



GM'S REPORT

THE BUNNY HOP THAT COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE

Staying safe after a vehicle-versus-utility-pole collision



Don Englet
GENERAL MANAGER

Electrical Safety Foundation International designates May as National Electrical Safety Month. Every year, Firelands Electric Cooperative uses this time to educate our members and the community about electrical safety. Whether in the home, outdoors, or in the workplace, being informed can help reduce injuries, fatalities, and property damage related to electrical accidents.

Reducing the dangers associated with electricity is sometimes pretty obvious, such as never mixing

electricity and water or avoiding contact with power lines when using a ladder, shovel, or power tools. Other hazards are somewhat hidden, however. For instance, underground power lines are undetectable without the help of special equipment, which is why it is required by law to call 8-1-1 before you dig. Ground-mounted transformers (those green metal boxes found outside of some homes and businesses) also house a hidden danger. The high-voltage equipment inside can be deadly, so steering clear of them is critical.

Another potentially hazardous situation, which is often overlooked, occurs when a vehicle collides with a utility pole and the power line comes in contact with the car or area surrounding it. Knowing the proper way to handle this situation could mean life or death.

According to the Insurance Institute of Highway Safety, 1,027 people died as the result of car accidents involving utility poles in 2022. While electricity was not the direct cause of all the fatalities, the number is significant enough to promote the importance of learning how to protect yourself and your family should you find yourself in a similar situation.

For starters, you need to remember that even a downed power line can still be energized or “live,” and it is impossible to tell by just looking at the wires. Unless your life is in danger by doing so (such as in the event of a fire), staying in the vehicle after a collision with a utility pole is the safest plan. Stepping outside the car, or even opening the door, could create a dangerous connection, allowing electricity to travel from a power line into your body.

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FIRELANDS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LOCAL PAGES

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The first step you should take is to call 911. The 911 center will contact the appropriate utility company to safely de-energize the lines. Also, be sure to warn others — even first responders — to wait for crews to arrive for further instructions. If you absolutely must exit the vehicle, jump away without touching the ground and vehicle at the same time. Making contact with both creates an open path for electricity to travel, which can result in serious injury or even death.

The next step is where the “bunny hop” comes in. Once safely outside the vehicle, keep your feet together and hop until you are at least 40 feet from the vehicle, making sure that both feet land on the ground at the

same time. If hopping is not an option, shuffle your feet as you slowly move away, always maintaining contact between both feet and the ground. For a visual aid on these safety measures, check out the illustration from Purdue University below.

Electricity provides us with a multitude of benefits. It's a vital part of our everyday lives that allows us to work and play. While electrical hazards can be alarming, taking the proper safety precautions can help avoid accidents and serious injury.

To learn about additional electrical safety precautions, visit our website at www.firelandsec.com/electric-safety.



Source: Fred Whitford, Purdue Pesticide Programs, Purdue University, PPP-151

Voltage reduces as it flows away from where live wires touch the ground — but that voltage can still cause injury, or even death. Stay safe by following the guidelines shown here, and stay at least 35 feet away from any point where wires make contact.

YOUTH PROGRAMS



CO-OP SELECTS 2025 DELEGATES

Firelands Electric is pleased to announce that Jaycee Hazen and Preston Smeltzer will be representing the cooperative on the 2025 Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.

The daughter of Jason and Jessica Hazen of Jeromesville, Jaycee is a sophomore at Hillsdale High School, where she is active in FFA and is a member of the varsity swim team. Jaycee is also

involved in the Kindness Club and enjoys volunteering in her school community. She plans to enroll in the animal veterinary science program at the Ashland County-West Holmes Career Center (ACWHCC) next fall.

Preston is the son of Jason and Jennifer Smeltzer of Perrysville. He is a junior at Loudonville High School and ACWHCC, where he serves as president of the FFA chapter and takes part in the mechanical engineering program. Preston is a member of 4-H, Loudonville's Junior Fair Board and Livestock Club, and several beekeeping associations. This summer, he will be participating in the tool and die apprenticeship program at Schaeffler Transmission Systems in Wooster.

