



GM'S REPORT

# ACCESS FOR ALL

## The pursuit of affordable rural broadband service

For nearly three years, Firelands Electric Cooperative's board and management have been investigating ways to get high-speed broadband internet to every home, business, and farm within our service territory. We are keenly aware that not all locations have access to this staple of modern life, which fosters economic development, promotes telehealth, advances educational opportunities, enables remote work capabilities, and provides social connectivity.

Firelands has invested considerable time and money into researching various options for extending high-speed broadband to all corners of our service territory, including a possible partnership with other area electric cooperatives to form a new internet company.

Unfortunately, the investment needed and the projected operating deficits for a new broadband entity have prevented us from developing a viable broadband business plan. Two different feasibility studies revealed that it would take millions of dollars in grant money to build and operate a new broadband entity. Our attempts to secure grants from the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF II) ended in disappointment when our service territory was deemed ineligible to apply due to several telecoms claiming to already provide broadband service to the area. In addition, other government programs for broadband expansion have been targeted primarily to existing telecom providers.

This has led Firelands to change our focus from building a broadband network of our own to

working with existing broadband providers to extend their service in Firelands' territory. Having access to federal and state grant funding, existing broadband providers appear to be in the best position to expand internet coverage into unserved rural areas. Recent discussions with multiple local broadband providers have been encouraging. We've agreed to offer cooperation and assistance that would help reduce construction and operation costs for the internet companies, and is intended to make it easier and more feasible for them to build new broadband alongside of Firelands' existing poles and power lines.

It is our sincere hope that these offers of assistance and cooperation, combined with needed state and federal grant funding, will result in an expansion of internet within our service area. I urge our member-consumers to contact area broadband providers and let them know that you want their services and that your location is on Firelands' lines. Please feel free to also contact me to share your observations or insights, which could help further this initiative.



Dan McNaull  
GENERAL MANAGER



SAFETY

# PRIORITIZE SAFETY YEAR-ROUND

At Firelands Electric Cooperative, we recognize Electrical Safety Month every May — but we also know the importance of practicing safety year-round. From our co-op crews to you, the consumer-members we serve, we recognize that everyone has a part to play in prioritizing safety.

According to the Electrical Safety Foundation International, each year thousands of people in the U.S. are critically injured or electrocuted as a result of electrical fires and accidents in their own homes. Many of these accidents are preventable. Electricity is a necessity, and it powers our daily lives. But we also know firsthand how dangerous electricity can be because we work with it 365 days a year.

For your co-op, safety is more than just a catchphrase. We want to help keep you and all members of our community safe. That's why you'll see Firelands Electric hosting safety demonstrations, sponsoring contests, and providing information on the dangers of electricity in our print and digital communications. We explain how to handle emergency scenarios, such as what to do in a car accident involving a utility pole and downed power lines. We caution students on the dangers of playing around electrical equipment and overloading circuits with too many electronic devices.

Electricity is an integral part of modern life. Given the prevalence of electrical devices, tools, and appliances, we'd like to pass along a few practical electrical safety tips.

Frayed wires pose a serious safety hazard. Power cords can become damaged or frayed from age, heavy use, or excessive current flowing through them. If cords become frayed or cut, replace them, as they could cause a shock when handled.

Avoid overloading outlets. Outlets can only cope with a limited amount of electricity. Overload happens when you draw more electricity than a circuit can safely handle by having too many devices plugged into one outlet. Contact a qualified electrician if your home is more than 40 years old and you need to use multiple large appliances that consume a lot of electricity.

Use extension cords properly. Never plug an extension cord into another extension cord. Known as "daisy chain," this could lead to overheating, creating a potential fire hazard. Don't exceed the wattage of the cord either. Doing so also creates a risk of overloading the cord. Extension cords should not be used as permanent solutions. If you need additional outlets, contact a licensed electrician to help.

Firelands Electric Cooperative encourages you to talk with your family about playing it safe and smart around electricity. Help them be aware of overhead power lines near where they work and play outdoors.

