

Current

News from Floresville Electric Light & Power System

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New Office to Be Completed Ahead of Schedule

FELPS is constructing a new office at 187 Highway 97 E to house all employees and a customer drive-through. The move to the new facility is planned for late April or early May, several months earlier than the originally projected completion date in September. Watch the FELPS website at www.felps.us and social media for more announcements.

The building will bring all the utility's functions together in one location for greater efficiency and to provide space for future growth. When the move to the new facility is complete, the downtown Floresville and Highway 181 South locations will be vacated.

The one-story building will include about 22,500 square feet of space for administrative staff, 6,600 square feet of warehouse space and 6,000 square feet for the maintenance shop. The three major functions currently are spread among three different facilities.

Located on Highway 97 E next to the Texas Department of Transportation maintenance facility, the FELPS building will have a glass and stone front with metal louvers and metal siding. One of the most important features will be a convenient drive-through for customers.

FELPS Drone Project Assists Inspections

The FELPS drone project continues to provide outstanding assistance as staff inspects the FELPS system and provides another utility with images for their analysis of a problem.

In January, FELPS drone pilots contracted with Brazos Electric Power Cooperative troubleshooters to investigate damage to a transmission line after it was struck by lightning. Based on the high-quality images provided by the drone team, Brazos employees are using the information to plan repairs on their line.

The drone team has collected images of a FELPS line to be replaced, allowing the contract engineers to plan the construction without the need for their field teams to survey the line in person. The drone team also continues a sweep across the service area to complete inspections of lines and poles. The work along FM 1303, FM 775 and County Roads 104, 121, 122, 125 and 128 focuses on any potential problems that could lead to service disruptions, including issues with vegetation and infrastructure.

Customers receive automated calls to alert them of the drone team's presence before work is undertaken. Customers are asked to ensure needed access for the inspections and are encouraged to discuss the work with the drone pilots or by calling customer service at 830-216-7000, sub-option 2.

The two drones, Goose and Gander, were put into service last fall following pilot training of seven FELPS staff. The drones allow staff to save time and money performing inspection work, among other uses. The result will be improved reliability of the electric system and cost-effective service to customers.

Twice-a-year inspections of the entire FELPS electric system will be completed by the drones to monitor and track

FELPS Briefs

- The FELPS office will be closed to customer visits until further notice. Employees will observe a holiday on April 2 for Good Friday. Regular hours will resume at 8 a.m. on April 5. Customers can conduct business by telephone, mail and email.
- 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 or submit your outage through the FELPS web site www.felps.us.
- FELPS supports the stock shows in its service area through contributions. The utility contributed \$1,500 to the buyers' pool for the Wilson County Stock Show and \$1,000 to the La Vernia Stock Show.

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wear-and-tear on the lines and poles as well as to help identify areas that require vegetation trimming. Those inspections will aid in determining when equipment is nearing the end of its life and also can help determine when distribution automation will be helpful.

During outages, including those caused by storms, drones can be used to identify faults or downed poles so crews can more quickly restore power. Routine inspections can be made more safely and cost effectively by reducing the need to use a bucket truck to examine the tops of poles.

This FELPS foray into innovation and technology means even more reliable and cost efficient service for customers.

FELPS to Pay Owner Cities

Based on gross electric revenue in 2020, FELPS will pay \$1,220,531 to the three owner cities. Floresville will receive \$781,140 and Stockdale and Poth will each receive \$219,695. The payments represent 3 percent of the utility's gross electric sales within the cities during the previous year.

FELPS also will transfer 2.5 percent of gross electric sales within La Vernia and 2 percent in Falls City.

The payments go into the cities' general funds, allowing the cities to keep tax rates lower than otherwise would be the case.

Plant Now for Future Benefits

Early spring is a good time to add to your landscape so trees, shrubs and other plants can get a good start before the hottest months.

Choose landscape plants to reduce the requirements for watering. The results will save you money on your water bill and effort when the summer heat comes. And well-placed trees can help cool your home, reducing your electric bill.

While drought-resistant plants, such as lantana and salvia greggii, will bloom best if they have adequate water, they can survive the heat and drought of Texas summers even without water.

Likewise, native-type grasses, such as buffalo grass, do not require water to survive the summer. Buffalo grass will turn brown without water but will become green again when water is added or rainfall begins. On the other

hand, St. Augustine grass requires about one inch of water per week during the hottest months.

A well-watered tree in the landscape can reduce utility bills by shading your property, particularly the house. Trees on the south and west sides of your home will limit sun exposure.

When choosing trees, select the sizes according to the location. Plan the locations of trees so they will not interfere with power lines and will not crowd other landscape plantings.

Also consider the type of tree that will thrive in the environment. Because trees such as oaks and pecans grow well in South Texas and can reach 30-40 feet tall, they represent a good choice for lawns that have adequate space.

Smaller trees, such as cedar elms, can be better choices for more limited space. Flowering trees, such as crape myrtle and mountain laurel, can add color to the landscape and represent good choices for areas where shorter trees are required.

Wired World Can Inflate Electric Bill

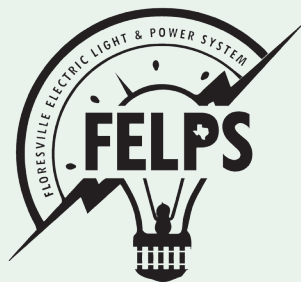
Electronics can account for as much as 15 percent of electricity usage in a home when you consider all the items such as televisions, home theaters, cordless and cell phones, computers, video games, clocks and equipment that has an analog or digital display.

With some thought, the amount of electricity used for electronic devices can be reduced to save on the utility bill each month.

You can turn off electronic devices when they are not in use. However, some devices continue to use electricity, because they have an internal battery to power up the device. In those situations, the device can be unplugged.

If it's difficult to remember to unplug a device, consider using a "smart" power strip. The "smart" power strip can sense when one device is turned off and turns off others connected to it. Or the power strip can monitor current flow to turn the device off completely when it is not being used.

Devices, such as computers, can be set to go on standby mode as a means of conserving electricity. With a little awareness, the use of electricity for electronics can be reduced.



Contacting FELPS

Floresville Electric Light and Power System

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www.felps.us Twitter: @FELPS_Electric Facebook: 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.