Sponsored by Ohio's Electric Cooperatives, Firelands Electric, and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, Youth Tour is an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., that will take place June 15 to 21. Jaycee and Preston will join approximately 50 other students from Ohio's rural electric cooperatives as they tour the sights in and around our nation's capital.

The annual Youth Tour program gives nearly 2,000 children of cooperative members from across the nation a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to participate in an in-depth look at Washington, D.C. Ohio's delegates have the chance to visit sites such as the U.S. Capitol, Gettysburg, the Smithsonian Institution, the Supreme Court building, and many others. Through educational and sightseeing activities, students gain a personal understanding of American history and their role as citizens. Delegates are also able to meet and interact with their U.S. representatives and senators during the trip.

Firelands' Youth Tour contest is offered to high school sophomores and juniors who reside in homes served by the cooperative. Candidates are evaluated on school and community activities, demonstrated leadership, and a letter of recommendation. Up to two applicants are then chosen to represent the co-op on the annual tour. To learn more about Firelands' youth programs, visit www.firelandsec.com/community.



Jaycee Hazen
HILLSDALE HIGH SCHOOL



Preston Smeltzer
LOUDONVILLE HIGH SCHOOL



CO-OP CONTESTS

ELECTRICAL SAFETY CONTEST

Lunch with a LINEMAN



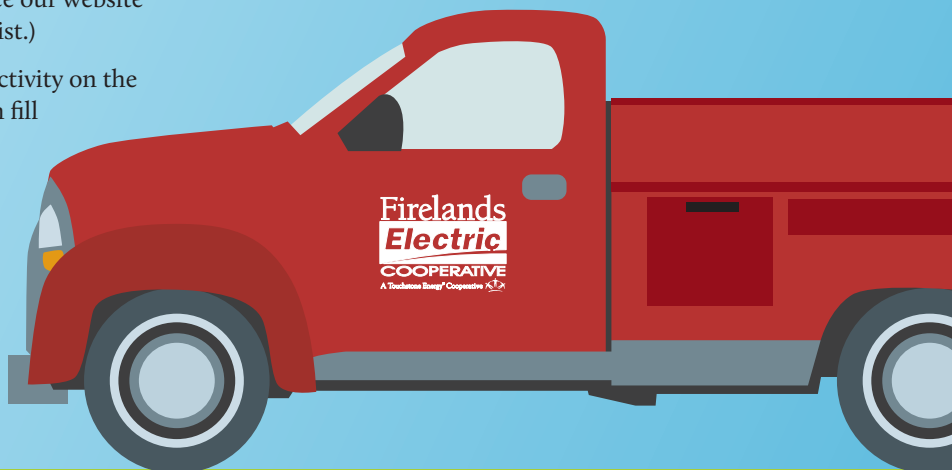
Every May, Firelands Electric Cooperative makes a special effort to reach out to our younger community members as part of National Electrical Safety Month. This month, the co-op is once again sponsoring a contest for children in kindergarten through fifth grade to do just that.

To enter, students simply need to complete and return the safety activity on the next page. Three students will then be selected to attend a special lunch with some of Firelands Electric's linemen and participate in a behind-the-scenes look at the co-op's utility equipment later this summer!

Contest rules:

1. Children in kindergarten through fifth grade attending one of the schools in or around the co-op's service territory are eligible to enter. (See our website at www.firelandsec.com/contests for a list.)
2. Students simply need to complete the activity on the next page and have a parent or guardian fill out and sign the section at the bottom.
3. Completed entries may be mailed to: Safety Contest, Firelands Electric Cooperative, 103 Industrial Drive, New London, OH 44851. Entries may also be completed online at www.firelandsec.com/contests, dropped off at the co-op office, or emailed to members@firelandsec.com.
4. Entries must be received by 4 p.m. on Friday, June 6.
5. All entries received 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 or two adult chaperones to the event, which is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, July 23.
6. 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.

