



GM'S REPORT

## BE SAFETY SMART WHEN USING A GENERATOR

The safety of our members and our employees is top priority at Firelands Electric Cooperative. Our team provides electrical safety education to many in our community, including adults, students, and first responders. We cover everything from power line and home safety to how to stay safe in the event of a car-versus-pole accident. While our safety education efforts take place year-round, the co-op gives it special emphasis every May as part of National Electrical Safety Month.

This year, with the spring and summer storm season upon us and the ownership of portable generators on the rise, Firelands Electric wants to make sure that co-op members are being safety smart about their use.

When storms hit and power lines go down, our crews take precautions before they get to work on making repairs. They verify that the line is de-energized, isolate it from the distribution system, and properly ground lines and equipment.

Even after all these measures, an improperly connected portable generator can still be hazardous. Of course, no one would ever purposely put co-op crews or the community at risk, but a generator connected directly to a home's wiring or plugged into an everyday household outlet can cause backfeeding along power lines. The standard residential 120 volts converts to 7,200 volts as it flows in reverse through the home's transformer and back onto distribution lines. This level of power is deadly, capable of electrocuting anyone who comes into contact with the line — including lineworkers, first responders, and your neighbors — even if it appears harmless.

Firelands Electric employees are not the only ones in danger when a portable generator is operated incorrectly. Generator owners themselves could be at risk of electrocution, fire, property damage, or carbon monoxide poisoning if they do not follow the necessary safety rules.

To protect yourself, your family, and your community, follow these guidelines when using a generator:

- Never connect a generator to your home's wiring or an outlet. This can cause backfeeding along power lines and electrocute anyone who comes into contact

with them, including lineworkers making repairs. If you want to have your emergency generator connected directly to your home's electrical system, have a licensed electrician install only approved equipment necessary to do it safely.

- Plug appliances directly into generators unless you have an approved transfer switch installed. Connecting a generator to your home's circuits or wiring must be done by a qualified, licensed electrician who will install an approved transfer switch to prevent backfeeding.
- Use heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cords. Make sure extension cords have plugs with three prongs and avoid overloading cords, which can cause fires or equipment damage.
- Ensure your generator is properly grounded and never refuel while it is operating. For gasoline-powered units, we recommend using non-ethanol gasoline, if it is supported by the generator's manufacturer. Adding a fuel stabilizer can also help prolong the storage life of gasoline.
- Turn off all equipment powered by a generator before shutting it down.
- Keep the generator dry and in a well-ventilated area. Never operate a generator in a home, garage, or other enclosed space. Position it on a dry surface under an open structure and away from windows.
- Most importantly, read and follow all the manufacturer's instructions.

A generator can be a valuable tool during a power outage, but make sure you use this tool wisely to protect the well-being and safety of your family and safeguard those who may come to your aid. By working together, we can keep the lights on and keep our families and our community safe.



Dan McNaull  
GENERAL MANAGER



CO-OP CONTESTS

ELECTRICAL SAFETY CONTEST

*Lunch* with a **LINEMAN**



It takes a lot of people to keep electricity flowing, including more than a dozen linemen who work at Firelands Electric Cooperative. These linemen often face challenging and dangerous situations to ensure that your home, farm, or business receives safe, reliable power.

