GM'S REPORT

Don Englet
GENERAL MANAGER

Your CO-OP

Choosing the members of your co-op's board

As a cooperative, Firelands Electric is far from an ordinary utility company. We exist to serve our members and our community, not to make a profit for remote investors. For our business model to work, we rely on members like you to be informed, engaged, active, and supportive of your co-op. This includes electing the most qualified fellow members to serve on Firelands' board of trustees.

From March 2 through April 12, cooperative members will be casting their ballots to decide who will represent districts 1, 3, and 6 on the co-op's board for the next three years. Before you vote in the 2026 elections, let's do a quick review of the responsibilities of a Firelands Electric Cooperative board member.

Community representation

Board members are a direct link between the cooperative and its members. Unlike those of investor-owned utilities, our board is made up of people who live in our community, ensuring decisions reflect the priorities and needs of local families and businesses.

Influencing policy

Members serving on the board have an important voice in shaping the cooperative's path forward — whether that involves upgrading the local distribution system, adopting new technologies, or supporting initiatives that benefit our community.

Ensuring fair rates

The board plays a key role in setting electric rates. Trustees work diligently to find a balance between affordability for members, reliability of our system, and maintaining the financial health of the co-op.

This process is vital to ensuring fairness and stability for Firelands Electric's households, farms, schools, and businesses.

Supporting local development

Beyond delivering electricity, Firelands' investments strengthen our region's future. From simplifying the process for high-speed internet companies to expand into our area to encouraging job growth and supporting infrastructure, trustees help champion initiatives that make a lasting difference in the places we call home.

Your VOTE

One of the most meaningful ways members can help shape their co-op community's future is by participating in the annual board of trustee elections. I invite each and every one of you to exercise your rights and recognize your responsibilities in keeping the co-op strong for years to come by casting your vote in this year's board elections. For complete details on the voting process, see the next page.

Board trustees have more than a leadership role. They have an opportunity to help guide the future of your cooperative and create real impact for your neighbors and community — so make sure to cast your vote.

HOW TO CAST YOUR BALLOT

In 2026, members of Firelands Electric will elect trustees to represent districts 1, 3, and 6.

- Voting will be conducted by mail and online ballot. A third-party, independent provider will manage the election, overseeing the printing and mailing of ballots, the online voting portal, and receiving and tallying all votes.
- Candidate biographies and a paper ballot were mailed to every member in February. A link to video messages from the candidates is also available on our website at www.firelandsec.com/cooperative-elections.
- Votes may be cast online via the secure link available at www.firelandsec.com or by returning the completed paper ballot in the envelope provided. If casting your vote online, the account number on record, which is found on your printed or emailed monthly billing statement, will be required.
- **VOTING OPENS ON MONDAY, MARCH 2, AND WILL CLOSE SUNDAY, APRIL 12, AT 11:59 P.M.**
- Only original 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 provider will be considered final.
- Any ballots received by the independent provider after the close of voting will not be counted, so please allow ample time for delivery if sending by mail.
- Paper ballots must be mailed to the independent provider and cannot be accepted at the co-op office.
- Winners of the election will be announced at Firelands Electric Cooperative's virtual annual meeting, which will be posted in early May. Results will also be posted on the co-op's website and published in *Ohio Cooperative Living* magazine.

LET'S CELEBRATE!

MEMBER APPRECIATION DAY

MAY 21, 2026

at Firelands Electric Co-op's facility in New London
Details will be included in the April issue of *Ohio Cooperative Living*

service with purpose 90 YEARS Firelands Electric COOPERATIVE

YOUTH PROGRAMS

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS:

Want to see firsthand how electricity is generated?

CARDINAL POWER PLANT YOUTH DAY

April 22, 2026

Firelands Electric will be selecting up to 20 high school students to join us for a free, all-day trip to the Cardinal Power Plant on April 22.

Located in Brilliant, Ohio, Cardinal is one of the cleanest coal-fired power plants in the world and provides electricity to 1 million Ohioans, including the members of Firelands Electric Cooperative.

Youth Day applicants ***DO NOT*** need to be members of the co-op. Any students who attend one of the 17 high schools in our service territory are eligible to apply. Filling out the short online application takes just a few minutes!

Want to join us for a day of touring Cardinal's state-of-the-art facility, food, and fun? Applications are available on our webiste and are due by 4 p.m. on Friday, March 27.