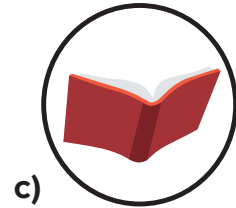
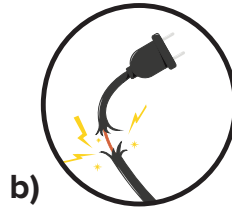
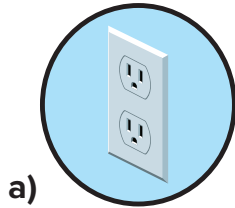


CONTEST IS OPEN TO ANY STUDENT ATTENDING ONE OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN AND AROUND FIRELANDS ELECTRIC'S SERVICE TERRITORY. THEY ARE NOT REQUIRED TO BE A CO-OP MEMBER.

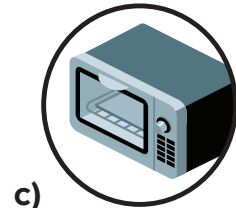
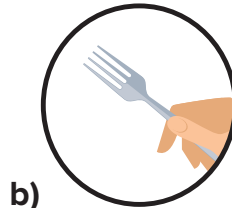
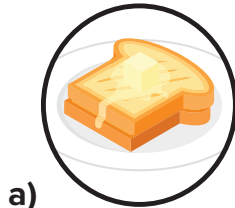
CAN YOU SPOT THE ELECTRICAL HAZARD?

Electricity is essential for everyday life, but when combined with seemingly harmless items, it can create a dangerous situation. View the grouped items below, then circle the two items that (when combined) create a potential electrical safety hazard.

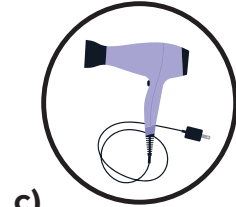
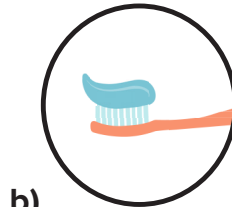
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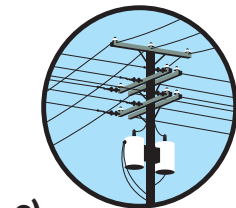
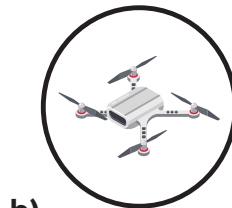
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3.



4.



Please complete the information below and mail this page to: Safety Contest, Firelands Electric Cooperative, 103 Industrial Drive, New London, OH 44851.

Child's Name _____

School and Grade _____

Address _____

Parents'/Guardians' Names _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____



ENERGY EFFICIENCY

SCOTT'S ENERGY SPOT: AIR CONDITIONERS

Efficiency tips from Firelands Electric's energy advisor



Scott Carbary
ENERGY ADVISOR

It's getting to be that time of year. One day it is warm enough for shorts and the next snow is flying. This can only mean one thing — that spring is in the air in Ohio. Soon, Firelands Electric's members will start thinking about turning on their air conditioners to combat the hot summer temperatures. In preparation, it's important to make sure

your air conditioner is in top-notch condition.

Determining a unit's readiness for summer can be tackled by the member or by hiring a qualified heating and cooling contractor. Let's take a few minutes to go over some tips for our do-it-yourself homeowners.

Air conditioners and heat pumps generally consist of two sections, the outside unit, or condenser, and the indoor coil, also known as the evaporator. The outside unit is typically located next to the house and the indoor unit is located next to or on top of the furnace.

Before any work is started on your air conditioning unit, the thermostat should always be put in the off position and the power to the outside condenser should be shut off. The latter can be done either at the outside disconnect or at your breaker panel.

Outside unit/condenser

First, a visual inspection of the area around the outside unit should be performed. Look for any landscaping or shrubs growing too close to the outside unit. Heating and cooling equipment

manufacturers generally recommend at least two feet of clearance on each side, including the top, to allow for proper air flow.

Once landscaping and shrubs have been cleared from the area, clean the outside condenser fins with a shop vacuum, air, or garden hose. If using a garden hose, make sure to clean the hole located in the bottom pan of the condenser to allow for drainage. Extra care should be taken around the cooling fins. Bending or distorting the fins will have a major impact on the equipment's performance. Stubborn, caked-on dirt or debris may need to be professionally cleaned.