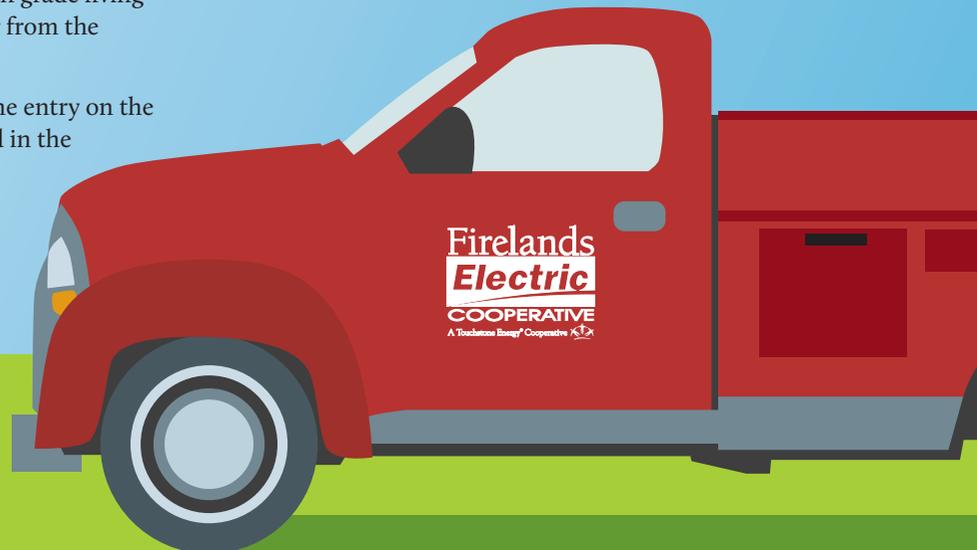
Working near high-voltage equipment on a regular basis, linemen wear special safety equipment to protect themselves. As part of National Electrical Safety Month, Firelands Electric Cooperative wants our younger co-op members to learn about the importance of this safety gear. For the second consecutive year, the co-op is sponsoring a contest for children in kindergarten through fifth grade to do just that. Three students will be randomly selected to attend a special lunch with some of Firelands Electric's linemen and a behind-the-scenes look at the co-op's utility equipment this summer!

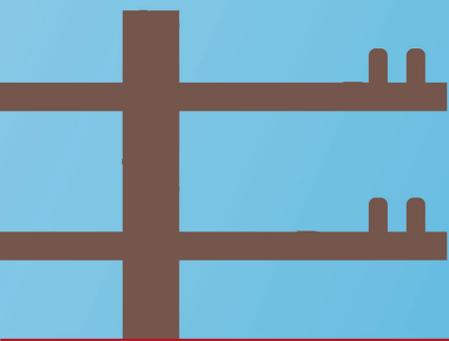
Contest rules:

1. Children in kindergarten through fifth grade living in a home receiving its electric power from the cooperative are eligible to enter.
2. To enter, students simply complete the entry on the next page by writing the correct word in the blank found in each sentence.
3. A parent or guardian must also complete and sign the section at the bottom of the page.

4. Completed entries may be mailed to: Safety Contest, Firelands Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 32, New London, OH 44851. Entries may also be dropped off at the co-op office or emailed to [members@firelandsec.com](mailto:members@firelandsec.com).
5. Entries must be received by 4 p.m. on Monday, June 3.
6. Students' names will be placed into a drawing for a chance to win one of three spots for an exclusive tour of the co-op and lunch with some of Firelands' linemen. Each of the three winners will be permitted to bring one adult chaperone to the event, which is tentatively scheduled for July 24.
7. Winners will also be featured in the local pages of a future issue of *Ohio Cooperative Living* magazine, as well as on Firelands Electric Cooperative's website and social media outlets.

Questions regarding this contest may be directed to the member services department at 1-800-533-8658 or by emailing [members@firelandsec.com](mailto:members@firelandsec.com).





# DO YOU KNOW ABOUT LINEWORKER SAFETY?

Take the quiz below to find out!

- 1. Lineworkers have to wear a lot of gear to do their jobs. A lineworker's gear can weigh up to \_\_\_\_\_.**  
a. 15 pounds      b. 50 pounds      c. 80 pounds
- 2. Lineworkers maintain and repair electrical lines, but they do not install them.**  
a. True (no installation)      b. False (They maintain, repair and install lines.)
- 3. Over \_\_\_\_\_ hours of training are required to become a lineworker.**  
a. 300      b. 4,000      c. 8,000
- 4. Lineworkers must wear \_\_\_\_\_ clothing to protect them from a possible electric arc while working.**  
a. fire resistant      b. extra thick      c. rubber
- 5. Lineworkers must wear special boots when climbing a pole.**  
a. True      b. False



[www.firelandsec.com/safety-line-clearance](http://www.firelandsec.com/safety-line-clearance)



Please complete the information below and mail this page to:  
Safety Contest, Firelands Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 32,  
New London, OH 44851.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Child's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Grade

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parents'/Guardians' Names

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature



CO-OP NEWS



# New phone payment procedures effective July 1

Earlier this year, the global financial regulation group Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards (PCI DSS) made changes to the requirements for processing payments made over the phone. These new guidelines require businesses worldwide to use an automated interactive voice response system (IVR) when a member or customer provides their bank or debit/credit card details over the phone. These changes were put in place to provide additional protection to prevent a consumer's sensitive financial information falling into the wrong hands.