Our top priority is providing an uninterrupted energy supply 24/7, 365 days per year. But equally important is keeping our community safe around electricity.

For more electrical safety tips, visit our website at [www.firelandsec.com/safety-line-clearance](http://www.firelandsec.com/safety-line-clearance) or check out the Electrical Safety Foundation International at [www.esfi.org](http://www.esfi.org).

Frayed power cords are a serious safety hazard. Replace them immediately to avoid damaging household appliances, causing electric shock, or starting a fire.



YOUTH PROGRAMS

# SAFETY CONTEST WINNERS



Makayla Detterman  
DAUGHTER OF KURT AND MARIA  
DETTERMAN OF NEW LONDON

## Electrical safety quiz answers

- 1. Smoke alarms in your home should be tested how often to ensure they work properly?**  
A. Once a month
- 2. It is safe to run extension cords under carpet or rugs in your home.**  
B. False
- 3. What should you do if you are outdoors and hear thunder?**  
B. Seek shelter indoors and wait at least 30 minutes
- 4. It is safe to leave the kitchen with a burner on, as long as it's a short amount of time.**  
B. False
- 5. How far should items be kept away from space heaters?**  
C. At least 3 feet
- 6. Overloaded outlets can overheat and cause a fire.**  
A. True
- 7. If a toy or pet gets stuck on an electric pole or power lines, what should you do?**  
A. Have an adult call the electric company
- 8. It is okay to play near downed power lines, as long as you are careful.**  
B. False



Chase Carpenter  
SON OF BEN AND JESSICA  
CARPENTER OF ASHLAND



Dean Draper  
SON OF JEREMY AND BRITTANY  
DRAPER OF GREENWICH

The Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) designates the month of May as National Electrical Safety Month.

To help raise awareness of the importance of electrical safety among the cooperative's younger members, Firelands Electric sponsored an electrical safety contest earlier this spring. Students in kindergarten through fifth grade who live in a home receiving its power from the cooperative were eligible to enter. Those who correctly answered at least six of the eight questions on the electrical safety quiz available online and in the March issue of *Ohio Cooperative Living* magazine had their name entered into a drawing for a chance to win one of three restaurant gift cards.



COOPERATIVE HISTORY

# WHAT'S IN A *name* ?

The name Firelands is not unique to your cooperative. Commonly used in and around Huron County, the moniker has a long history, dating back to before the United States even existed. Like the story of American rural electrification, the name's origin often gets lost in the annals of time. This month, Firelands Electric Cooperative celebrates its 86th anniversary, and to mark this milestone, let's take a closer look at the history of our namesake and our co-op.

### Connecticut connection

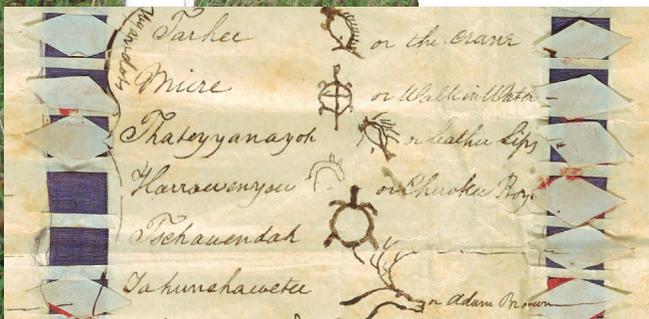
Although no significant battles took place in the Colony of Connecticut during the American Revolution, it did serve as an important site for the storage of weapons and ammunition for Colonial forces. The British, unable to seize control of the fiercely patriotic colony, resorted to raiding these storehouses and setting fire to everything in their path. From 1777 to 1781, the homes and livelihoods of Connecticut citizens in the following nine towns were completely destroyed: Danbury, New Haven, Fairfield, Norwalk, New London, Groton, Greenwich, Ridgefield, and East Haven.

