



MESSAGE FROM THE BILLING DEPARTMENT

WATTS YOUR WAY

Co-op offers several payment options to help manage your money while still keeping you cool this summer



Jessica Schwanger, Stephanie Schmidt, and Julie Amato
FIRELANDS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE'S BILLING DEPARTMENT

Do you have a favorite summer activity? We love a good backyard barbeque, weekends by the pool, fishing at the lake, family vacations . . .

There is one thing that no one likes, however — increases in our electric bills from cooling our homes during the dog days of summer!

Having bill amounts that change dramatically throughout the year can make managing your cash flow difficult. Budget billing is just one of several free programs that Firelands Electric offers to help our members make their monthly bill payments easier and more predictable. (See next page for other options.)

DEADLINE TO SIGN UP FOR THE NEXT BUDGET PLAN YEAR IS FRIDAY, AUG. 21.

Firelands Electric's budget program avoids drastic changes in the balance due by leveling your bill and setting up a consistent amount to be paid each month. (There is an example of a budget plan on the next page.)

Your budget amount is based on an estimated average of your home's past 12 months of electric use. In short, a year's worth of electric bills is spread out into even monthly payments over the year. Since the amount is based on previous use, members **MUST HAVE** at least one year of residency listed in their name at their current address to be eligible for the program.

Firelands Electric's budget plan has an annual "catch-up" month at the end of the 12-month period. Any unpaid balance remaining on your account is due by Aug. 14. If you have a credit, this will be reflected on your August bill and you may not owe a payment for the month. (Please note: This is for the month of August only.) Members' accounts are reviewed quarterly and the monthly budget

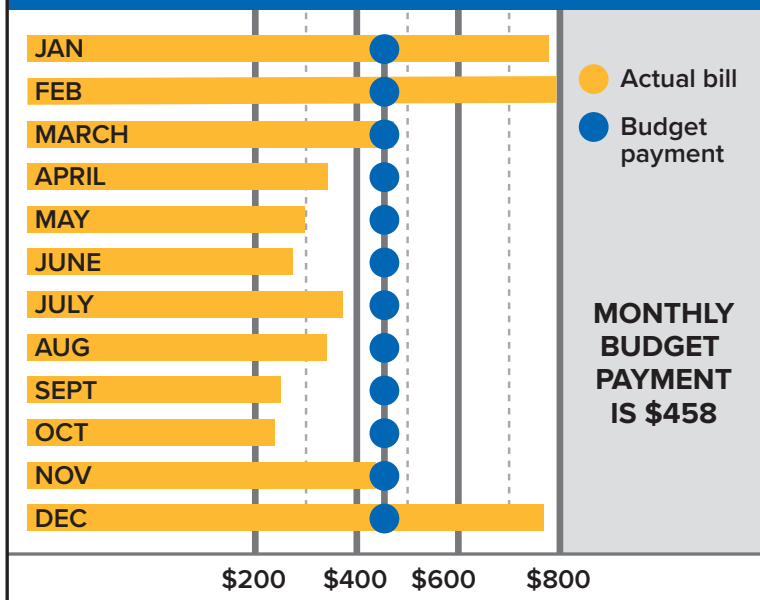
payment amount adjusted, if necessary, based on actual electric consumption. This helps members avoid having a significant balance or credit at the end of the budget year in August. Members can also keep track of their running balance in the "Current Account Balance" line of their monthly billing statements.

Don't let significant changes in your bill spoil your summer plans! Sign up for the next budget plan year by Friday, Aug. 21. (Your first budget payment will be due on Sept. 14.) Members currently enrolled in budget billing will automatically be renewed for next year.

For more information on budget billing and the co-op's other payment options, check out the next page, visit www.firelandsec.com/payment-options, contact Firelands Electric's billing department at 1-800-533-8658, or email us at billing@firelandsec.com.



SAMPLE BUDGET BILLING PLAN



PAYMENT ASSISTANCE

These agencies have programs that may be able to help with utility bills

JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES

Ashland County — Ashland
5 West 4th St.
419-282-5000

Huron County — Norwalk
185 Shady Lane Dr.
419-668-8126

Lorain County — Elyria
42485 North Ridge Rd.
440-323-5726

Richland County — Mansfield
171 Park Avenue East
419-774-5400

UNITED WAY'S 211

Call 211 when you need help locating human service agencies. It's a free, confidential 24-hour service, so you get the help you need when you need it. Information is also available online at www.211.org.