Firelands Electric COOPERATIVE
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

ELIGIBLE HIGH SCHOOLS:

- ASHLAND
- CRESTVIEW
- HILLSDALE
- LOUDONVILLE
- LUCAS
- MADISON
- MAPLETON
- MONROEVILLE
- NEW LONDON
- NORWALK
- PLYMOUTH
- SENECA EAST
- SOUTH CENTRAL
- ST. PAUL
- ST. PETER
- WESTERN RESERVE
- WILLARD

FOR COMPLETE TRIP DETAILS AND THE LINK TO THE ONLINE APPLICATION, VISIT WWW.FIRELANDSEC.COM/COMMUNITY.

SAFETY

THE POWER OF PREPARATION

Meteorologists can often provide us with an advanced warning of upcoming severe weather events. However, sometimes a spring thunderstorm or extreme winter weather can strike with little to no warning. That's why it's important to always be prepared for the possibility of a prolonged power outage or other emergency by having enough food, water, and supplies to last your family at least a few days. Although Firelands Electric does our best to keep the length of power outages to a minimum, there are times when damage from wind, lightning, snow, or ice is simply too extensive.

So, what should members do? Be prepared.

While specific needs will vary by household, there are several practical steps you can take now to keep you and your family safe during potential future power outages. There is power in preparation. A little planning now can help reduce stress and anxiety and lessen the impact of an emergency event later.

To get you started, here are some general outage preparation guidelines recommended by the Federal Emergency Management Agency:

- **Assemble a grab-and-go disaster kit.** Include items like nonperishable food, water (one gallon per person, per day), diapers, batteries, flashlights, prescription medications, first-aid kit, battery-powered radio, and phone chargers.
- **Develop a communications plan.** Have a conversation with family and friends about how you will stay in touch if an emergency arises. Consider communicating via text, social media, third party, or another means.
- **Have some extra cash available.** During a power outage, electronic card readers and cash machines may not work.
- **Store important documents in a safe place.** Items such as birth certificates and property deeds should be kept in a secure location, such as a waterproof/fireproof home safe or bank deposit box. It's also a good idea to scan and save digital backups of important documents.
- **Fill your car with gas.**
- **Organize your supplies.** Keep emergency supplies together in an easily accessible location that all family members know about.
- **Have medication and supplies on hand for those with health needs.** This includes alternative power sources for devices that provide oxygen or nebulizers. Make sure that extra batteries are fully charged, and work with your doctors or equipment providers to arrange for power options in the event of an emergency. If a family member with medical needs does not live with you, arrange for someone to check in on them. If severe weather is expected, consider having your relative stay with you.
- **Have an ample stock of supplies for infants and young children.** Keep enough formula, diapers, medication, and other supplies on hand to get through an outage lasting several days.
- **Plan for the needs of your pets.** Microchip your pet and keep the contact information up to date. Create an emergency kit with food, bottled water, and medications, just like you do the other members of your household.

Power outages can be distressing — but planning for an emergency situation today can give you peace of mind when severe weather does strike. For more information on outage safety, visit Firelands Electric Cooperative's website at www.firelandsec.com/outage-center.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

KILO-WHAT?

Understanding kilowatt-hours and their impact on your electric bill

On your monthly billing statement, the Energy Charge listed in the Current Service Detail box is determined by the number of kilowatt-hours your home has used. But what exactly is a kilowatt-hour of electricity? How many kWh do different devices and appliances typically use? And how can you reduce the number of kWh your home requires each month?

Defining kilowatts

Every electrical device in your home has a wattage rating, which tells you how much electricity it needs to operate. A watt is a unit of electricity, and a kilowatt is equal to 1,000 watts. Wattage ratings vary widely by device. For example, a portable space heater uses 1,500 watts, a 1.5 horsepower pool pump requires 2,000 watts, and a water heater needs 4,500 watts. Wattage also differs based on the manufacturer, size, age, capacity, and features of your specific equipment.

Breaking down kilowatt-hours

Kilowatt-hours calculate the amount of electricity, measured in kW, that a device consumes over time. If you have a 40-watt TV, for instance, it will use 0.04 kilowatts of electricity per hour. To consume one kWh, you'd have to binge-watch your favorite shows for 25 hours. However, a 2,000-watt pool pump would only need 30 minutes to burn through one kilowatt-hour.

Calculating cost

But how does this information help with reading your bill? First, the formula below uses what we just learned to calculate how much electricity an appliance in your home is using each day.

