



# Current

News from Floresville Electric Light & Power System

Volume 23, Number 6

November/December 2021

## FELPS to Offer New Services for Customer Convenience

FELPS has three new services in the making to allow customers to conveniently get information about their electric service.

FELPS will soon offer a smart app for both Android and Apple phones so customers can access the same services they currently use on the website. Customers can view their bills and usage and can even make payments using the app.

Another service coming soon is text notifications of outages. Not only will you be able to report an outage by text, but you also will receive one automatically if an outage is confirmed.

Finally, the utility will unveil the new Meter Data Management system that will allow customers to see their electricity usage as often as every hour. With the information, customers can better manage their use of electricity and track patterns that may help them conserve, with the result of savings on electric bills.

Watch for information about these services on the FELPS website at [www.felps.us](http://www.felps.us).

## FELPS Works with Construction Contractor

During the remainder of 2021, FELPS staff will work with crews from Chain Electric to replace poles that were identified as rotted or failing when the annual pole inspection was completed in the summer. The program is part of FELPS' continuing focus on reliability of service.

Each year, 10 percent of FELPS-owned wood poles are tested to determine their remaining strength and to find decay. Under the program every pole is tested every ten years.

While most poles tested receive a clean bill of health, some are treated to extend their life and others are identified for replacement. Critical poles are changed out immediately, and non-priority problem poles are scheduled for Chain Electric to replace after all the testing is complete.

Customers can identify Chain Electric crews by the logo on their trucks. Even though they will be working only on FELPS-owned equipment, they may need to enter a customer's property. FELPS appreciates your assistance when that is the case.

## FELPS Briefs

- Please mark your calendar for holidays when the FELPS office will be closed: Nov. 25-26 for Thanksgiving, Dec. 24-27 for Christmas, Dec. 31 for New Year's and Jan. 17 for Martin Luther King Jr. 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.-4:30 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 website 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 website, [www.felps.us](http://www.felps.us), under the "E-Notifications" link located on the "My Account" tab.

## **FELPS Drone Team Continues Work**

The FELPS Drone and Data Collection team continues to look for potential issues in infrastructure and vegetation encroachment and to update information on assets to continue delivering reliable service.

Recently, the team finished inspections of the new SS30 line and tagged new poles that were installed along the route. They also completed a pilot audit of outdoor lights near FM 775 in the Eagle Creek area to ensure the accuracy of streetlight mapping and account ownership.

During November and December, the team will conduct drone flights along power lines in the areas of Abrego Lake subdivision, Flores Oaks, Lost Springs and County Road 119. They will continue auditing street lights but have not yet determined the area.

The team has expanded with the addition of Johnny Martinez in the position of visual observer. His job is to convey information about nearby hazards and other features to the pilots who may not be able to see them from their vantage point. He has worked many years on line crews and brings extensive knowledge about infrastructure maintenance.

Any questions about the work of the drone team can be addressed by team members in the field or by calling customer service at 830-216-7000, sub-option 1.

## **Save Money with These Tips**

Heating can represent a fairly large expenditure for electricity in South Texas, approximately 14 percent of the total electricity usage in a 2,000 square foot home. To reduce your utility bill this winter, follow some energy-saving practices.

Set the thermostat at 68-70 degrees to maintain a comfortable temperature. Check the room temperature with a thermometer to be sure the temperature near your thermostat is consistent with other areas of your home. Cold drafts or warm lamps nearby can result in an inaccurate reading.

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.

## **Plant Energy-saving Trees 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. Plan to have at least three feet from power lines.

## **LEDs Light Up Christmas**

The newest type of light, the LED 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.



### **Contacting FELPS**

187 Highway 97 E., Floresville, TX 78114

[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.-4:30 p.m. Drive-through closes at 4:15 p.m.

The FELPS Board of Trustees meets the last Wednesday of each month at 8:30 a.m. in the utility offices, 187 Highway 97 E., Floresville.