COMMUNITY ACTION COMMISSION (CAC)

Ashland County — Ashland
1060 Claremont Ave. #2
419-281-4327

Huron County — Norwalk
92 N Prospect St.
419-668-9823

Huron County — Willard
530 S Conwell St.
419-935-6481

Lorain County — Lorain
936 Broadway Ave.
1-888-245-2009

Richland County — Mansfield
597 Park Ave. East
419-589-2520

For a more extensive list of agencies, visit www.firelandsec.com/energy-assistance-agencies.

WAYS TO PAY YOUR BILL



Online

Firelands' SmartHub can be accessed 24 hours a day from the link on our website (www.firelandsec.com) or by downloading the mobile app. SmartHub also gives members the option to schedule future payments.



Auto pay

Your monthly payment can be automatically drafted from your bank account or debit/credit card. To enroll in this service, log in to your SmartHub account or contact the office at 1-800-533-8658 for assistance.



Office lobby or drive-through window

Members may pay in person at our office walk-up window or drive-through. We accept cash, checks, money orders, and debit/credit cards. This option is available Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.



Drop box

After hours, payments may be placed in our secure, 24-hour drop box, located just before the drive-through window. Members should not put cash in the drop box.



Pay by phone

Payments may be made 24/7 with a bank account or debit/credit card by calling our Automated Payment System at 1-855-940-3960.



Payments by mail

Members may mail payment, along with the bottom portion of their bill, in the return envelope provided. Please allow ample time for delivery, as payments must be RECEIVED by the 14th of each month to avoid late fees.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY



Scott Carbary
ENERGY ADVISOR

SCOTT'S ENERGY SPOT: FEELING LUCKY?

Don't gamble with HVAC maintenance

While luck may be a good option for the horse track, it is not the best idea for your HVAC system.

In a recent survey conducted by the HVAC equipment manufacturer Duraplas, 50% of those polled were choosing to

rely on luck this summer by skipping regular maintenance on their air-conditioning system.

In these tough economic times, some of Firelands Electric's members may also be considering this option to save some money. While this may seem like a good idea in the short term, it could end up costing a great deal in the long run — through both higher monthly utility bills and HVAC equipment failure.

HVAC maintenance may seem like an unnecessary expense when high prices are putting the squeeze on your monthly budget, but simple maintenance and updates can often be completed by members for minimal cost and just a small investment of time.

Low cost ways to win big

Regular filter changes are one of the easiest and most effective maintenance tasks but are often overlooked until cool air stops blowing from the vents. Unfortunately, by the time this occurs, it may be too late. A lack of airflow across the indoor coil can cause liquid refrigerant to travel to the compressor, ruining it as quickly as a bad hand at the casino.

According to HVAC filter manufacturers Permatron and Airbear, a dirty filter can increase summer cooling bills by 30% to 60%. Clogged filters force your air-conditioning system to run continuously and seriously affect the unit's cooling performance. This can be easily avoided by regularly spending ten minutes to replace a \$4 to \$40 filter.

While in the basement changing the filter, members should also inspect the air distribution system. Look for gaps and loose metal on the supply and return

sheet metal trunk (the main conduit of the HVAC system), as well as on the ductwork. According to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), the average HVAC ductwork leaks enough air through gaps and holes to reduce the system's overall efficiency by 30% or more. These areas can be sealed easily with a heat-resistant caulk, aluminum foil tape (don't use duct tape), and my personal favorite, brushable duct mastic. All three are available online or at any area hardware store. For an investment of only \$10 to \$50, members can increase their HVAC efficiency and their home's comfort level.

The outside condensing unit of your air conditioner is another area that could also benefit from a periodic visual inspection. The U.S. DOE advises that a layer of dirt, grass clippings, or cottonwood the thickness of only a dime can increase utility bills by preventing the condensing unit from moving heat from the home to the outdoors. This causes the air-conditioning system to run continuously while also providing little to no cool air. The layer of dirt can be removed by shutting the power off to the outdoor unit and using a garden hose, compressed air, or a soft brush and shop vac to remove the debris. Don't apply too much force though, because it can damage the cooling fins of your unit.

Firelands Electric's members do not have to rely on luck to save money on their utility bills this summer. Tips, DIY instructions, and other helpful links are available on our website at www.firelandsec.com/energy-education. And, I'm always happy to provide members with a free, one-on-one energy efficiency consultation. To schedule your free consult, contact the members services department at 1-800-533-8658 or at members@firelandsec.com.



FIRELANDS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LOCAL PAGES



Firelands Electric welcomed approximately 340 members and guests to our facility in New London on Thursday, May 21, for the cooperative's 2026 Member Appreciation Day. This event gave members the opportunity to help celebrate the co-op's 90th anniversary, enjoy food, win prizes, and participate in family fun.