COST OF ELECTRICITY FORMULA

STEP 1: wattage of device ÷ 1,000 = kilowatts

STEP 2: kW x number of hours appliance used per day = total kilowatt-hours per day

SAMPLE CALCULATION FOR A SPACE HEATER:

STEP 1: wattage of 1,500 ÷ 1,000 = 1.5 kW

STEP 2: 1.5 kW x 8 hours per day = 12 kWh per day

To determine the cost, multiply the kWh by the electric rate:

12 kWh per day x $0.14370 = **$1.72 per day**

Keep in mind that the figures above represent the cost of electricity to run a single space heater one eight-hour day. If the heater is operated for eight hours every day of the month, multiply the daily cost by 30 days. In this example, this adds up to more than $45 in electricity a month to run one space heater.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Scott Carbary
ENERGY ADVISOR

SCOTT'S ENERGY SPOT: HEAT PUMPS

Tips from Firelands Electric's energy advisor

Improved design, government and utility incentives, and the surge in electrification in the U.S. over the past decade have resulted in heat pump sales surpassing natural gas systems for residential heating and cooling. But is a heat pump right for your home? Let's take a deeper dive to find out!

Heat pumps extract heat from the air, soil, or water and transfer it to your living space. Since they transfer heat rather than generating it, like a gas, oil, or electric furnace would, heat pumps can have efficiency ratings as high as 150% to 400% or more.

Ducted air-source heat pump

There are several different types of heat pumps available. The most common is the ducted air-source heat pump (ASHP). Resembling a standard outdoor air conditioner, the unit transfers heat from the outside air to the indoor furnace or air handler via a refrigerant. The warm air is then distributed throughout the house with ductwork. In cooling mode, this process is reversed. The refrigerant transfers the heat from the indoor space to outside the home. In other words, the heat pump is one unit that functions as both a furnace and an air conditioner. ASHPs are versatile and can be used in residential, commercial, new construction, and retrofit applications with efficiencies ranging from 150% to 200%.

New models of ASHPs work well in our northern climate but do need a source of backup heat to supplement their output when temperatures drop into the 30s or below. This back up source could include an electric furnace (heating coils), or a gas or oil furnace. When used in conjunction with fossil fuel furnaces, heat pumps can also help members use the least expensive of their home's available heat sources.

Water source heat pump

Instead of air, water-source heat pumps (WSHP) transfer heat using water from a well or pond. The unit is usually located in the basement and connected to the home's ductwork system. This type of heat pump can also be incorporated into a hot water baseboard system.

WSHPs can have operating efficiencies up to 300% or more. They supply consistent temperatures as long as they receive an adequate quantity and quality of water. These systems also require a way to dispose of the water after the heat transfer is completed.

Ground source heat pump

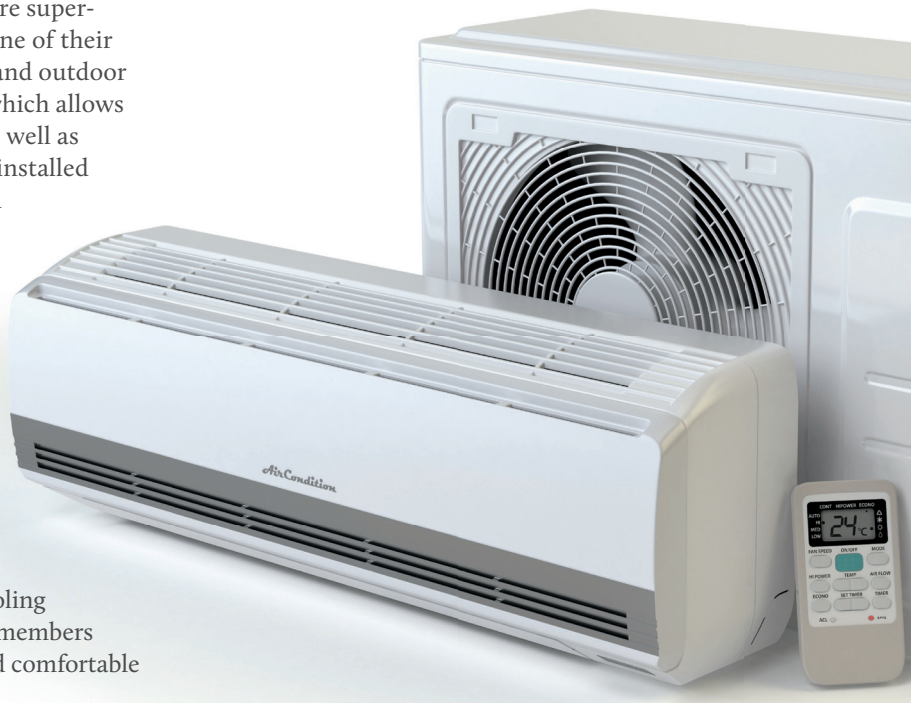
Ground source heat pumps (GSHP), also referred to as geothermal systems, transfer heat from outdoors to indoors via fluid-filled pipes that are installed horizontally or vertically in the ground or a pond. To function properly, the piping system may require a large amount of space, making GSHPs one of the most expensive heat pump types to install. Like ASHPs, GSHPs are typically located in the basement and connected to a ductwork system. However, their efficiency can be much greater, reaching a maximum of more than 400%.