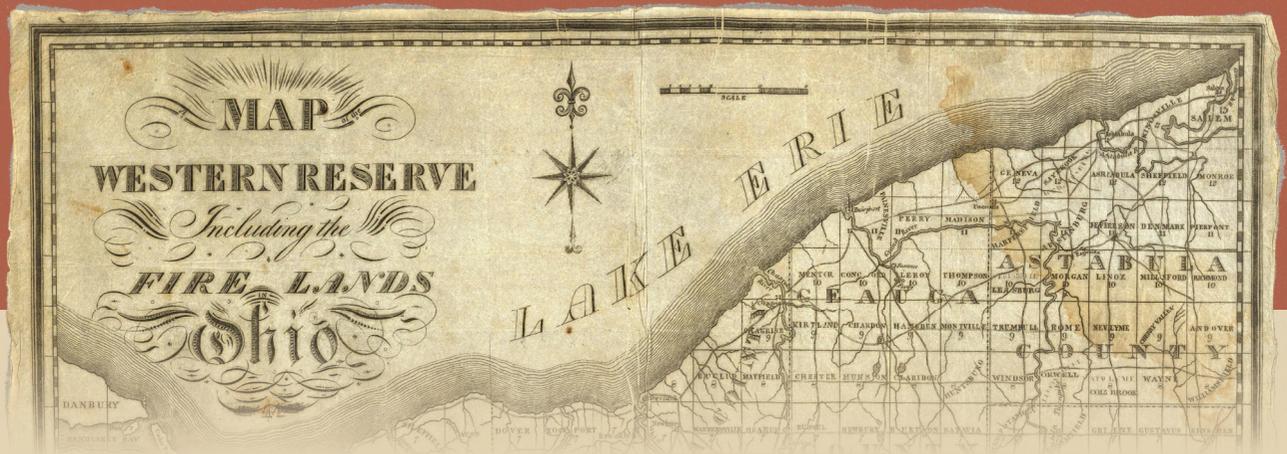
Called the "Fire Sufferers," those affected by the British raids repeatedly petitioned the Connecticut General Assembly to receive some type of compensation. In May 1787, a resolution was finally approved to repay the sufferers for their losses. But there was one problem — the colony had no funds available to do so. Instead of monetary compensation, those whose homes had been destroyed were promised tracts of land located in the Connecticut Western Reserve, an area west of Pennsylvania between Lake Erie and the 41st parallel that belonged to the colony. With 1,870 families experiencing \$538,445.26 in losses, this was the only feasible option Connecticut had for repayment.

Half a million acres was set aside for the sufferers in 1792. The area, now commonly referred to as the "Fire Lands," would become part of the state of Ohio in 1803. It consisted of present-day Erie and Huron counties, Danbury Township in Ottawa County, and Ruggles Township in Ashland County.

Taking possession of the land, however, would not be easy. Located hundreds of miles from Connecticut, the area was still covered by heavy forest and occupied by Native Americans. In July 1805, nearly three decades after the devastating British raids, the U.S. and eight Native American tribes (the Wyandotte, Ottawa, Chippewa, Munsee, Delaware, Shawnee, Seneca, and Potawatomi) signed the Treaty of Fort

Native American signatures from the Treat of Fort Industry (1805). As part of the treaty, eight tribes relinquished all rights to "The Fire Lands."





Industry in what is present-day Toledo. For an annual sum of \$1,000, plus a one-time payment of \$16,000, the tribes relinquished all land in the Connecticut Western Reserve, including the Fire Lands. The way was now open for the sufferers and their descendants to move west.

### The story continues

Over a century later, a group of determined Ohioans living in the same area as the original “Fire Lands” was also trying to improve their quality of life. On May 28, 1936, the North Eastern Farm Bureau Electric Cooperative was created for the purpose of exploring options to bring electricity to the rural areas of Huron and surrounding counties. The creation of the federal Rural Electrification Administration (REA) just a year prior had prompted the national Farm Bureau organization to help educate, organize, and guide farmers in their quest for electric power — and the local farmers wanted in.

After a year and a half of research, North Eastern took the first steps to becoming an REA-financed rural electric cooperative. In late 1937, the board petitioned to change their name to Firelands Electric Cooperative, Inc., reflecting the history of those it would serve. The first official board meeting of Firelands Electric took place on Jan. 25, 1938, and the co-op’s articles of incorporation were officially amended just four days later.

