



GM'S REPORT

# Electric reliability threatened by current U.S. energy policy

Are rolling blackouts coming to Ohio?



Dan McNaull  
GENERAL MANAGER

Over the past few months, cooperative leaders across the state, including myself, have met with elected leaders at the Ohio Statehouse and in Washington, D.C., to discuss our concerns over power reliability and the impact it could have on our communities.

We know that our members rely on the power that Firelands Electric provides. You depend on it — for your lives and your livelihoods — 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

However, for the first time

since neighbors came together to form Firelands Electric Cooperative in 1936, the reliability of electric power is at risk.

Buckeye Power, our generation provider, produces plenty of power for all 400,000 members of Ohio's electric cooperatives, but we are also connected to the larger electric transmission grid and depend on it to balance supply and demand. Your cooperative works hard every day to ensure the local delivery system is reliable through planned maintenance programs and responsive service to local power outages. However, what's happening on the state and national levels still has an impact on us.

It's important that you understand why power reliability is at risk:

- Demand for electricity is higher than ever, especially during extreme weather conditions and with the growing electrification of our transportation network.
- The national supply of reliable electricity is down due to the rapid retirement of coal and nuclear plants.

For instance, in 2009, Ohio had 21 coal-operated power plants. By the end of 2023, just four will remain in operation. Intermittent sources such as wind and solar power have come online but not enough to fill the gap left by the closed coal-fired plants. Plus, these alternative sources, which are being built and operated with government-provided subsidies, aren't readily available around the clock or during every weather scenario.

- Overreaching and unreasonable environmental regulations have resulted in unnecessarily high costs for coal- and gas-operated power plants and provide only minimal environmental benefits.
- Poorly designed electricity market rules under-compensate reliable baseload power plants that provide steady, controllable output, while over-compensating less reliable, intermittent sources.
- Unattainable goals and time frames have been put into place to achieve greater reductions in carbon emissions from electricity providers, even though the U.S. electric sector has cut carbon dioxide emissions by 36% since 2005 — while also producing nearly 5% more electricity.
- Supply chain challenges have resulted in lengthy lead times for obtaining new transformers, line trucks, and other equipment necessary for local service.

Organizations charged with ensuring a reliable electric grid and managing Ohio's grid, such as the North