To adhere to these new guidelines, Firelands Electric will be transitioning to an automated IVR system over the next two months.

**Members will still speak with a co-op employee when they call during regular business hours.**

Those **WITH** a payment method saved in Firelands Electric's system will not experience any changes. Billing representatives will still verify the last four digits of your payment method and then process your payment for you. With the updated system, those **WITHOUT** a bank account or debit/credit card saved to their Firelands Electric account and who wish to pay their bill over the phone will be forwarded to a secure automated payment system to complete their transaction.

Please note that as of July 1, the cooperative's billing representatives will not be able to personally process a payment over the phone for members without a saved payment method on file.

To meet the financial industry's new guidelines, the member must be transferred to the secure automated payment system. All other interactions with the co-op will remain the same.

Members will have the option to save their payment method to their Firelands account at the end of the automated process. Saving the payment method **WILL NOT** sign a member up for auto pay, but simply allows future over-the-phone payments to be handled by the co-op's billing staff, rather than through the automated system. Those who would like to opt for the convenient, secure auto pay option may sign up through their SmartHub account.

Plus, if you enroll in auto pay between now and the end of June, you will receive a one-time \$5 bill credit. Both new and existing auto pay members will also automatically be entered in a drawing for a chance to win an additional \$25 bill credit. Check out the next page for details.

Our billing department is working to make the transition to this new procedure as smooth as possible for our members, and we thank you for your patience and understanding. For additional payment options, visit [www.firelandsec.com/payment-options](http://www.firelandsec.com/payment-options). For any questions regarding payment methods, please contact our billing department at 1-800-533-8658 or [billing@firelandsec.com](mailto:billing@firelandsec.com).

## Memorial Day

*Emergency service is available 24/7 by calling 1-800-533-8658.*



The Firelands Electric office will be closed on

**MAY 27**

as we honor the brave men and women lost in the pursuit of freedom.

## WE GET IT – LIFE IS BUSY!

Avoid the aggravation  
with auto pay.

There are numerous benefits to having your monthly electric bill paid automatically from your bank account or debit/credit card:

- Never worry again about missing the payment due date.
- Avoid late fees.
- Slow mail delivery is no longer a concern.
- You don't have to call the co-op's answering service after normal business hours.
- No decoding phone prompts.



[www.firelandsec.com/  
payment-options](http://www.firelandsec.com/payment-options)

Best of all, every member who enrolls in auto pay during the months of May and June will receive a one-time \$5 credit on their electric bill. Plus, existing auto pay members and new signups will automatically be entered in a drawing to win one of two \$25 bill credits at the end of May, and again at the end of June. The only thing you need to do is enroll in auto pay via SmartHub or by contacting Firelands Electric's billing department at 1-800-533-8658. We'll take care of the rest!

Sign up for  
auto pay and  
get a \$5 bill  
credit!



# Did you know...



The average home can be powered for full **TWO DAYS** for about the same cost as six of your favorite hot wings.

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!



In June, Firelands Electric Co-op will be working with NRECA Market Research Services to complete member satisfaction surveys.

We strive to provide all member-owners with safe, affordable, reliable, and clean electric service. Members who are randomly selected to participate in this survey help us make decisions that benefit you, your family, and your neighbors.



ENERGY EFFICIENCY

# HOME APPLIANCES

## How much are they costing you?



### OVEN



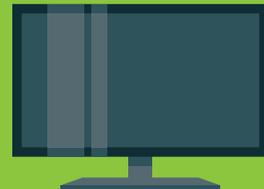
**\$50/year**  
30 minutes a day/180 days a year

### REFRIGERATOR



**\$150/year**  
24 hours a day/365 days a year

### TV



**\$20/year**  
5 hours a day/365 days a year

### CLOTHES DRYER



**\$50/year**  
1 hour a day/twice a week

### SPACE HEATER



**\$540/year**  
12 hours a day/180 days a year

### DEHUMIDIFIER



**\$300/year**  
24 hours a day/180 days a year

These are just estimates of course; your energy use will depend on the size of your household and your habits. Save money and energy by purchasing more efficient or ENERGY STAR certified appliances. For more information visit [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov).