A U.S. Department of Energy study, as well as several major HVAC manufacturers, report that a layer of dirt on the outside air conditioner coils that is only the thickness of a sheet of paper can decrease the overall air conditioner or heat pump efficiency by 21% and increase the operating cost by as much as 35%.

With the fins cleaned, a visual inspection of the copper lines running between the inside and outside units should be performed. Look for any signs of oil stains or missing pipe insulation. Oil stains are an indication of a possible refrigerant leak. The Air Conditioning Contractors of America report that a 10% decrease in refrigerant levels will result in a 20% decrease in system performance, leading to higher electric bills.

Also note, if your area has an abundance of cottonwood trees, the outside condenser should be checked and cleaned more frequently.

Indoor unit/coil

Cleaning or replacing the air filter is a very easy way to improve air conditioning performance. The U.S. Department of Energy estimates that

keeping the filter clean will lower your unit's electric consumption by 5% to 15%. Most air filter manufacturers recommend changing the indoor furnace filter every one to three months for standard one-inch air filters and every six months for extended thickness air filters. It should be noted that depending on a member's particular home and environment, this schedule may need to be increased.

The condensate line — the pipe carrying water away from your unit's indoor coil — should be cleaned by pouring a mixture made of one part bleach to 16 parts water down the pipe. This mixture will remove and kill any bacteria that may be in the pipe from the prior cooling season.

You're now ready to turn the thermostat to the cooling position and restore power to the outside unit!

These simple, low-cost tips can be performed quickly and should become part of your spring-cleaning home maintenance routine. In addition to these do-it-yourself

tips, members can also have their local heating and cooling contractor service the unit. Contractors will go into greater detail when servicing the unit, checking refrigerant levels, airflow, and other components.

While proper maintenance can keep your air conditioner or heat pump running more efficiently for a longer period, there will still come a time when you may have to think about replacing or upgrading your system. When this time arrives, a good first step is to call Firelands Electric Cooperative's member services department at 1-800-533-8658 and speak to a knowledgeable representative about available rebate programs or schedule an appointment with our energy advisor. You can also visit our website at www.firelandsec.com/member-programs for information.

We're always happy to help you navigate the wide variety of heating and cooling options available.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY SCAVENGER HUNT

For the next six months, Firelands Electric Cooperative will be holding a monthly efficiency scavenger hunt for our members.

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS

1. Look for the month's efficiency photo theme in *Ohio Cooperative Living* and on the co-op's website and Facebook pages.
2. Search for something in your home, garage, barn, or business that fits the month's theme.
3. Snap a photo and submit it to us before the 25th of each month. The first deadline is May 25.
4. Entries can be submitted by:
 - Posting your photo on your Facebook page and tagging the co-op
 - Emailing your photo to members@firelandsec.com
 - Mailing a printed photo to 103 Industrial Drive, New London, OH 44851
5. Be sure to include your name, address, phone number, and email address (if applicable).
6. That's it! Your will then be entered into our monthly drawing for the chance to win a \$25 bill credit.

Note: Contest is open to Firelands Electric Cooperative members only and entries are limited to one per month. Members may only win one \$25 bill credit during the six-month game.



May's theme is HVAC FILTERS



CO-OP NEWS

Giving back

Co-op lineman participates in global humanitarian effort

In January, Firelands Electric Cooperative's Lead Lineman Robert Shepherd spent 18 days in Guatemala as part of Ohio Electric Cooperatives' Project Ohio. Shepherd was one of 15 co-op linemen from across the state who participated in this project, which brought the first electric power to the remote village of Barejones.

