



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



# DISTINCTIVELY DIFFERENT

Capital credits set us apart from other utilities



Dan Schloemer  
BOARD PRESIDENT

In the early part of the 20th century, when investor-owned utilities refused to bring electricity to the sparsely populated areas of rural America, residents pooled their resources and worked together to accomplish what could not be done individually. For a small investment of \$5, those living in the Firelands area in 1936 joined forces to create an electric cooperative. Their economic contributions helped generate enough capital to start building a new electric distribution system to serve a growing need.

As a not-for-profit, Firelands Electric Cooperative operates at cost, collecting just enough revenue to maintain and operate our distribution system. At the end of each year, if there is money left over after paying all the co-op's expenses, any margins are allocated (or assigned) to you, our member-owners, as capital credits. These credits are a member's equity — or "share" of ownership — in the cooperative and are based on each individual member's electric use.

This equity is combined with that of other members and used to maintain and improve the electrical distribution system, as well as cover unforeseen expenses such as storm damage or other emergencies. This reinvestment

of margins allows Firelands to continue providing reliable electricity, while also avoiding increased costs associated with borrowing from a lender. And when the funds in your capital credits account are no longer needed to operate the co-op, they are returned to you!

Each year (typically in late spring), you receive an allocation notice letting you know how much was added to your capital credits for the previous year, as well as your total capital credits balance. When the cooperative's financial position permits, capital credits are retired, or paid back to our member-owners, much like investor-owned companies return dividends to shareholders.

This year, Firelands Electric is retiring \$1 million in capital credits to current and former co-op members. Those who received electric power from the co-op in portions of 2005 and 2006 are eligible for a refund. Retired capital credits will automatically be applied to the August bills of qualifying current members. Former members scheduled to receive a refund will be issued a check, so make sure that Firelands Electric always has your current mailing address on file.

Since 1948, Firelands Electric Cooperative has refunded more than \$22.3 million in capital credits to our members — an almost unheard-of situation at non-cooperative utilities. For more information, including a detailed explanation of the allocation process, visit [www.firelandsec.com/capital-credits](http://www.firelandsec.com/capital-credits). If you have additional questions, please contact our billing department at 1-800-533-8658.



## CAPITAL CREDITS Q&A

### **What's the difference between allocated and retired capital credits?**

An allocation is made annually for every member based upon Firelands' margins for the year and the amount of electricity the member purchased. This amount is set aside to be used as operating capital for maintaining the co-op's distribution system. Co-op members receive an allocation notice every year, which is simply a report showing their capital credits balances for the current and previous years.

A retirement is the portion of a member's capital credits balance that is being refunded. The amount retired is decided annually by the board of trustees based on the financial health of the cooperative.

### **Will I receive a refund every year?**

Like any investment, receiving a payout takes time. The board of trustees authorizes retirements based on the financial condition of the co-op. When a retirement takes place, specific years are selected, and those who were Firelands Electric members during those years are eligible to receive a refund. Typically, members with the longest-standing investments in the co-op receive a refund first. In recent years, those receiving refunds have been co-op members for about 20 years.

### **What happens to my capital credits if I move out of the co-op's service area?**

Your capital credits balance remains on the books in your name until the credits are retired. Refund payments are made to both current and former co-op members, so be sure to always provide us with your current mailing address. If a member passes away, the legal representative of their estate should contact the co-op for assistance.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY SCAVENGER HUNT

August is month four of our six-month contest!

To enter, submit or post a photo of something in your home, garage, barn, or business that fits the monthly theme by the 25th of each month. The next deadline is August 25.



### August's theme is **THERMOSTATS**

- Entries can be submitted by:
- Posting your photo on your Facebook page and tagging the co-op
- Emailing your photo to [members@firelandsec.com](mailto:members@firelandsec.com)
- Visit [www.firelandsec.com/contests](http://www.firelandsec.com/contests) for complete details.

## Happy Labor Day!

The Firelands Electric Cooperative office will be closed on

**Monday, Sept. 1**

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



IN THE COMMUNITY

# ADVENTURES IN ENERGY EDUCATION

For 100 years, 4-H Camp Conger, near North Fairfield in Huron County, has been welcoming campers during the month of June. Firelands Electric has been a proud supporter of this tradition for more than half a century, when the cooperative first brought electric power to the camp. For the past 40 years, Firelands employees have also helped campers build electrical projects, including the 45 extension cord projects completed earlier this year.