*Continued on page 18*



## FIRELANDS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LOCAL PAGES

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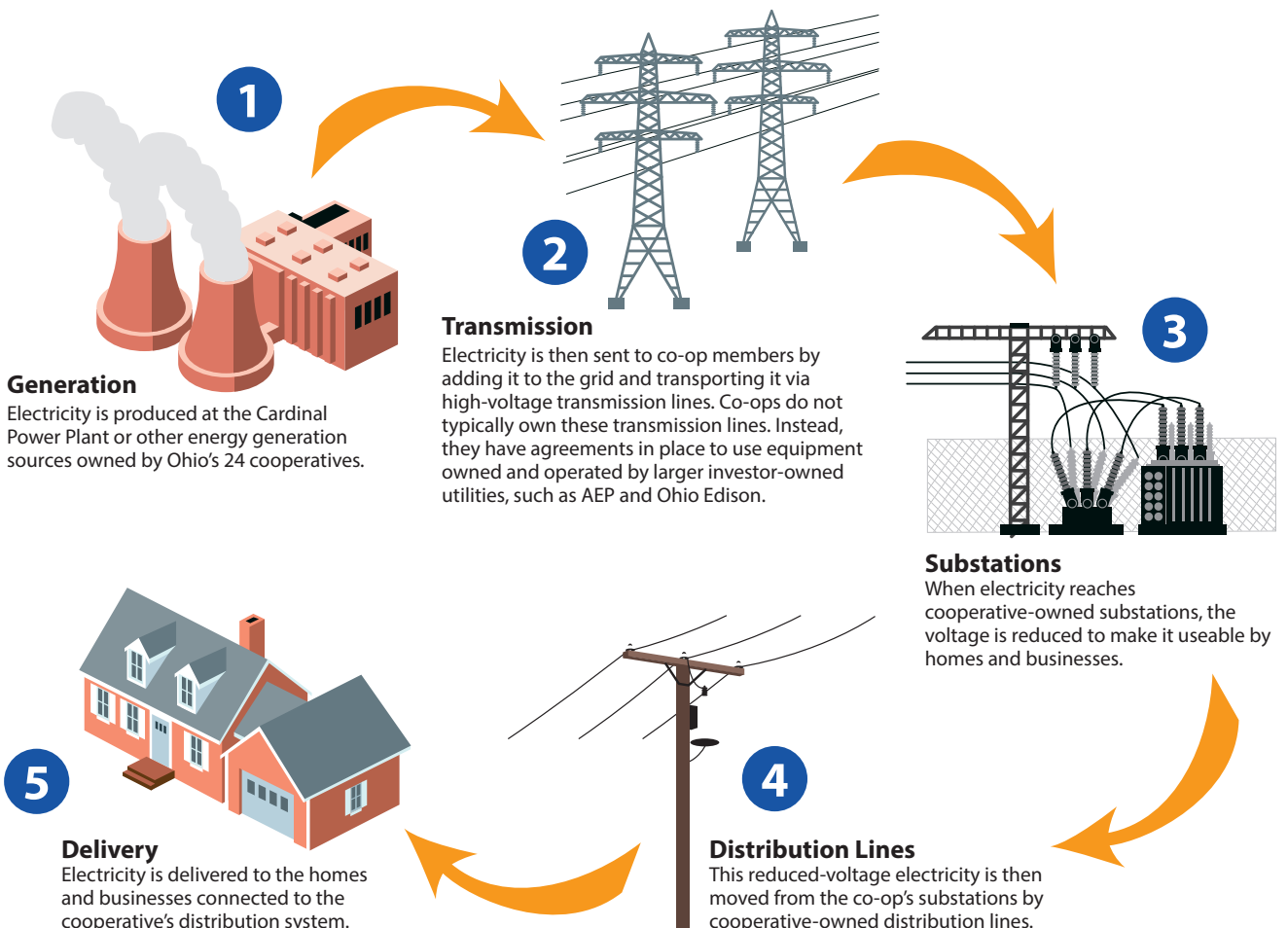
American Electric Reliability Corporation ([nerc.com](http://nerc.com)) and PJM Interconnection ([pjm.com](http://pjm.com)), have each published reports on the concerning trends causing increased reliability risks. They point out that rolling blackouts, like those experienced in Texas, California, and nine Midwest states — as well as those that threatened Ohio in December 2022 — are inevitable without an immediate change in energy policy.

For 87 years, the mission of Firelands Electric Cooperative has been to deliver reliable, safe, environmentally responsible electricity at stable

and affordable rates to our member-owners and the local communities we serve. Our commitment has never wavered, but it is being challenged because of the current poorly conceived energy policies. Please help us carry the message to our federal, state, and local elected leaders that you support a commonsense energy policy.

Additional information about the reliability of electric power in Ohio and the U.S. can be found at [www.ohioec.org/oec-news](http://www.ohioec.org/oec-news) and [www.electric.coop](http://www.electric.coop).

# THE PATHWAY TO POWERING YOUR HOME





## CO-OP NEWS

# WHERE DOES MY ELECTRICITY COME FROM?

Attend the 2023 tour of the Cardinal Power Plant to find out

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.

The 2023 Cardinal Power Plant tour is scheduled to take place Wednesday, Sept. 13. 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 dinner at Dutch Valley Restaurant and Bakery in Sugarcreek.

The bus will depart from Firelands' office in New London and will include a 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, tour participants must be at least 12 years old, unless specifically authorized. 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 your seat on the Cardinal tour bus, please visit [www.firelandsec.com/base-load-generation](http://www.firelandsec.com/base-load-generation). 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.*

*Happy*  
**INDEPENDENCE DAY!**

The Firelands Electric Cooperative office will be closed on

**Tuesday, July 4**

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



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. Lead Lineman Phil Pickering and Groundman Josh Kirk helped students check out the cab, bucket, tools, and even the air horn. Other vehicles at the event included a police car, fire truck, backhoe, school bus, tractor, and an ambulance. Visit [www.flickr.com/photos/firelandsec/albums](http://www.flickr.com/photos/firelandsec/albums) to view additional photos from this event.



On April 26, Firelands Electric played host to nearly 30 high school students from New London Local Schools for the first-ever Cardinal Power Plant Youth Day (at right). Participants joined other students from co-ops across the state for a special behind-the-scenes tour of the plant, which is located in Brilliant, Ohio. Buckeye Power and Ohio's Electric Cooperatives also shared information about the many career opportunities available in the electric cooperative industry.