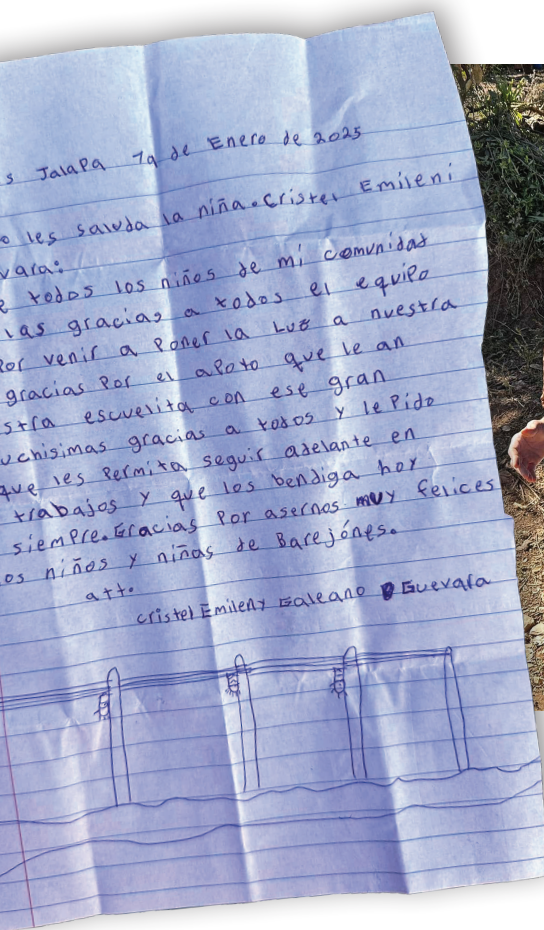
The group of Ohio electric co-op volunteers traveled to Guatemala as part of NRECA International, a rural electrification mission of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. Created in 1962, NRECA International has brought safe, reliable, and affordable electric power to more than 220 million people in 48 countries, with the majority located in the world's most isolated communities. NRECA International's primary

mission is to share the information and know-how gained during the rural electrification of the U.S. with developing countries around the globe. The program's staff and volunteers design and construct electric distribution systems to meet the individual needs of each community, and they train the local workforce how to operate and maintain the system once it is completed.

Earlier this year, the state's 24 electric cooperatives combined resources to contribute towards the needs of Barejones' residents, providing both supplies and workers to Project Ohio. Shepherd joined other co-op linemen, NRECA organizers, and locals as they built distribution lines; hung transformers; and installed electrical services, meters, and internal wiring to bring power to the 90 homes in the mountaintop village.

Shepherd says his biggest challenge during the trip was the language barrier, especially when a translator was not able to be present. He also found adjusting to the mountain terrain demanding, explaining that walking up and down the hillsides in combination with climbing poles was exhausting.

Project Ohio crews were also able to install septic tanks and electricity in the village's school, which will give the children access to restrooms.



Ten-year-old Cristel (back left) handed Firelands Electric Lead Lineman Robert Shepherd a special letter and drawing on his last day in Barejones, Guatemala, with Project Ohio. The note thanked the 18 linemen from Ohio for bringing lights to her village and supporting her school.

In addition to electrical work, Project Ohio provided EcoWater filters to every home in the village. Other donations were used to help with additional village needs, such as providing 120 pairs of shoes to the children.

The team also provided electricity to the school in Barejones and gifted it two 50-inch classroom televisions with speaker systems and some much-needed school supplies to help the children with their studies. The lineworkers also installed a wood fence and a new entrance gate to provide a more secure schoolyard.

“Appreciation from the village community and the children was most rewarding,” Shepherd says. During the team’s final day in the village, 10-year-old student Cristel handed Shepherd a special letter thanking him and all the linemen for bringing power and lights to her little village, and for supporting all the boys and girls in her school. The small gesture made a big impact on Shepherd. “I’m beyond grateful for this opportunity to provide hope for the future,” Shepherd says. “What a life-changing experience — and I would do it all over again if given the opportunity.”

Barejones,
Guatemala





FIRELANDS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
LOCAL PAGES

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Your thoughts and opinions on Firelands Electric Cooperative
help us better serve you.

The week of June 9, we will be working with NRECA Market Research Services to complete member satisfaction surveys.

The random surveys will be conducted by phone and email, and not everyone will be contacted. If you are contacted, we would greatly appreciate a few minutes of your time to share your opinions about the cooperative. All information is confidential.

We strive to provide all member-owners with safe, affordable, reliable, and clean electric service. By participating in the survey, you will help us make decisions that benefit you, your family, and your neighbors.