Earlier this summer, Firelands Electric's Scott Carbary (above left), Jake Willbond (front cover), Evan Clemons, Andrea Gravenhorst, and Tracy Gibb, along with summer intern Reed Warnement, spent a morning teaching electrical safety to elementary students participating in New London FFA's annual safety town event.



To view additional photos from Firelands Electric Cooperative's recent events, scan the QR code or visit [www.flickr.com/photos/firelandsec/albums](http://www.flickr.com/photos/firelandsec/albums).





## FIRELANDS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LOCAL PAGES

### YOUTH PROGRAMS



## Experience Ohio's capital with your co-op

Do you know a high school student interested in history, government, or politics? Encourage them to apply for Cooperative Youth Day in Columbus, which is scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 23, 2025.

Firelands Electric will be selecting up to 25 students to join us for this FREE, all-day chartered bus trip. Selected participants will tour the Ohio Statehouse, meet with legislators, visit the Statehouse Museum, and have time to check out the nearby Ohio History Center. Breakfast items, snacks, and drinks will be available for students on the bus ride to and from Columbus, and a complimentary lunch will be provided at the Statehouse.

To be eligible, students must be in grades 9-12 during the 2025-26 school year and attend one of the schools in or around Firelands Electric Cooperative's service territory (Ashland, Huron, Lorain, or Richland counties).

**Applicants do not need to be cooperative members to apply.**

**COOPERATIVE  
YOUTH DAY  
2025**

Simply use the QR code at right to fill out our short application online or download a fillable PDF to complete and send to the cooperative.

Complete details and a link to the application are available at [www.firelandsec.com/cooperative-youth-day](http://www.firelandsec.com/cooperative-youth-day). You may also visit our Flickr gallery at [www.flickr.com/photos/firelandsec/albums](http://www.flickr.com/photos/firelandsec/albums) to view photos from last year's Youth Day.

Questions? Contact Firelands Electric's member services department at [members@firelandsec.com](mailto:members@firelandsec.com) or by calling 1-800-533-8658.



APPLY BY:  
**SEPTEMBER 19**  
[www.firelandsec.com/community](http://www.firelandsec.com/community)



## CO-OP NEWS

# Sign up to tour the **CARDINAL POWER PLANT**

Located on the Ohio River in Brilliant, Ohio, Buckeye Power's Cardinal Power Plant provides electricity to Firelands Electric and the 23 other electric co-ops in Ohio. The plant has invested millions of dollars in environmental upgrades — making it one of the cleanest coal-fired power plants in the world.

This scenic day trip is free and available to cooperative members who have not previously toured the plant. Attendees will participate in a short presentation and guided tour of Cardinal, as well as be treated to an early dinner on the trip back to Ashland and New London.

The bus will depart from Firelands' office in New London and will include an additional pick-up/drop-off point at the Ashland County Career Center on State Route 60.

Since the power plant can be a potentially hazardous area, Cardinal requires tour participants to be at least 12 years old. There will be a considerable amount of walking, climbing several flights of stairs, and going through some hot and dusty areas. Members with health concerns, those who require assistance walking, or those who cannot walk more than a half mile without resting should not take the tour.

Space is limited and reservations are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Seating for this popular tour fills up quickly, so be sure to sign up early.

If you are interested in attending this year's tour and would like to request seats for you and a guest on the Cardinal tour bus, please visit [www.firelandsec.com/power-supply](http://www.firelandsec.com/power-supply). Members may also sign up by contacting the member services department at [members@firelandsec.com](mailto:members@firelandsec.com) or by calling 1-800-533-8658.

**The 2025 Cardinal  
Power Plant tour will  
take place on  
Wednesday, Oct. 1.**





## ENERGY EFFICIENCY

# SCOTT'S ENERGY SPOT: ADJUSTING YOUR THERMOSTAT

Efficiency tips from Firelands Electric's energy advisor



Scott Carbary  
ENERGY ADVISOR

During summer energy consultations, I often get asked, "Are there any energy savings if I turn my thermostat up when I'm gone?"

