



## News from Floresville Electric Light & Power System

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### **Firm Handles After-hours Calls**

## **FELPS Contract to Increase Outage Reporting Coverage**

FELPS has entered a business relationship with Cooperative Responses Center, Inc. (CRC). The nationwide 24/7 call center, with headquarters in Austin, Minn., handles after-hours calls for nearly 500 electric utilities nationwide. CRC also has regional offices in Dunlap, Tenn., and Abilene, Texas.

CRC will handle calls and dispatch line crews when calls are not being handled by the FELPS office. Customers will call the same number—830-216-7000, sub-option 2—to report electrical outages; calls are automatically forwarded to CRC when FELPS staff are

not handling them. CRC began answering calls for FELPS on Oct. 1.

When your power is out, you may wonder whether it is necessary to report an outage to FELPS. The answer is “yes”. FELPS needs to know, since you may be the only customer without power. On the other hand, if it’s a time of widespread outages, you may hear detailed information about the situation.

When you call, you will be prompted to press “1” to report an outage. If the phone number you are calling from is recognized by the FELPS system, the FELPS electronic system will identify your account. If the phone number is not recognized, you must enter your 10-digit phone number.

If the volume of calls is heavy, your call will be directed to a queue to be answered in the order in which it was received. You’ll hear an automated “thank you for holding” message every 30-45 seconds. If the wait is going to be long, you will be prompted to call back later.

Whether calls are answered locally by FELPS customer service representatives or by CRC, the goal is to provide excellent service with the shortest amount of waiting time.

### **FELPS Briefs**

- Please mark your calendar for holidays when the FELPS office will be closed: Nov. 26-27 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.”
- Now is the time to update your FELPS records. Be sure FELPS has the number for the telephone you use (whether land line or cell phone) and your email address. You may want to consider adding names on your accounts, since FELPS will provide information only to the person or persons listed on the account to protect the account holder. 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.
- 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.

## **FELPS Pursues Rates Restructuring**

FELPS performed a cost of service study earlier this year. Based on the study, changes to the rate structure have been approved by the FELPS Board of Trustees and will go to the Floresville City Council for consideration.

The rate changes do not include a rate increase. The overall impact will be neutral, with customers seeing no change in their total bill amount. The service charge for most classes will increase, but the kilowatt hour energy charge will decrease, leaving little difference between the current rates and the proposed rates.

The Floresville City Council was scheduled to consider the changes in October, after this newsletter was printed. If approved, the changes will take effect in January.

# Improvements Can Mean Energy Savings

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 websites.

**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.

Some additional ways to reduce your utility this winter include:

- Set the thermostat at 68-70 degrees to maintain a comfortable temperature. Check the room temperature with a thermometer to be sure the thermostat is accurate.
- Service the furnace to be sure it operates properly and is clean. A well-maintained furnace is more efficient and lowers heating costs.
- Change filters at least monthly to be sure they are clean, so the furnace is not taxed unnecessarily.
- Consider installing a programmable thermostat so you can reduce the temperature at night and when you are away from home for an extended time.
- Resist the temptation to cover the rotating vents on your roof. These vents circulate air to reduce attic moisture and are necessary both in winter and summer.

## Lighting Brings Christmas Cheer

Part of the Christmas fun involves decorating. Unless you plan a large display, holiday lights are inexpensive to operate, because decorative lights require low wattage.

The newest type of light, the LED (light-emitting diode) bulb, can mean festive Christmas decorating at a fraction of the cost of older types of lighting. Using 90 percent less electricity than regular Christmas lights, LED lights do not get hot, so they can be used on a live tree without concern for setting it on fire.

Because LED lights are plastic, rather than glass, they are less likely to break and are therefore easier to string up and to pack after Christmas. 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, colors, white and even some shaped like snowflakes. Some indoor/outdoor strands can be purchased for as little as \$10.

Christmas 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.



## 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](https://www.facebook.com/FELPS.OnLine)

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

Business hours: Monday-Friday 8 a.m.-4:45 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 8:30 a.m. in the utility offices, 1400 Fourth Street, Floresville.