With the help of the REA, Firelands Electric was soon building its first power lines, which it energized during the summer of 1938 utilizing an interconnection with the Norwalk City municipal generating plant. The number of co-op members would continue to grow and, by the mid-1940s, Firelands Electric would acquire the New London Power Company, greatly expanding its transmission capabilities. What had started out as the dream of a few had become reality for many.

Today, Firelands Electric Cooperative serves over 9,100 homes and businesses in Ashland, Huron, Lorain, and Richland counties. The cooperative also maintains nearly 1,000 miles of power lines and over 25,000 utility poles. To read more about Firelands Electric’s history, visit [www.firelandsec.com/cooperative-history](http://www.firelandsec.com/cooperative-history). Included on the page is a link to a summary of the cooperative’s history written in 2002 by former Firelands Director of Finance and Accounting Harold Kirkpatrick, who worked at the cooperative from 1955 until 1986.

### Sources

*Firelands*. Ohio History Connection. <https://ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Firelands>

*The Firelands Grant* by Clarence D. Laylin. Ohio History Connection. *Ohio History Journal*. Volume 10/April 1902/ Number 4, pages 435–451. <https://resources.ohiohistory.org/ohj/browse/volumebrowse.php>

Firelands Electric Cooperative archives, board minutes, and handwritten records from former employee Harold Kirkpatrick.

*Fort Industry: An Historical Mystery* by Walter J. Sherman. Ohio History Connection. *Ohio History Journal*. Volume 38/ April 1929/Number 2, pages 231–259. <https://resources.ohiohistory.org/ohj/browse/volumebrowse.php>

*History of the Firelands*. Historic Lyme Village. <https://lymevillage.org/history-of-the-firelands/>

*Shared service: The History of Electric Cooperatives and Ohio Farm Bureau* by Craig Lovelace. *Ohio Cooperative Living*. March 2017. <https://www.ohiocoopliving.com/shared-service-history-electric-cooperatives-and-ohio-farm-bureau>

FIRELANDS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC.



# Save the date!

Join us for Firelands Electric Cooperative's  
**2022 Member Appreciation Day**

This year, your cooperative will be holding a special family-oriented event for members on Saturday, June 18. This event will take place from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Firelands Electric's facility, located at 103 Industrial Drive in New London.

~ *There's something for everyone!* ~

**Complimentary lunch**  
**Gifts for each member**  
**Additional prize drawings**  
**A brief business meeting**  
**Inflatable slides**

**Face painting**  
**Carnival games and prizes**  
**Crafts**

*Complete details for the 2022 Member Appreciation Day will be mailed to members in the latter part of May. Remember, voting for trustees to represent districts 4, 5, and 8 will be conducted by mail and online ballot from May 1 to June 12. The results will be announced during the business meeting portion of Member Appreciation Day. For details about the election process, please see the article on the next page.*



TRUSTEE ELECTIONS

# CAST YOUR



Trustee elections open May 1

Members of Firelands Electric Cooperative will choose trustees to represent board districts 4, 5, and 8 this year. Elections will be conducted by mail and online ballot. Co-op Ballot, an independent service provider, will manage the election by printing and mailing ballots, overseeing the online voting portal, and receiving and tallying all votes.

Members will receive candidate biographies and a paper ballot in the mail at the end of April. Candidate information will also be available online at [www.firelandsec.com](http://www.firelandsec.com) and in the June issue of *Ohio Cooperative Living* magazine.