The U.S. Department of Energy has performed testing on a variety of homes in warmer climates. They estimate that turning your thermostat up by seven to ten degrees when you are asleep or away from home during the summer months can yield a savings of about 10%, or up to \$180, per year. In my

experience as a building analyst and energy consultant, I haven't found it to be quite that simple, however. A more accurate answer would be "It depends." If a member is interested in saving energy or lowering costs, I would answer yes — but with some reservations.

For starters, when considering thermostat adjustments to reduce energy costs, it's important to keep the efficiency and condition of a home in mind. In previous articles I spoke about air leaks and solar heat gain, where the sun shining through a home's windows heats up the interior.

If a home has poor insulation or is drafty, and the shades or blinds are always open, the air conditioner will struggle as it attempts to cool the house down to a comfortable level.

The age or condition of the outdoor cooling unit, indoor ductwork, and the blower system are

other things to consider. If the outdoor air-conditioning unit has a layer of dirt, debris, or cottonwood or dandelion fuzz stuck on the surface of the coil, it will have a hard time trying to transfer heat from inside the home to the outside, making it very inefficient. If the indoor HVAC filter is plugged or overly restrictive, it will also reduce air flow coming out of the registers. In addition, older homes (and even some newer ones) are notorious for having inadequate ductwork to the second floor. In all of these situations, turning the thermostat down ten degrees when you are not home may actually cause your air-conditioning system to run almost continuously as it tries to cool your home's interior.

With all that being said, members can experiment a bit with their thermostat to determine what works best for their home. Seven to ten degrees might be too large of a temperature swing for their home but a three to four degree shift may be achievable. The installation of a smart thermostat, which learns your habits and adjusts the cooling and heating system automatically according to the home's needs, may also be beneficial. Those who install Google Nest and Ecobee smart thermostats have reported a savings of 10% on their annual cooling costs.

At this point, you're probably wondering, "What conclusions can you even draw from all of this information?" The benefits of adjusting your thermostat at night or when you are at work or school vary from home to home, and person to person. There is no clearcut answer, and determining what is best for your home may be a process of trial and error. If bumping the thermostat from 72 degrees to 78 when you are away works for you and doesn't overly increase the demand on your cooling system, by all means give it a try to see if it lowers your energy use.

However, if you notice your system working harder and running more often to compensate for the change in temperature, it may be a better idea to try a smaller adjustment or other low costs ways to keep cool. For example, start off by checking the outdoor unit to make sure it isn't clogged and that you can see the coil or fins.





Avoid having any debris or landscaping closer than one foot from your outdoor unit so that your system has the room it needs to operate at its most efficient. It's also a good idea to regularly make sure the air filter in your HVAC system is clean and installed correctly. Finally, once the air-conditioner is on, do not open the windows in the evening and use drapes or blinds to limit the hot sun's impact on the interior temperature during the day.

Hopefully this article has provided a better understanding of the numerous variables you need to take into account when deciding if a thermostat adjustment could be beneficial. If you still have questions, please reach out to the energy experts at your cooperative by calling 1-800-533-8658. They will be happy to help or even schedule a free in-home consultation.

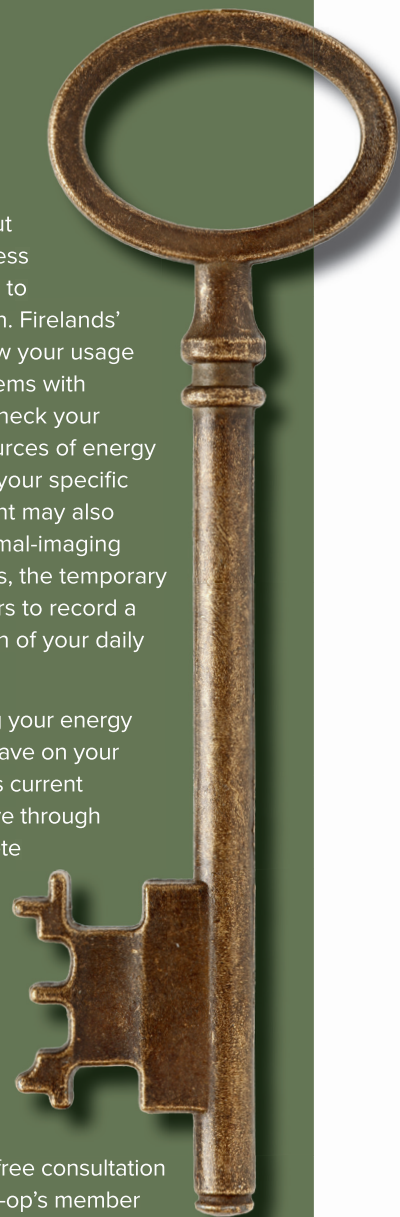
## UNLOCK SAVINGS WITH MEMBER PROGRAMS

Making your home more energy efficient reduces not only your electricity use, but also your utility bills. To help you unlock the benefits of efficiency upgrades, Firelands Electric Cooperative offers members several programs. Let's take a look at just a few:

- **APPLIANCES** — Replace existing appliances with new qualifying ENERGY STAR-certified models to receive bill credits ranging from \$50 to \$100 per appliance.
- **ELECTRIC WATER HEATERS** — Installation of a new electric water heater or replacement of an existing unit with a model that meets or exceeds the co-op's energy efficiency requirements can earn you a bill credit of \$300 or \$150, respectively.
- **HEAT PUMP AND GEOTHERMAL SYSTEMS** — Co-op members who install new or replacement geothermal, air-source, dual fuel, or ductless mini-split heat pump systems that meet or exceed the co-op's energy efficiency standards can also qualify for rebates. The majority of these incentives do require participation in the cooperative's Cool Returns load management program ([www.firelandsec.com/load-management](http://www.firelandsec.com/load-management)). Rebates range from \$200 to \$800, depending upon the type of system that is installed.
- **MISCELLANEOUS REBATES** — Additional rebates available include incentives for installing a Level-2 electric vehicle charger (up to \$250), smart thermostat (up to \$150), and professionally-installed air-sealing and insulation upgrades (up to \$800).
- **FREE ENERGY CONSULTATIONS** — A free consultation with the cooperative's energy advisor

can provide a great opportunity to learn about how your home or business uses electricity and ways to reduce your consumption. Firelands' energy advisor will review your usage history, pinpoint the systems with the highest usage, and check your property for common sources of energy waste. Depending upon your specific situation, this appointment may also include the use of a thermal-imaging camera to locate air leaks, the temporary installation of data loggers to record a more detailed breakdown of your daily usage, or other tests.

Finding the key to improving your energy efficiency is a great way to save on your utility bills. The cooperative's current rebate programs are effective through June 15, 2026. For a complete listing of Firelands Electric Cooperative's rebate programs and other incentives, as well as the specific eligibility requirements, visit [www.firelandsec.com/member-programs](http://www.firelandsec.com/member-programs). Questions regarding these programs and requests to schedule a free consultation should be directed to the co-op's member services department by emailing [members@firelandsec.com](mailto:members@firelandsec.com) or calling 1-800-533-8658.





## COOPERATIVE UPDATE

# BOARD MEETING *highlights*

*Firelands Electric Cooperative's Board of Trustees met May 27 and covered the following items:*

- Board President Dan Schloemer reported that the cooperative received 26 membership applications for approval by the board.
- General Manager Don Englet reviewed the monthly safety and training and tree-trimming reports.
- The board reviewed options for the retirement of capital credits to current and former members. Following discussion, the board unanimously approved the retirement and refund of \$1 million to those who received power from the co-op in portions of 2005 and 2006.
- Englet reviewed expenditures for the Coulter substation project and issues with obtaining materials for its completion.
- Director of Operations Rick Bowers reported on activities in the operations department, including the impact of recent vehicle accidents on the co-op's outage statistics.
- Englet reviewed several conferences and meetings he attended over the past month.
- The board viewed a recording of the recent NRECA Governance Talk and an informational video on the Cardinal Power Plant.
- Englet discussed the monthly outage report, including an update on a recent transmission outage caused by a vehicle-pole accident impacting 1,846 co-op members.
- Director of Finance and Accounting Tabi Shepherd reviewed the April financial reports and provided an update on recent accounting and billing department activities.
- Schloemer reviewed the OREC report, which positive changes to HB15.
- Director of Communications and IT Andrea Gravenhorst reported on recent activities involving the member services and IT departments, including the results of a recent cybersecurity assessment which reflected improvement since the previous testing conducted in 2023.

The cooperative's next board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 26. 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](http://www.firelandsec.com)



### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Don Englet

#### HAVE A STORY SUGGESTION?

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