The co-op provided attendees with a barbeque meal from West Clarkfield Smokers and ice cream treats. Guests had the opportunity to watch several electrical safety demonstrations, check out interactive energy efficiency displays, participate in co-op trivia, and enjoy inflatable bounce houses. The cooperative's 2026 virtual annual meeting video was available for viewing in the board room throughout the afternoon.

Ten attending members were also selected to each receive a \$90 bill credit as part of a special prize drawing. Congratulations to Kathy Wallace and Tim Davidson, both of Ashland; Timothy Moss of Greenwich, Don Freeborn of Jeromesville; William Brooks of Monroeville; Carole Gerlock of New London; Paul Yong of Nova, Charlie Scott of Perrysville, Len Leber of Shiloh, and Robert Thompson of Willard.

To view additional photos from the event, scan the QR code or visit our Flickr gallery at www.flickr.com/photos/firelandsec/albums.



SCAN TO VIEW
ADDITIONAL PHOTOS



integrity community commitment
accountability innovation

2026 MEMBER APPRECIATION DAY

“Members are the heart of everything we do, and this event is our way of saying thank you.”

— Firelands Electric Cooperative
General Manager/CEO Don Englet





IN THE COMMUNITY

SNAPshots



At left, students from the preschool classes at New London Local Schools explore one of Firelands Electric's bucket trucks during a special touch-a-truck event held in April. Working Foreman Phil Pickering (top) and Engineering Operations Coordinator Rob Swiger (bottom) helped students check out the cab, bucket, tools, and safety gear.



On April 22, Firelands Electric played host to a dozen students from area high schools for Cardinal Power Plant Youth Day (at right). Attendees participated in an exclusive behind-the-scenes tour of the plant, which is located in Brilliant, Ohio. Students also learned about the many career opportunities available in the electric cooperative industry.

Cardinal Power Plant provides electricity to more than 380,000 homes and businesses in 77 of Ohio's 88 counties, including the members of Firelands Electric.





In June, Firelands Electric Co-op employees helped campers at Huron County's 4-H Camp Conger tackle hands-on extension cord projects as part of a longstanding partnership with the camp.



Visit www.flickr.com/photos/firelandsec/ albums or scan the QR code above to view photos from additional cooperative events.

Happy Independence Day!

REMINDER:
The Firelands Electric Cooperative office will be closed on
Friday, July 3
As always, emergency service is available 24/7 by calling 1-800-533-8658.



HESS EARNS NATIONAL CREDENTIAL

Firelands' District 7 Trustee Greg Hess (pictured at right) recently received his Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). This program recognizes trustees who have completed five core courses focused on the successful operation of the electric cooperative: director duties and liabilities, understanding the electric business, board operations and processes, strategic planning, and financial decision-making. Board President Dan Schloemer (left) presented Hess with his certificate at the April board meeting.



COOPERATIVE UPDATE

BOARD MEETING *highlights*

Firelands Electric Cooperative's Board of Trustees met April 28 and covered the following items:

- Board President Dan Schloemer reported that the cooperative received 14 membership applications for approval by the board.
- General Manager Don Englet reviewed the monthly safety and training, tree-trimming, outage, and personnel reports.
- Englet reviewed plans for the upcoming member appreciation event.
- Director of Operations Rick Bowers reported on activities in the operations department.
- The board reviewed bids and delivery times for the Hillsdale Substation transformer.
- Englet reviewed activities from the cooperative's recent employee appreciation week.
- Director of Finance and Accounting Tabi Shepherd reviewed the March financial reports and provided an update on recent accounting and billing department activities.
- Englet provided updates on several meetings he recently attended, including meetings for the Village of New London Council, the Ohio MDM, and the Ohio Line Supervisors Association.
- Director of Communications and IT Andrea Gravenhorst reported on recent activities involving the member services and IT departments.
- Schloemer provided a recap on the recent OREC meeting he attended, including updates regarding operations at the Cardinal Power Plant. Board Vice President Kevin Reidy shared information from the Board Leadership Summit, and District 4 Trustee Lon Burton reviewed a class he recently attended.
- Board Secretary/Treasurer and District 5 Trustee Carl Ayers announced his retirement from the board, effective immediately.

The cooperative's next board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 28. 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
New London, OH 44851
1-800-533-8658

OFFICE HOURS

Mon.-Fri. 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
www.firelandsec.com



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Dan Schloemer
President, District 1

Kevin Reidy
Vice President, District 6

Tom Lucha
Secretary/Treasurer, District 3

Joe Williams
District 2

Lon Burton
District 4

[Vacant]
District 5

Greg Hess
District 7

Adrian Finlay
District 8

Brian Cucco
District 9

GENERAL MANAGER

Don Englet

HAVE A STORY SUGGESTION?

Email your ideas to:
members@firelandsec.com