### How to cast your vote

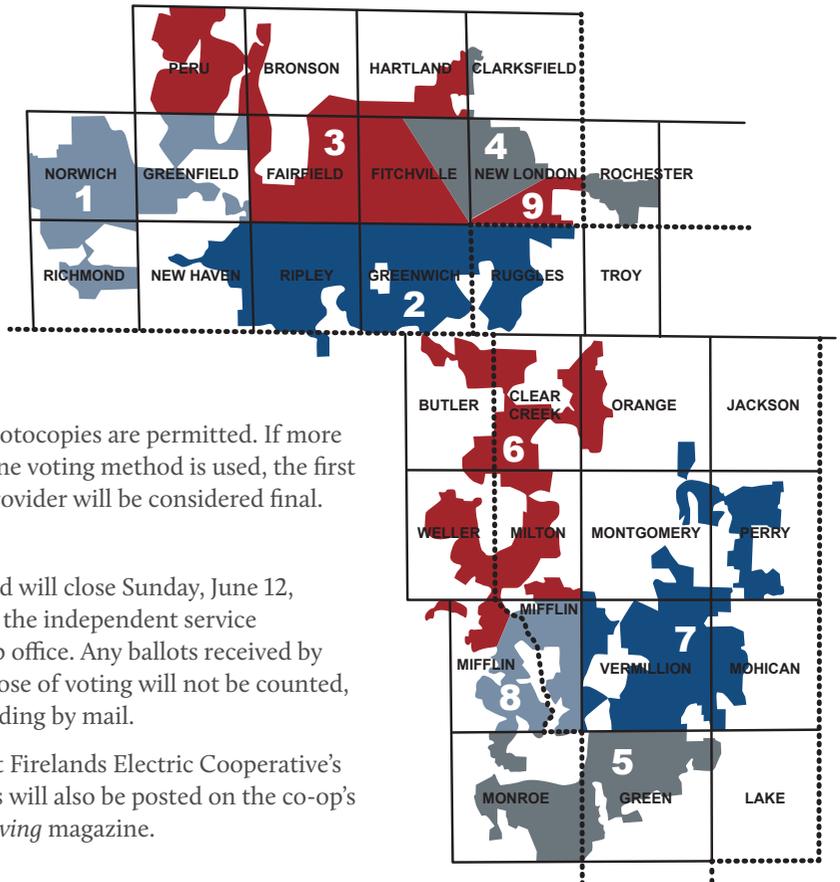
Beginning Sunday, May 1, Firelands Electric members can vote online via a secure link available on the co-op's website (<http://firelandsec.coopballot.com>). Members may also opt to vote by returning their completed paper ballot in the envelope provided.

You will need the account number on record, which is found on your printed or emailed monthly billing statement, to cast your vote online. Paper ballots cannot be accepted by the cooperative's office. Only original paper ballots will be accepted; no photocopies are permitted. If more than one ballot is submitted, or more than one voting method is used, the first ballot received by the independent service provider will be considered final.

### Timeline

Co-op voting will open on Sunday, May 1, and will close Sunday, June 12, at 11:59 p.m. Paper ballots must be mailed to the independent service provider and cannot be accepted at the co-op office. Any ballots received by the independent service provider after the close of voting will not be counted, so please allow ample time for delivery if sending by mail.

Winners of the election will be announced at Firelands Electric Cooperative's annual meeting on Saturday, June 18. Results will also be posted on the co-op's website and published in *Ohio Cooperative Living* magazine.





OPERATIONS UPDATE

# ACCORDING TO PLAN

## Co-op crews making progress on rebuild projects

In the electric cooperative industry, it's essential to have a strategy for the future. Making sure there is a clearcut plan in place for the construction and maintenance of power lines, utility poles, and other infrastructure helps ensure that members continue to receive the reliable, affordable power they have come to expect.