Mini-split heat pump

Mini-split heat pumps have been used in other countries for some time but are now growing in popularity in the U.S. They are most often used in a ductless configuration with individual units in various rooms throughout the home. Mini-splits are super-quiet with efficiencies of 200% to 250%. One of their benefits is the ability to adjust the indoor and outdoor blowers based on the needs of the space, which allows greater heating and cooling capabilities, as well as better dehumidification. They can also be installed for a relatively reasonable cost and be used in homes without ductwork, such those heated with electric baseboards.

Contrary to the naysayers familiar with their parents' or grandparents' heat pumps, a well-designed and properly installed system will work well in our northern climate. Proof of this lies in the Nordic countries' successful use of heat pumps, where 60% of the buildings in Norway and more than 40% of those in Sweden and Finland use heat pumps for heating and cooling their homes. However, it is important that members use a contractor who is expertly trained and comfortable with installing and setting up a heat pump.

I know this has been a lot of information, but remember that the cooperative's highly skilled employees are always happy to help and to answer any questions you may have. Simply contact the Member Services Department by calling 1-800-533-8658.



GENERATE SAFELY

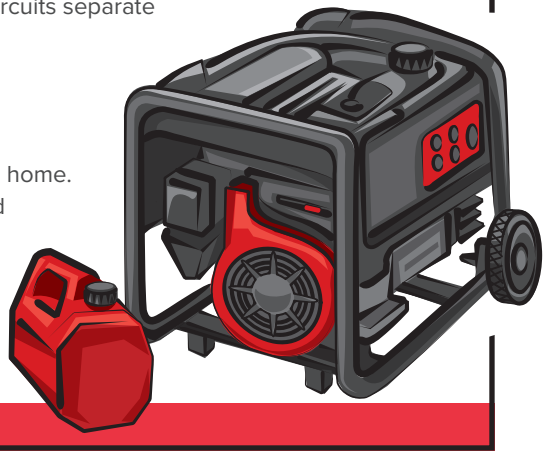
Never connect a standby generator into your home's electrical system. There are only two safe ways to connect a standby generator to your equipment.

Stationary generator

- An approved generator transfer switch, which keeps your house circuits separate from the electric co-op, should be installed by a professional.

Portable generator

- Plug appliances directly into the outlet provided on the generator.
- Set up and run your generator in a well-ventilated area outside the home. Make sure it's out and away from your garage, doors, windows and vents. The carbon monoxide generated is deadly.
- Use a heavy-duty extension cord to connect electric appliances to the outlet on the generator.
- Start the generator first before connecting appliances.



COOPERATIVE UPDATE

BOARD MEETING *highlights*

Firelands Electric Cooperative's Board of Trustees met Dec. 19 and covered the following items:

- Board President Dan Schloemer reported that the cooperative received 32 membership applications for approval by the board.
- General Manager Don Englet reviewed the monthly safety and training, tree-trimming, outage, and personnel reports, which included an update on the 2026 tree maintenance budget.
- Director of Operations Rick Bowers reported on activities in the operations department.
- Englet advised that the OEC Winter Conference is scheduled for Feb. 9 and 10.
- The board reviewed updates on the AEP and First Energy project in New London, along with progress reports on several ongoing substation projects, including repairs at Fitchville, the Coulter rebuild, and plans for a new Hillsdale substation.
- Englet reviewed a recent New London Township meeting that he attended regarding the potential for solar array installations in the area.
- Director of Finance and Accounting Tabi Shepherd reviewed the November financial reports and provided an update on recent accounting and billing department activities.
- Schloemer recapped a recent OREC meeting he attended, which included discussion on planning for the potential construction of data centers in Ohio.
- Englet reviewed the OEC Competitive Retail Electric Service Report and Ohio SSO Update, advising that both reports were positive for Firelands' generation provider, Buckeye Power.
- Director of Communications and IT Andrea Gravenhorst reported on recent activities involving the member services and IT departments, including steps being taken to prevent possible cyber attacks.

The cooperative's next board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 14. 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.

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GENERAL MANAGER
Don Englet

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Email your ideas to:
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