# HOW TO READ AN APPLIANCE ENERGY GUIDE

When shopping for new appliances, make sure to check the yellow Energy Guide for efficiency information on the model you are considering. This label can tell you:

1. Key features of this appliance. Models included in the comparison range (see No. 3) also have these same features.
2. The manufacturer, model number, and size/capacity of this particular appliance.
3. Estimated yearly cost to operate this model, based on the national average cost of electricity. The graph below this reflects the cost range of similar models (if they are available).
4. This specific model's estimated yearly electric consumption in kilowatt-hours.
5. The ENERGY STAR logo will be located here if the appliance has been certified. If this area is blank, this specific model is *not* ENERGY STAR-certified. New appliances that are ENERGY STAR-certified are typically 10% to 40% more efficient than models that haven't received this certification. **Firelands Electric offers co-op members rebates on some ENERGY STAR-certified appliances. Visit [www.firelandsec.com/appliance-rebates](http://www.firelandsec.com/appliance-rebates) for details.**

To learn more about the ENERGY STAR program, visit [www.energy.gov/energysaver/shopping-appliances-and-electronics](http://www.energy.gov/energysaver/shopping-appliances-and-electronics).

U.S. Government Federal law prohibits removal of this label before consumer purchase.

# ENERGYGUIDE

APPLIANCE TYPE **1** MANUFACTURER NAME **2**  
 • MODEL FEATURE 1  
 • MODEL FEATURE 2  
 • MODEL FEATURE 3  
 MODEL NUMBER  
 CAPACITY

**Compare ONLY to other labels with yellow numbers. Labels with yellow numbers are based on the same test procedures.**

**Estimated Yearly Energy Cost** **3**  
**\$48**

Cost range not available

**4** **399 kWh**  
 Estimated Yearly Electricity Use **5**

- Your cost will depend on your utility rates and use.
- Cost range based only on models of similar capacity with automatic defrost, top mounted freezer, and without through-door-ice service.
- Estimated energy cost based on a national average electricity cost of 12 cents per kWh.



[ftc.gov/energy](http://ftc.gov/energy) (P/N W10706425 Rev. A)



COOPERATIVE UPDATE

# BOARD MEETING *highlights*

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

- Board President Dan Schloemer reported that the cooperative received 23 membership applications for approval by the board.
- General Manager Dan McNaull reviewed the 2024–2025 capital improvements project bids. Following discussion, the Haughland Group was awarded the bid.
- McNaull reviewed the status of the 2024 tree trimming plan and the outage report for the past month.
- Director of Operations Don Englet reported on activities in the operations department, including estimates and timelines for the Coulter Substation project and the plans for the new Jeromesville Substation. He also showed the board the new, stronger Hendrix cable the co-op will be using in some heavily wooded areas.
- The board approved proceeding with a Purchase Option Agreement for the property to build the new Coulter Substation.
- McNaull reviewed the upcoming elections, advising the board that information and ballots were mailed out on Feb. 26.

- The board reviewed a report from a safety and training meeting held on Feb. 13.
- The board named cooperative attorney Heather Neidermeier Heyman as chairperson of the 2024 Election Committee.
- Appointments for the 2024 Credentials Committee were made as follows: District 1 – Dennis Rees; District 2 – Gary Hunter; District 3 – Brandon Walcher; District 4 – John Noss; District 5 – Evan Hahn; District 6 – Steve Willeke; District 7 – Steve Taylor; District 8 – David Seiss; and District 9 – Richard Murr.
- Director of Finance and Accounting Tabi Shepherd reviewed the December financial reports and provided an update on recent accounting and billing department activities.
- McNaull reviewed information regarding the recent Buckeye Board meeting and OEC Winter Conference, as well as plans for the co-op's upcoming annual meeting.

The cooperative's next board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 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  
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

Gene Lamoreaux  
District 2

Tom Lucha  
District 3

Kevin Reidy  
District 6

Rob Turk  
District 7

Elaine Oswald  
District 8

John Martin  
District 9

**GENERAL MANAGER**

Dan McNaull

**HAVE A STORY SUGGESTION?**

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