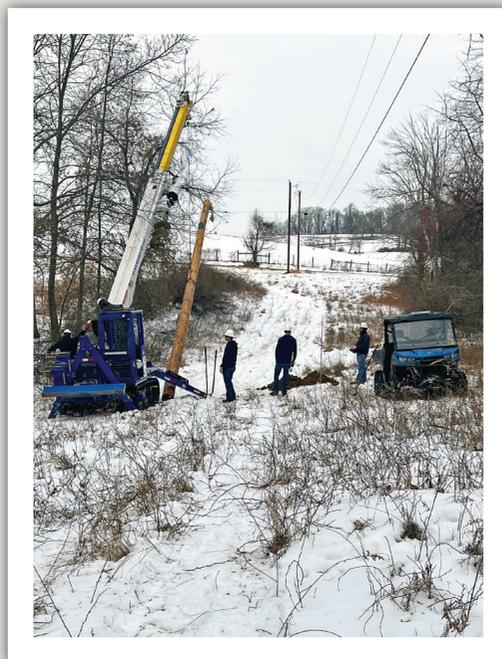
Over the past few months, Firelands Electric Cooperative has been making progress on its current workplan. Crews have been focusing on areas that are difficult to access due to challenging terrain and their distance from roadways. Several poles in one of these areas were recently replaced in Ashland County's Vermillion Township, including one pole that was leaning considerably due to erosion from a nearby creek. While already in this hard-to-reach area, Firelands' crews also replaced five poles that were starting to show signs of aging and deterioration.

Crews have also been concentrating on areas with very old conductor (the wire that carries electricity from one point to another). In Richland County's Monroe Township, Firelands replaced four poles and copper weld conductor that was approximately 75 years old. Located along a farm driveway, this project was done in cooperation with the member and will improve the quality of service for the farm as well as other nearby members.

Other current line crew projects include rebuilding a section of line running east from State Route 603 in Monroe Township, Richland County, and a project in Ashland County's Green Township. The stretch along State Route 603 was originally constructed in 1945, so the co-op is replacing all of the poles as well as the conductor. Having seen several service

interruptions in recent months, Firelands' goal in this particular location, like with many of our projects, is to reduce the number of power outages in the future. The 1.1-mile line rebuild project in Ashland County, on the other hand, is being completed to improve voltage because members at the end of this line have experienced a voltage drop that doesn't meet the co-op's standards.

While Firelands Electric's linemen have many additional projects to complete yet this year, the first few months have been pretty productive — and our crews plan to keep it that way.



Firelands Electric crews use the cooperative's tracked digger to help set a new utility pole near State Route 603 in Richland County.

## YOUTH PROGRAMS

# CO-OP SELECTS 2022 YOUTH TOUR DELEGATES

Firelands Electric is pleased to announce that Abbie Durbin and Brett Carnegie will be representing the cooperative on the 2022 Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.

After a two-year hiatus due to COVID-19, the Youth Tour is back! Sponsored by Ohio's Electric Cooperatives and Firelands Electric, this all-expenses-paid trip will

take place June 18–24. Abbie and Brett will join approximately 40 other students from rural electric cooperatives across the state of Ohio as they tour the sights in and around our nation's capital.

The daughter of Joe and Angela Durbin of Plymouth, Abbie is a senior at Plymouth High School. She plans to attend Tiffin University next fall and pursue a degree in criminal justice and forensic psychology. Her ultimate career goal is a future with the FBI's Behavioral Analysis Unit.

Brett is the son of Ron and Kendra Carnegie of Loudonville. He is a junior at Loudonville High School and also attends the Ashland County-West Holmes Career Center, where he participates in the robotics and advanced manufacturing program. Brett is also currently part of the tool and die apprenticeship program at Schaeffler Group of

Wooster. He plans to earn a degree from the University of Akron and become an Ohio certified journeyman.

The annual Youth Tour program gives children of members a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to participate in an in-depth look at Washington, D.C.

Participants have the chance to visit sites such as the U.S. Capitol, Gettysburg, the Smithsonian Institution, the Vietnam Memorial, the Kennedy Center, the Supreme Court Building, and many others. Through educational and sightseeing activities, students gain a personal understanding of American history and their role as citizens. They also meet and interact with their U.S. representatives and senators.

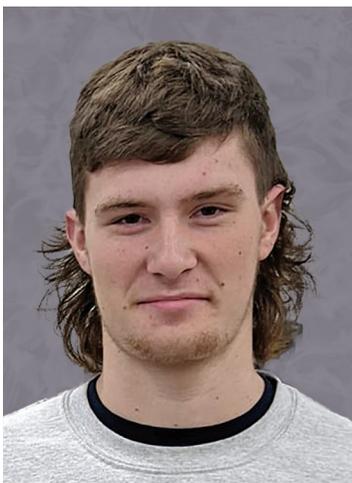
While groups are organized at the state level, Firelands' delegates will also meet students from other cooperatives across the country for Youth Day. At this event, they will hear featured speakers who provide insight into the important roles that electric co-ops play in their communities. In all, nearly 2,000 students participate in Youth Tour each year.