Cardinal Power provides electricity to more than 380,000 homes and businesses in 77 of Ohio's 88 counties, including the members of Firelands Electric. For additional photos from Youth Day, visit our Flickr page at [www.flickr.com/photos/firelandsec/albums](http://www.flickr.com/photos/firelandsec/albums).





## CO-OP CONTESTS

# KUDOS IN THE CLASSROOM

Firelands Electric firmly believes in the power of knowledge and the importance of educating tomorrow's leaders. Over the past four decades, the cooperative has sponsored nearly 70 high school students on the annual all-expenses-paid Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. Since 2000, we have awarded more than 200 scholarships to graduating seniors. By the end of this year, two dozen students will have been recognized through The A Team, the co-op's middle school academic program that launched in 2017. In addition, Firelands regularly participates in electrical safety education events and provides support for area 4-H, FFA, sports, and school programs.

We also realize that behind every great student is a great teacher. This past winter, the cooperative wanted to recognize these extraordinary teachers who play such a valuable role in educating our students. To accomplish this goal, Firelands Electric held its first Terrific Teachers Contest.

Throughout February and early March, cooperative member-families were asked to nominate their school's most dedicated kindergarten through fifth grade teachers. Educators from the more than 20 elementary schools that serve students living in the cooperative's service territory were eligible for the contest. Teachers with the most nominations in each of two grade categories were awarded a plaque and a prize package filled with energy-themed books, games, and activities for their classroom.

Firelands would like to congratulate the following Terrific Teachers:

### GRADES K-2 CATEGORY:

- Winner — Amy Secrist of Lucas Elementary, Grade 1
- Runner-Up — Jessica Cook of Lucas Elementary, Grade 1

### GRADES 3-5 CATEGORY:

- Winner — Ann Stitzlein of McMullen (Loudonville) Elementary, Grade 3
- Runner-Up — Jennifer Raubenolt of Hillsdale Elementary, Grade 3

Additional information about Firelands Electric's youth programs is available at [www.firelandsec.com/community](http://www.firelandsec.com/community).



AMY SECRIST (LEFT) — LUCAS  
JESSICA COOK (RIGHT) — LUCAS



ANN STITZLEIN — MCMULLEN (LOUDONVILLE)



JENNIFER RAUBENOLT (LEFT) — HILLSDALE





## PAYMENT OPTIONS

# BUDGET BILLING AVAILABLE

Firelands Electric's budget billing is a free service that makes managing your cash flow easier by providing set monthly payment amounts.

Utility bills are generally highest during cold winter months and hot summer months. Firelands' budget plan avoids these highs by leveling your monthly bill and setting a consistent monthly payment amount. Each member's budget amount is based on an estimated average of the member's past 12 months of electric use. In short, a year's worth of electric bills is spread out into even payments over 12 months.

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The deadline to sign up for Firelands Electric's budget plan is Friday, Aug. 18.

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Firelands Electric's budget plan has a built-in annual "catch-up" month at the end of the 12-month period. Any balance remaining on your electric account is due by Aug. 14. If you have a credit, this will be reflected on your August bill and you will not owe a payment. (Please note: This is for the month of August only.) Members' accounts are reviewed quarterly and, based on changes in actual electric consumption, the monthly payment amount may be adjusted to avoid a significant balance or credit at the end of the budget year in August.

The cooperative's budget billing option is available at no extra cost. You can also participate in automatic budget payments, meaning you can sign up for both auto pay and budget billing. The same amount will be electronically paid from your bank account, debit card, or credit card every month.

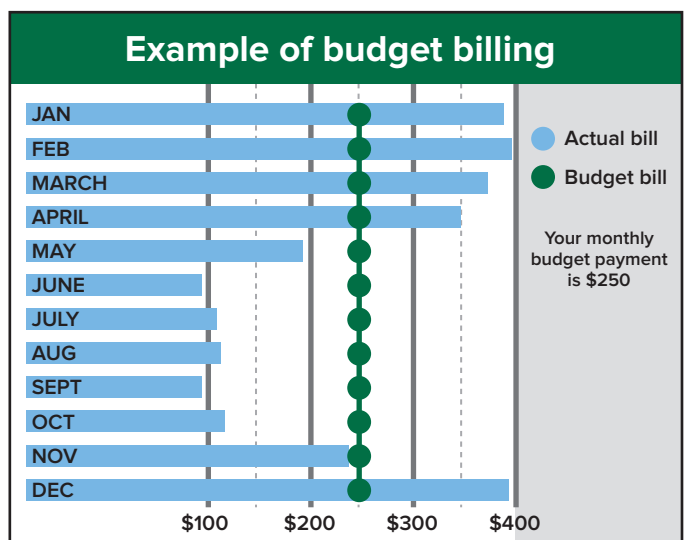
Since the amount is based on previous use, members need to have at least one year of residency listed in their name at their current address to be eligible for the program.