CAPITAL CREDITS

Understanding your annual capital credits allocation

Most co-op members associate capital credits with the retirements refunded in late summer. The amount of these refunds is decided by the board of trustees based on the financial health of the cooperative and that amount is credited to your August electric bill.

Every Firelands Electric Cooperative member has a capital credits account. This account is separate from your monthly billing account. Funds are added to your capital credits account once a year in what is referred to as an allocation. The amount added is based upon the co-op's margins and your personal electric usage over the previous 12 months. The balance is then combined with

that of other members to serve as operating capital for the cooperative.

Think of your capital credits account like a piggy bank. Whenever you have funds left over from your paycheck, you may "deposit" them into the bank to save for an unexpected home or car repair. These funds sit in the piggy bank until you need them.

Capital credits allocation work in a similar way. Whenever Firelands Electric has margins after paying all of our expenses, these margins are "deposited" (allocated) to your capital credits "piggy bank" (account). These funds are then utilized as operating capital to cover maintenance and updates, as well as unforeseen expenses such as major storm damage or other emergencies.

Like watching money accumulate in a piggy bank, the co-op keeps a running total of how much money is in each member's capital credits account. The annual allocation notice you receive reports your total balance, as well as the amount that was added for the previous year.

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

Every Firelands Electric Cooperative member receives an annual allocation notice, which provides a report of their capital credits balances.

1. In the sample notice below, the member's total capital credits balance prior to 2024 was \$1,433.64
2. \$97.16 was added to their capital credits account for 2024. This amount is based on the co-op's margins for the year, as well as how much electricity the member used. This amount will be refunded to the member when the capital credits for 2024 are retired.
3. This breakdown reflects the portion of the margins from Firelands Electric and the portion from Buckeye Power, which generates the electricity purchased by the co-op.
4. This last line represents the member's new capital credits total.



SAMPLE CAPITAL CREDITS ALLOCATION NOTICE

Capital Credit #: 00000

Prior Years Unrefunded Balance: **1** \$1,433.64

Capital Credits Allocation for 2024: **2** \$97.16

Firelands Electric: **3** \$66.15

Buckeye Power: **3** \$31.01

TOTAL UNREFUNDED BALANCE: **4** **\$1,530.80**





COOPERATIVE UPDATE

BOARD MEETING *highlights*

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

- Board President Dan Schloemer reported that the cooperative received 28 membership applications for approval by the board.
- General Manager Don Englet reviewed the monthly safety and training, tree-trimming, and outage reports.
- Lead Lineman Robert Shepherd discussed his recent experience with Project Ohio in Guatemala, including the work that crews performed and their interactions with village residents.
- Director of Operations Rick Bowers reported on activities in the operations department.
- Englet reviewed plans for the upcoming annual meeting and his recent involvement with the Huron County Growth Partnership.
- The board discussed nominees from each district for the trustee elections credentials committee.
- Schloemer provided a report on his recent OREC meeting in Columbus, including power generation efforts during this winter's extreme cold.

- Director of Finance and Accounting Tabi Shepherd reviewed the January financial reports and provided an update on recent accounting and billing department activities.
- Director of Communications and IT Andrea Gravenhorst reported on recent activities involving the member services and IT departments, including a recent security assessment performed by a third-party vendor to evaluate the cooperative's cybersecurity.

The cooperative's next board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 27. If you would like to attend the next scheduled meeting, please contact the Firelands Electric office at 1-800-533-8658.

MEMORIAL DAY

REMEMBER & HONOR

The Firelands Electric Cooperative office will be closed on

Monday, May 26

to honor those who gave their lives for our freedom.

*As always, emergency service is available
24/7 by calling 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

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Vice President, District 4

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District 3

Kevin Reidy
District 6

Greg Hess
District 7

Elaine Oswald
District 8

Brian Cucco
District 9

GENERAL MANAGER

Don Englet

HAVE A STORY SUGGESTION?

Email your ideas to:
members@firelandsec.com

**Firelands
Electric**
COOPERATIVE

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 