Students may also be chosen to represent their state on the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) Youth Leadership Council (YLC). One student from each state is selected to come back to Washington, D.C., in July for a leadership workshop that focuses on the electric cooperative industry.

Firelands' Youth Tour contest is offered to high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors who reside in a home served by the cooperative. Candidates are evaluated on school and community activities, demonstrated leadership, and a letter of recommendation. Up to two applicants are then chosen to represent the co-op on the annual tour. To learn more about Firelands' youth programs, visit [www.firelandsec.com/youth-programs](http://www.firelandsec.com/youth-programs).



Abbie Durbin  
PLYMOUTH HIGH SCHOOL



Brett Carnegie  
LOUDONVILLE HIGH SCHOOL





ENERGY EFFICIENCY



# 10 IDEAS FOR SUMMER SAVINGS

A hot, uncomfortable home and elevated energy bills can take the fun out of summer. To help you save this season, check out these ten tips:

1. **SERVICE YOUR AC UNIT** Air conditioning units work by moving air over fins or coils that contain refrigerant. Whether you have a portable unit, central AC, or a heat pump, get your system ready for summer by cleaning the filter, coils, and fins. If you are tackling this yourself, remember to always disconnect power to the unit first. Central AC systems have two sets of coils — one inside and one outside — and both should be cleaned annually. If you hire a professional, they can also check refrigerant levels during this process.
2. **SEAL YOUR WINDOW AC UNIT** If you have a window or portable AC unit that vents through a window, seal the area between the window sashes. Water heater pipe insulation is a great way to seal this spot. It's available at your local hardware store and is easy to cut for a snug fit.
3. **THERMOSTAT SETTINGS** Keeping your thermostat at the highest comfortable temperature will save you money. If you aren't home during long stretches of the day, increase your thermostat eight to ten degrees. There's no need to cool an empty house.
4. **KEEP YOUR COOL** Before heading to the thermostat, turn on a fan in the room you're in. This may be enough to make you comfortable without spending more to cool your home.
5. **LOCK WINDOWS** After opening your windows at night or in the morning to let in fresh air, ensure your windows are closed and locked. This reduces gaps that allow cool air to escape your home and let hot air in.
6. **WEATHERSTRIPPING AND CURTAINS** Covering and sealing windows may seem like tasks reserved for winter, but they help in the summer, too. Add weatherstripping to form a tight seal and curtains you can close during the hottest times of the day to block out the sun.

7. **COOK AL FRESCO** Keep your home cool or your AC from working overtime by cooking outside. Many grills have an extra burner on the side that lets you do stovetop cooking outside, too.
8. **ADD INSULATION** Even in the summer, adding insulation can keep your home more comfortable and save you energy by keeping warm air out. As a general rule, if you can see the joists in the floor of your attic, you need more insulation.



Using your grill to cook meals can keep your home cooler on hot summer days.

9. **TURN OFF GAS FIREPLACES** Reducing the amount of heat entering your home can keep it cooler, especially if you don't have AC. If you have a gas fireplace, your pilot light lets off a small amount of heat into the room. Consider turning it off during summer months.
10. **ADD SHADE OUTSIDE** Planting trees and shrubs strategically around your home can shade the roof, walls, and pavement, reducing heat radiation into your home. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, tree-shaded neighborhoods can be up to six degrees cooler in the daytime than treeless areas.

If you're looking to keep comfortable and save energy this summer, make sure to try applying a few of these ideas! For additional summer savings tips, visit [www.energy.gov](http://www.energy.gov).



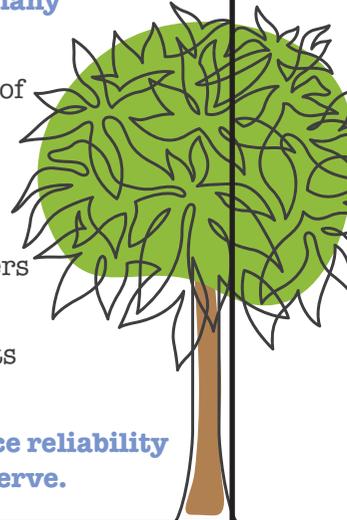
## We Trees, Too.

We know everyone in our community enjoys the beauty and shade trees provide. But trees and power lines can be a dangerous mix without regular trimming.

**If you see us out in the community trimming, remember the many benefits it brings:**

- Keeps power lines clear of tree limbs
- Helps us restore power outages more quickly
- Keeps crews and members of our community safe
- Reduces unexpected costs for repairs

**Trimming improves service reliability for you, the members we serve.**



SPONSORED BY OHIO'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

Nominate a **bright light** in your community

*Inspired by a co-op member making a difference in your community? Tell their story and they could win \$500!*

Beginning May 1, submit a photo of your nominee, tell us why that person inspires you, and explain how they make a difference in your co-op community. Deadline for entries is June 4. Visit [ohioec.org/wpvo](http://ohioec.org/wpvo) for complete details.



## MEMORIAL DAY

Remember & Honor

The Firelands Electric Cooperative office will be closed on

**Monday, May 30**

to honor those who gave their lives for our freedom.

*As always, emergency service is available 24/7 by calling 1-800-533-8658.*





COOPERATIVE UPDATE

# BOARD MEETING *highlights*

*Firelands Electric Cooperative's board of trustees met Feb. 22 and covered the following items:*

- Board President Dan Schloemer reported that the cooperative received 37 membership applications for approval by the board.
- General Manager Dan McNaull reviewed a report for a safety and training meeting held Jan. 19.
- McNaull reviewed Form 7A, which is year-end documentation submitted to RUS.
- The board reviewed capital credits retirements from Buckeye Power to the cooperative.
- McNaull reviewed the monthly tree-trimming and outage reports.
- The board reviewed the status of petitions filed in the upcoming 2022 trustee elections.
- Director of Finance and Accounting Tabi Shepherd reviewed the January financials and reported on recent accounting and billing department activities.
- McNaull reported on the OEC Winter Conference, which he attended in early February.
- Director of Communications and Technology Andrea Gravenhorst reviewed recent activities involving the member services and IT department, including the implementation of a new, updated cyber security platform.
- Schloemer reported on an audit committee meeting that he and Trustee Bruce Leimbach recently attended.
- Director of Operations Don Englet reviewed recent activities and projects in the operations department, including a review of the Special Equipment Summary Report and mutual aid provided to fellow Ohio cooperative South Central Power Company.
- Trustee Kevin Reidy reported on a recent OEC meeting he attended.
- McNaull reminded the board that the NRECA Annual Meeting was scheduled for March 6–9.

The cooperative's next board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 24. If you would like to attend the next scheduled meeting, please contact the Firelands Electric office at 1-800-533-8658.

**FIRELANDS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.**

**OUTAGE HOTLINE**

1-800-533-8658

**OFFICE**

103 Industrial Drive  
P.O. Box 32  
New London, OH 44851  
1-800-533-8658

**OFFICE HOURS**

Mon.–Fri. 7:30 a.m.–4 p.m.  
[www.firelandsec.com](http://www.firelandsec.com)



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Dan Schloemer  
President, District 1

Bruce Leimbach  
Vice President, District 4

Carl Ayers  
Secretary/Treasurer, District 5

W.E. Anderson  
District 8

Tom Lucha  
District 3

Gene Lamoreaux  
District 2

John Martin  
District 9

Kevin Reidy  
District 6

Rob Turk  
District 7

**GENERAL MANAGER**

Dan McNaull

**HAVE A STORY SUGGESTION?**

Email your ideas to:  
[members@firelandsec.com](mailto:members@firelandsec.com)

