http://www.felps.us) or call customer service at 830-216-7000, sub-option 1.

### FELPS Briefs

- Please mark your calendar for holidays when the FELPS office will be closed: Nov. 22-23 for Thanksgiving, Dec. 24-25 for Christmas and Jan. 1 for New Year's Day. Office hours will resume at 8 a.m. on the business day following each holiday period.
- To report outages 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](http://www.felps.us) and select the tab labeled "Report Outage."
- You can receive your FELPS bill by email in addition to receiving it by regular mail or you can get it only by email, if you wish. Sign up for the email option on the FELPS web site, [www.felps.us](http://www.felps.us), under the "E-Notifications" link located on the "My Account" tab.

### Make Improvements to Save on Electric Bills

Heating represents the second largest user of energy in South Texas—after air conditioning. But some improvements to your home can save money on your utility bill during both the heating and cooling seasons.

Your house can lose energy from four big areas:

- Windows and doors - 25%
- Floors and below-grade space - 15%
- Walls - 35%
- Ceilings and roof - 25%

Some improvements can reduce your utility bill.

**Ventilation** is necessary to keep moisture and extreme heat from forming inside the attic. The presence of moisture may contribute to mold problems. Attic ventilation can be achieved by installing soffit and gable vents or installing through-the-roof vents, such as turbovents, or a continuous ridge vent.

**Insulation** is needed in attics and walls to provide a thermal barrier. In some cases, insulation also can be added under the floor in the crawl space.

Insulation is measured by the R-value, which is the resistance to heat flow. The higher the R-value, the better the insulation properties.

The attic does not have adequate insulation if ceiling joists are exposed. Even in homes where ceiling joists are not exposed, the amount of insulation still may not be adequate for the South Texas climate. The attic should have insulation of at least R-38, which requires about 12 inches, depending on the type.

Fiberglass insulation, made of sand and recycled glass, has an R-value of 3.14 per inch, while cellulose, made of recycled newspaper, has an R-value of 3.7 per inch. If blown-in cellulose insulation is used, remember to take into account that it will settle and that it should be kept away from heat sources.

To learn more about the different types of insulating materials and to determine the best for your home, consult with installers and with insulation manufacturers on their Web sites.

**Weather-stripping and caulking** around doors and windows will help prevent the escape of heated air from your home and the entrance of cold air. Weather-stripping, caulk and energy-efficient windows are investments that will save money on utility bills during all seasons.

# Celebrate the Season with Lighting

Part of Christmas fun involves decorating with lights. An energy-efficient way to do that is with LED lights, since LED (light-emitting diode) bulbs use about 90 percent less electricity than regular Christmas lights.

Because LED lights are plastic, rather than glass, they are less likely to break than are regular lights. And they last up to 100,000 hours so will not need to be replaced for years.

LED lights come in a variety of styles—large bulbs, small bulbs, several colors and even some shaped like snowflakes. Some indoor/outdoor strands can be purchased for as little as \$10.

Holiday lights and equipment should be chosen and used carefully to ensure safety. FELPS recommends that only equipment with the Underwriters' Laboratories approval (UL seal) be used. Follow these additional guidelines for safety:

- Discard or repair any frayed extension cords and never use indoor lighting equipment outdoors.
- Be sure lights are unplugged when placing them on the tree and unplug lights when leaving the house and at bedtime.
- To prevent falls, do not run extension cords under rugs or in traffic areas.
- To avoid shock, never drape electrical cords over pipes or other metal objects.
- Do not overload any household circuit. If your house lights dim or circuit breakers trip, you have too much wattage on the circuit.
- If you use a cut tree, place it in water as soon as it is brought inside and add water regularly to reduce the potential for fire.
- Locate the tree away from the fireplace and other sources of heat.
- When decorating outside, use only lights that are rated for outdoor use.

## Plant Energy-saving Landscaping Now

Winter is a good time to plant trees so they have growing time before the heat stresses of summer begin. Planting trees can cut electric bills significantly, even as they increase the value of your property and enhance its appearance.

The Department of Energy estimates that three trees properly placed around a home can save as much as \$250 in heating and cooling costs each year. That's strong incentive to make an investment that will pay dividends in the future as the trees grow.

Plant trees on the east side to protect from the morning sun and add trees and shrubbery to block afternoon sun on the west side. In addition to providing shade to the house, landscaping also keeps the ground around the house cooler so less heat is transferred to the walls.

When planning the placement of trees, consider the areas you wish to shade and the location of overhead power lines. Be certain that as they grow, the trees will not come in contact with overhead lines.

Winter also is a good time to have trees trimmed to avoid power interruptions caused by contact with electric lines. Call FELPS at 830-216-7000, sub-option 5, to have trees trimmed when they are three feet or less from power lines.

## Holiday Decorations May Require Cords

When planning holiday decorations, it will be a good idea to consider how they will be lighted. Take care when using extension cords to reduce safety and fire hazards.

- Do not run cords through walls, ceilings or floors.
- Do not overload extension cords with too many appliances.
- Never use an extension cord that is frayed or feels hot. The cord can lead to shock or a fire.

When you have several devices to plug into an outlet, you may need a temporary power strip. Power strips generally have three to six electrical receptacles, a cord that is several feet long and a surge protector. When using these devices, follow a couple of safety tips:

- Plug power strips directly into wall outlets rather than stringing them together.
- Buy only products that have the Underwriters Laboratory seal and follow directions for using the product you buy. For example, never use power strips outdoors unless they are marked for exterior use.

As a final precaution, do not overload any household circuit. If your house lights dim or fuses blow, you have too much wattage on the circuit.



## Contacting FELPS

Floresville Electric Light and Power System

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[www.felps.us](http://www.felps.us) Twitter: @FELPS\_Electric Facebook: [www.facebook.com/FELPS.OnLine](http://www.facebook.com/FELPS.OnLine)

Phone: (830) 216-7000 • Fax (830) 393-0362

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.