For your convenience, Firelands Electric has numerous options for paying your electric bill. Members can make payments by mail, at the drive-up window, or in our night drop box. You can also pay by phone 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by calling 1-800-533-8658.

Other convenient payment options include:

- **AUTOMATIC BANK DRAFT** — This service enables you to have your Firelands Electric payment automatically deducted from your checking, savings, or credit card account each month. You save postage costs and time, and your money stays in the bank until the 14th day of each month.
- **SMARTHUB ACCOUNT** — Firelands Electric's online payment system gives members the ability to schedule future payments, report power outages, and receive important notifications regarding their account.
- **SMARTHUB APP** — The co-op's free mobile application allows members to pay bills and access their electric account information anytime, anywhere, through their mobile devices. Members can also receive power outage notifications directly to their phone or tablet.
- **SMARTHUB PAY NOW** — For those members who just want to pay their bill without having to create an online account, SmartHub Pay Now is an easy bill payment system that does not require any registration and can be accessed using your electric account number and last name/business name.

For more information on billing options, please contact Firelands Electric Cooperative at 1-800-533-8658 or email us at [billing@firelandsec.com](mailto:billing@firelandsec.com).





## FEELING OVERWHELMED?

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

Sometimes life happens. Your home or car needs a major repair. Someone in your household is temporarily unemployed.

We've all been there. Occasionally, despite our best efforts, there just isn't enough money to cover all of the month's expenses.

If you or someone you know is behind on their electric bill or facing possible disconnection of their electric service, the agencies at right may be able to help. As a member of the community, Firelands never wants to have to shut off anyone's power due to non-payment, so please don't wait if you are struggling — reach out to one of these organizations right away.



For a more extensive list of agencies, visit [www.firelandsec.com/energy-assistance-agencies](http://www.firelandsec.com/energy-assistance-agencies).

## PAYMENT ASSISTANCE AGENCIES

### Job and Family Services

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

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

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

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

### Community Action Commission (CAC)

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

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

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

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

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

### 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](http://www.211.org).



## ACCOLADES

In early May, Firelands' District 6 Trustee Kevin Reidy (pictured at left) received his Board Leadership Certificate (BLC) from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). This program recognizes trustees who have continued their professional development by completing 10 advanced courses focused on the issues and skills important for a successful electric cooperative. General Manager Dan McNaul (right) recently presented Reidy with his BLC certificate.



## COOPERATIVE UPDATE

# BOARD MEETING *highlights*

*Firelands Electric Cooperative's Board of Trustees met April 25 and covered the following items:*

- Board President Dan Schloemer reported that the cooperative received 29 membership applications for approval by the board.
- General Manager Dan McNaull reviewed the results of the cooperative's recent ACSI member satisfaction survey. With a score of 88, the co-op's overall results were 1 point higher than last year, while its retention rate increased by 2 percentage points.
- Following discussion and a review of financial forecasts, the board approved the retirement of \$1 million in capital credits. This retirement will be refunded to current and former members in August.
- The board reviewed a report from the safety and training event held on April 12.
- McNaull announced the following as tellers for the 2023 trustee elections: Debbie Schloemer, Benjamin Murphy, Debbie Reidy, and Ron Slarb. The board also appointed Heather Niedermeier-Heyman as chairperson of the election committee.
- McNaull reviewed the timeline for the upcoming trustee elections, as well as the progress on arrangements for the annual meeting planned for June 24 at Ashland University.
- Director of Operations Don Englet reviewed recent projects in the operations department.
- McNaull reviewed recent outage and tree trimming reports.
- Director of Finance and Accounting Tabi Shepherd reviewed the March financials and reported on recent accounting and billing department activities.
- McNaull and Englet reported on the NRECA Legislative Conference they recently attended in Washington, D.C.
- Director of Communications and Technology Andrea Gravenhorst reported on recent activities involving the member services and IT departments.

The cooperative's next board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 25. 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

Elaine Oswald  
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)

**Firelands**  
**Electric**  
**COOPERATIVE**  
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative