



GM'S REPORT

READY TO ROLL

After the long, dreary months of winter, many of us are eagerly awaiting the first signs of spring. The sun shines a bit more frequently, and the days become slightly warmer. Birds return from their winter vacations, and new growth starts to become visible on the trees and in the fields.

But along with this welcome change also comes the threat of spring storms. Often unpredictable, storms can bring high winds, lightning, and downed trees — all common causes of power outages. While preventing Mother Nature from wreaking havoc isn't possible, planning and foresight on the part of Firelands Electric Cooperative's employees can help minimize the severity and duration of the outages in her wake.

A proactive approach

Being prepared for a storm starts well before it even appears in the weather forecast. Every Thursday, Firelands Electric's team takes an inventory of materials in our warehouse. We place orders as needed to ensure there are sufficient supplies for any storm or other unforeseen project. When forecasters are calling for potential thunderstorms after normal business hours, crews spend time at the end of the regular workday making sure that all trucks are filled with fuel, restocked with supplies, and ready for action. Supervisory staff also confirm which linemen will be available if additional crews — beyond those already on call — become needed.

For large-scale storms, the staff at Ohio's Electric Cooperatives in Columbus helps coordinate the 24 co-ops throughout the state in case of widespread damage. True to the cooperative principle "Cooperation Among Cooperatives," those not being affected by storms may be put on standby to provide mutual aid to those who might need extra hands to repair damage and restore power.

Keeping members informed

Co-op members can also be proactive when it comes to severe weather. For starters, download Firelands Electric's SmartHub app on your smartphone or tablet. This free app allows you to report outages to the co-op with just the tap of a button. Members can also sign up to receive notifications via text and/or email when their power has gone out and when it has been restored — even if they

aren't home. It can also be helpful to enroll in alerts from the National Weather Service. Visit www.weather.gov/wrn/mobile-phone for details.

Be prepared

Perhaps the best way to be ready for severe weather and possible power outages is to always have emergency supplies on hand. Some items to consider include:

- Bottled water and nonperishable food that requires little to no preparation
- Flashlights, radio, and extra batteries
- Medications and other health essentials — such as a reserve supply of oxygen, if needed
- First aid kit stocked with pain relievers, bandages, and other supplies
- Hand sanitizer, diapers, and toiletries
- Keep your cellphone charged and your car's gas tank full
- For additional storm prep tips, visit www.redcross.org

Most importantly, have a backup plan in place in case of an extended outage. Although lengthy power outages are rare, having another place to go may become necessary — especially if you have medical needs that rely on a steady power supply.

If a severe storm with high winds and sustained rain is expected, you can rest assured that Firelands Electric Cooperative's line crews and office personnel are prepared to restore any power outages as quickly and safely as possible. And with just a few simple steps on your part, you can be ready too.



Dan McNaull
GENERAL MANAGER



FIRELANDS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LOCAL PAGES

MEMBER TOOLS

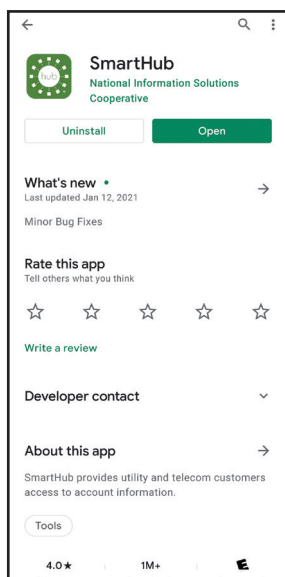


OUTAGE ALERTS

Firelands Electric Cooperative members can sign up to receive text and email notifications during outages that may be affecting their electric service.

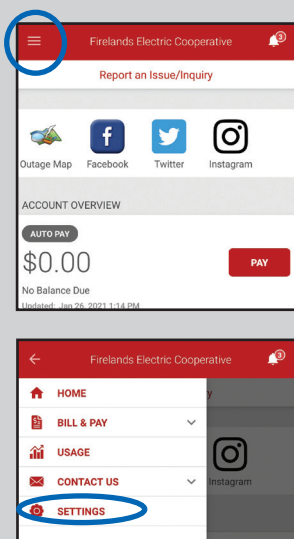
Below is a step-by-step guide for members to enroll in these alerts through the mobile SmartHub app. Those who have not enrolled in SmartHub yet may do so by visiting <https://firelandsec.smarthub.coop/Login.html>.

STEP 1: Log in to your SmartHub account via the mobile app. If you have not yet downloaded it from your device's app store, it can be found by searching for "SmartHub."



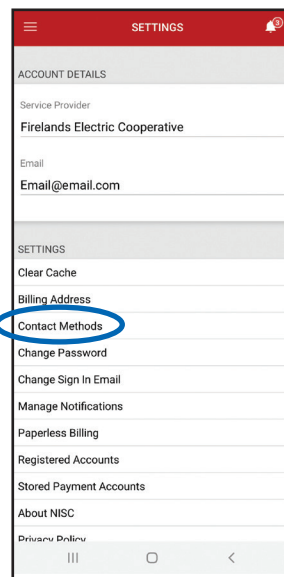
STEP 2: After logging into your SmartHub account, select the three bars at the top left of the screen to open the main menu, then select "Settings."

**Menu may be dots and in a different location on the screen, depending upon the type of phone.*



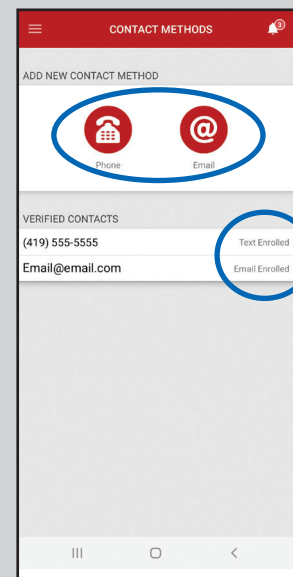
STEP 3: Next, select "Contact Methods" from the list of options.

**You can also control many other aspects of your account from this screen.*



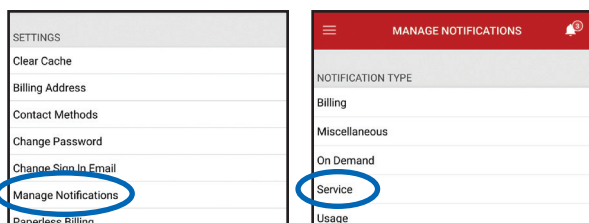
STEP 4: Here you can add a phone number and email address. Current entries may be updated by selecting them in the "Verified Contacts" list.

It's important for all contacts to show "enrolled."



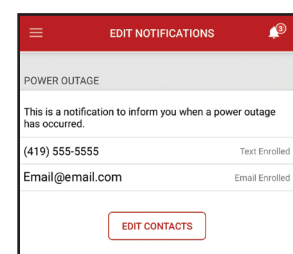
STEP 5: Navigate back to the settings screen seen in Step 3 and select "Manage Notifications" from the list.

Then, select "Service" from the options that appear.



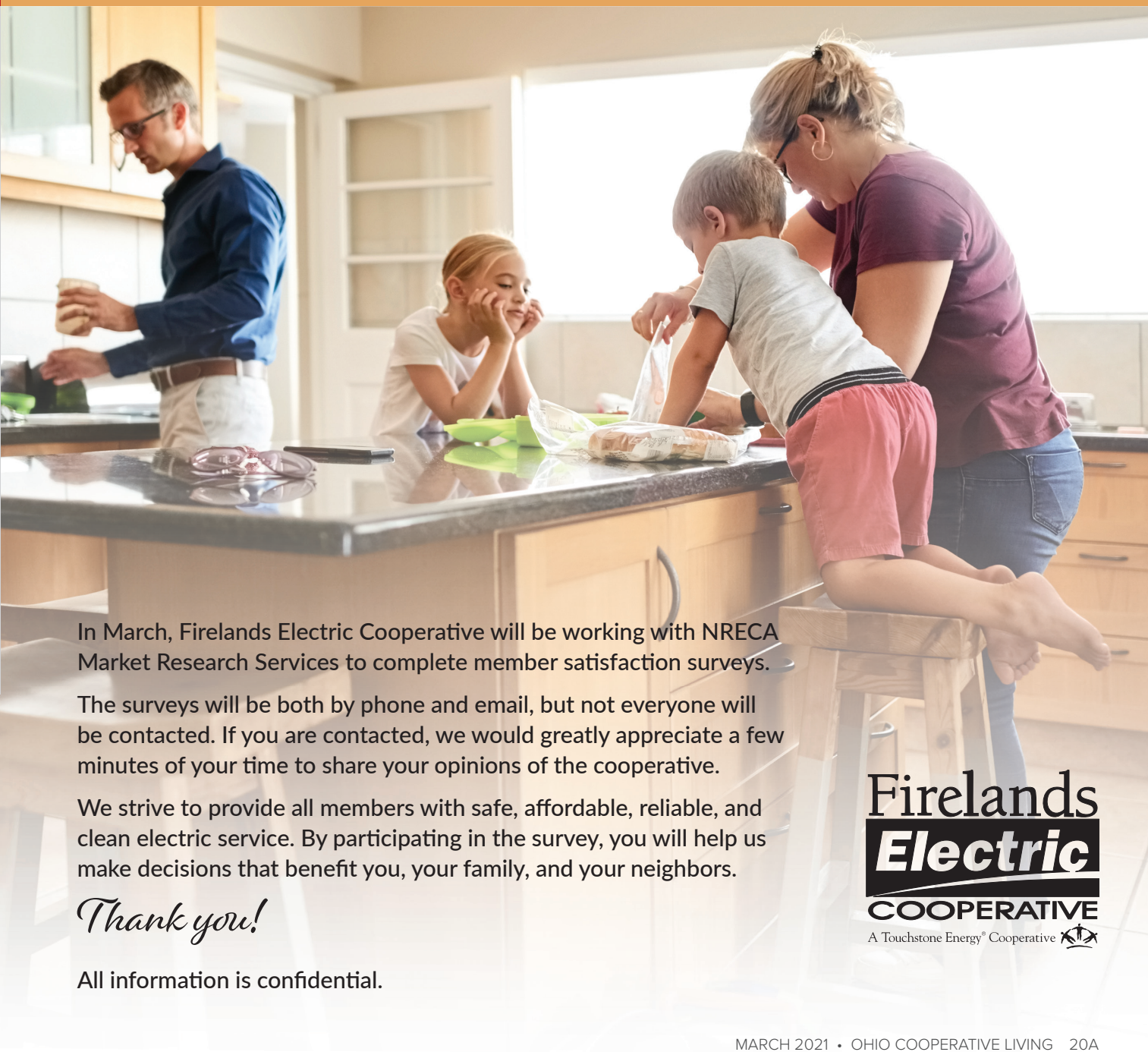
STEP 6: From here, you'll be able to select which outage alerts you'd like to receive and by what method. Select "Edit Contacts" under each alert to enroll or unenroll a specific contact method.

Again, it's necessary for each contact method to show enrolled next to the phone number or email address.



We want to hear from you!

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



In March, Firelands Electric Cooperative will be working with NRECA Market Research Services to complete member satisfaction surveys.

The surveys will be both by phone and email, but not everyone will be contacted. If you are contacted, we would greatly appreciate a few minutes of your time to share your opinions of the cooperative.

We strive to provide all members 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.

Thank you!

All information is confidential.

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ENERGY EFFICIENCY

SPRING DIY FOR YEAR-ROUND EFFICIENCY

As you put together that list of home improvement projects this spring, don't forget to include energy efficiency upgrades. Many do-it-yourself tasks not only make your home more comfortable, but also save money on your energy bills.

Keeping your cool

During the summer months, reducing the amount of outside air making its way inside your home is key to your comfort level and keeping those cooling bills in check. If you're planning to update your landscaping, consider planting trees and shrubs that do double duty by providing shade in the summer and adding aesthetic value. Placed properly, the right trees can create a protective canopy of cooling shade for your home.

Limit the amount of unnecessary heat added to your home by fitting windows with treatments like curtains or shades to block sunlight. It's also a good idea to replace any incandescent bulbs with LEDs. The waste heat from the old bulbs impacts energy use and creates wasteful and unwanted warmth.

In extremely hot weather, your air conditioner works harder to close the gap between the high outdoor temperature and the cool indoor thermostat setting. To lessen the difference in temperature between the two and lower cooling costs, set the thermostat as high as you can while maintaining your comfort level. Installing and using a ceiling fan in conjunction with your air conditioning can allow you to increase the thermostat setting approximately four degrees with no reduction in comfort levels.

Heating things up

To maintain a comfortable indoor environment in chillier weather, caulk and weatherstrip air leaks around windows and doors. Similarly, install gaskets around outlets to prevent drafts. Keeping the cold air out will help your heating system run less often, saving you energy. As an added bonus, sealing leaks also keeps hot air out of your home during the summer months — thus increasing your savings.

Other areas to look for and stop air infiltration include your attic access, ductwork, and around plumbing. Also consider installing a programmable thermostat to set the temperature as low as is comfortable when you are home (ideally around 68 degrees) and turn down several degrees when sleeping or away from home. This small adjustment can help you save as much as 10% a year on heating and cooling costs.

All year long

Some projects can provide energy savings in every season. Improving your home's insulation keeps the cold air out in winter and blocks the heat in summer, reducing your heating and cooling bills all year long. Replacing old, inefficient models with new ENERGY STAR-certified units can reduce appliance energy consumption by nearly 30%. Even better — many of these updates may qualify for rebates from your cooperative. See the chart at right for a list of rebates currently available to Firelands Electric members.

If you're planning home improvement projects this spring, why not incorporate some that will also save you money in the long run? For additional energy-saving DIY ideas, visit www.energy.gov/energysaver/energy-saver. And if you have questions about making your home more energy efficient all year long, contact the experts at Firelands Electric by calling 1-800-533-8658. They'll be glad to help!



Firelands Electric Cooperative Member Programs

PROGRAM TYPE	AMOUNT	GENERAL REQUIREMENTS
HVAC SYSTEM & LOAD MANAGEMENT REBATES		
All-Electric geothermal systems	\$800* rebate	Installation of a new or replacement all-electric geothermal or heat pump system with a Cool Returns load management device installed . Communicating systems that are incompatible with the load management device will receive the rebate, less \$100*.
All-Electric heat pump systems	\$500* rebate	
Dual fuel geothermal and air-source heat pump systems	\$300* rebate	
All-Electric ductless or mini-split heat pumps	\$300* rebate	
LOAD MANAGEMENT INCENTIVES		
Central air-conditioning systems	\$100* bill credit	Installation of a Cool Returns load management device on a new or existing central cooling unit that does <u>not</u> qualify for other member program incentives.
ELECTRIC WATER HEATER INCENTIVES		
New standard electric water heaters (no existing switch)	\$300* bill credit	Installation of a new or replacement electric water heater that has a 50-gallon or larger tank capacity, with an E.F. of 0.91 or higher that <u>does not already have a load switch</u> .
Replacement electric water heaters (existing switch)	\$150* bill credit	
Electric heat pump or communicating water heaters (only available on units incompatible with RCS switch)	\$150* bill credit	Installation of a new or replacement electric heat pump or communicating water heater that meets the energy efficiency standards above.
	\$50* bill credit	Installation of load management device on an electric water heater that doesn't meet the cooperative's energy efficiency standards. Solar and on-demand/tankless water heaters do not qualify for this incentive.
ENERGY STAR APPLIANCE REBATES		
Refrigerator & freezer	\$100* bill credit	Purchase of an ENERGY STAR®-certified appliance to replace an existing appliance. Purchase receipt, proof of removal of old appliance, and proof of ENERGY STAR certification required.
Dishwasher & clothes washer	\$50* bill credit	
Dehumidifier	\$25* bill credit	Installation of an ENERGY STAR®-certified dehumidifier with a minimum capacity of 70 pints/day. Purchase receipt for the new appliance and proof of ENERGY STAR certification required.
WEATHERIZATION REBATES		
Air-sealing upgrades	\$400* Rebate	Air sealing and insulation upgrades must be installed by a licensed contractor. All qualifying upgrades must be installed in an electrically heated residential home and meet or exceed required energy specifications.
Insulation upgrades	\$800* Rebate	
ELECTRIC VEHICLE (EV) REBATES		
Electric Vehicle (EV) Level 2 Charger	\$250* Rebate	Installation of a new, UL-listed electric vehicle (EV) Level 2 (240-volt) charger. Maximum of two rebates per residential member or six per commercial/industrial facility.

*A complete listing of specific eligibility requirements for all incentives is available on Firelands Electric Cooperative's website, www.firelandsec.com.



YOUTH PROGRAMS

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

Firelands Electric Cooperative invites children in kindergarten through fifth grade to enter its 2021 Electrical Safety Contest. Children who live in a home receiving power from the co-op are eligible to participate.

Complete the puzzle

To enter, students simply need to show off their knowledge of electrical safety by completing the crossword puzzle provided on the next page. A parent or guardian must also fill out and sign the section at the bottom.

Submit the completed and signed puzzle by mail to: Electrical Safety Contest, Firelands Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 32, New London, OH 44851. Entries may also be scanned/photographed and emailed to members@firelandsec.com (maximum file size of 10 MB) or completed online at www.firelandsec.com/contests. The deadline to enter is 8 a.m. Monday, March 22.

Win a prize

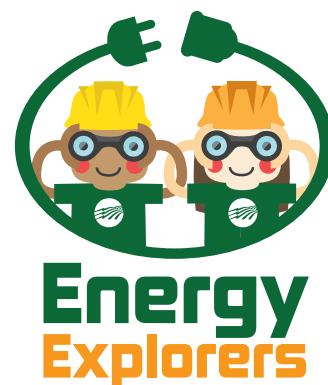
Students who correctly answer at least eight puzzle clues will have their name entered into a drawing for a chance to win one of three restaurant gift cards.

In May, as part of National Electrical Safety Month, winners' photos will be featured in the local pages of *Ohio Cooperative Living* magazine, as well as on Firelands Electric Cooperative's social media outlets. The correct answers will also be published in the May issue.



Official contest rules and the crossword puzzle are also available at www.firelandsec.com/contests. If you have questions, please contact the cooperative's member services department at 1-800-533-8658 or email members@firelandsec.com.

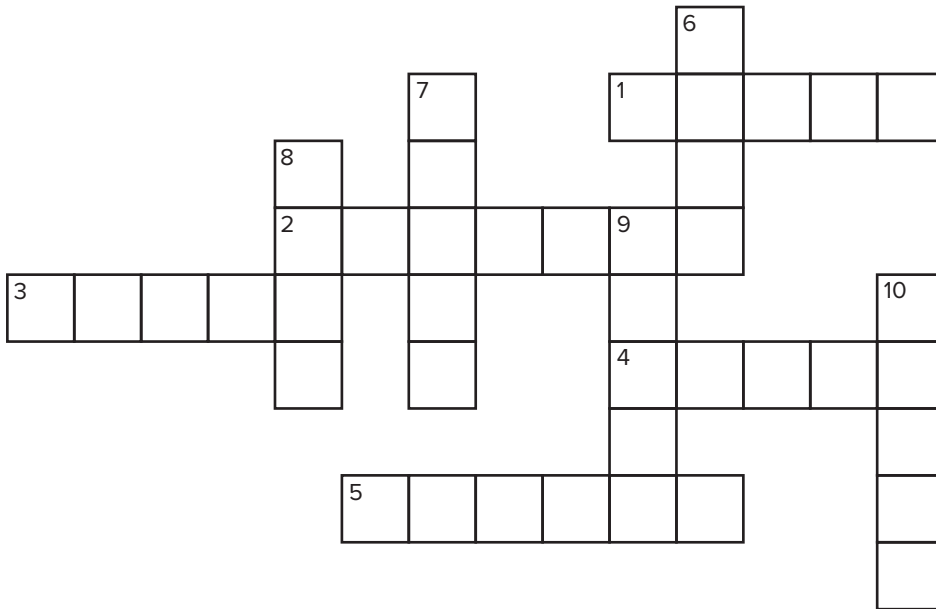
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**ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY FIRELANDS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
BEFORE 8 A.M. ON MONDAY, MARCH 22.**

2021 Electrical Safety Crossword

Complete the puzzle using the clues. Choose your answers from the word bank below.



WORD BANK

watts	pets
fallen	rugs
bulbs	energy
fence	truck
radio	cord
toys	poles
water	volts
seven	outlets
lines	kites
three	

NOTE: Not all words in word bank will be used.

ACROSS

- Use the right size light _____ for lamps.
- Never plug too many electrical devices into these at the same time.
- _____ and electricity don't mix!
- A battery-operated one is helpful during a power outage.
- Stay far away from power lines that have done this.

DOWN

- Don't run electrical cords under these.
- Never fly these near power lines.
- Never use an electrical device with a damaged _____.
- Keep space heaters this many feet away from furniture and curtains.
- These are not for climbing or playing on.

Please complete the information below and mail your entry to:

Attn: Electrical 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 CONTESTS

And the winners are ...

During November and December, members of Firelands Electric Cooperative showed off their holiday spirit by submitting photos of their indoor and outdoor Christmas lighting displays.

Firelands Electric shared the photos on our Facebook page, where the public voted for their favorite by clicking the “Like” button beneath the photo. The entry receiving the most likes at the end of each week received a \$25 credit on their January bill. The contest ran for four weeks, with a winner announced each week.

Thank you to the more than 30 members who entered and congratulations to the winners: John and Kelli Adams of Plymouth, and from New London, Deb and Steven Metro, Aubin Randleman, and Sarah Nau.

To view all of the photos submitted, visit www.facebook.com/FirelandsElectric and open the photo album “2020 Christmas Lighting Contest Entries.”



Deb and Steven Metro
NEW LONDON



Aubin Randleman
NEW LONDON



John and Kelli Adams
PLYMOUTH



Sarah Nau
NEW LONDON

Over 800 votes were cast in the co-op's recent Christmas Lighting Contest. The four winners, selected by popular vote, each received a \$25 credit on their January electric bill.

OPERATION ROUND UP

BIG IMPACT WITH SMALL CHANGE

Fifty cents won't go very far in today's economy. You can't even buy a cup of coffee for that price. There is one noteworthy exception, however. Co-op members who voluntarily participate in Firelands Electric's Operation Round Up can make a big impact in the community for just pennies a month.

Established in 1995, Operation Round Up is a charitable program funded by Firelands Electric Cooperative members who volunteer to have their monthly electric bill rounded up to the next dollar. Each member contributes an average of 50 cents a month. The money is pooled together to award grants to local organizations and individuals with extenuating circumstances. The recipients are chosen through an application process conducted every other month by the People Fund Board, a group of co-op members specifically appointed by Firelands Electric's trustees to oversee the distribution of funds collected through the program.

But how can a single member donating a few coins do so much good? As of January 2021, 84% of Firelands Electric's members chose to take part in Operation Round Up. That comes out to roughly \$3,800 in contributions per month, and over \$46,000 per year. In 2020, Firelands awarded grants totaling \$43,680. Since 1995, Firelands members have given back almost \$1.2 million to our community. That's a lot of spare change!

If you are affiliated with a local charitable organization that could benefit from a grant, contact Firelands' Operation Round Up at 1-800-533-8658. Applications, information, and a list of the 2020 grant recipients are also available at www.firelandsec.com/operation-round.



In 2020, Firelands Electric Co-op's Operation Round Up awarded \$43,680 in grants to local organizations including Huron River Joint Fire District for a new AED (left), Firelands Ambulance Service for updated lighting (top), St. Joseph's Helping Hands for a classroom STREAM lab (middle), and Homeward Bound Dog Shelter toward the construction of a new, larger facility (bottom).



GOVERNMENT



Co-op Owners for Political Action

Working to make your voice heard

As a member of Firelands Electric Cooperative, you are among 42 million Americans who can claim membership in a not-for-profit electric cooperative. Your co-op's ability to serve you and your community depends, in part, on electing the right people into office.

The Action Committee for Rural Electrification (ACRE) is the political action committee (PAC) of the nation's electric cooperatives. ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action is the member-based arm of this organization. A bipartisan PAC that focuses on electric co-op issues instead of party affiliation, Co-op Owners for Political Action supports those who support rural America.

In joining Co-op Owners for Political Action, you will be a part of a network of co-op members in your state and across the nation, making your voice heard on co-op issues that impact your electric bill and the availability of affordable, reliable, safe power for your home, business, and community.

What is Co-op Owners for Political Action?

For almost 50 years, ACRE has been working to support members of and candidates for the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives who understand and support electric cooperatives and members like you. Co-op Owners is the special electric co-op members-only arm of ACRE that gives you the ability to speak up and help elect Ohio and federal government officials who will:

- Keep electric service reliable
- Keep electric bills affordable
- Assist efforts to use electricity more efficiently
- Make renewable energy affordable
- Help us rebuild after a storm
- Protect our economy and jobs when making energy laws

Can I really make a difference?

Of the 47 states with electric cooperatives, Ohio has more than three times the number of Co-op Owners

members than any other state. There is strength in numbers, and it takes members getting involved. Every little bit helps to make the co-op voice stronger for both state and national leaders to hear.

On the flip side, if members stopped caring about policymakers, policymakers would stop caring about members. Disengaging in the political process could be very detrimental to members.

Your contribution is valued

Your co-op would like to take this opportunity to thank members who have already made the generous decision to participate in the ACRE program. Your commitment to spend personal dollars to support ACRE demonstrates your dedication to keeping the voice of electric cooperatives heard in the political process.

With your contribution, ACRE can support candidates who understand that the nation's electricity must be safe, must be reliable, and must remain affordable. ACRE contributions are made by over 30,000 cooperative members like you, making this organization a truly grassroots political action committee. ACRE gives co-op members a powerful, persuasive voice in Washington and acts as an honest broker for our 70,000 employees and 42 million members. This program is a wonderful opportunity for members to be involved in the political process and supportive of your local electric cooperative.

Thank you for your continued support of the ACRE program. If you have any questions, would like additional information, or want to sign up for the ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action program, please contact Firelands Electric Cooperative at 1-800-533-8658.

Contributions to ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action are not tax deductible. All contributions to ACRE are voluntary and will be used for political purposes. Contribution guidelines are suggestions only. You may contribute more or less than the recommended amount. You may refuse to contribute without reprisal.

CO-OP NEWS

Serve your co-op COMMUNITY

Become a candidate for the board of trustees

Firelands Electric is guided by a board of trustees who are members of the cooperative — not shareholders. Co-op trustees are your friends, neighbors, coworkers, and fellow community members.

It is the board's responsibility to represent co-op members' best interests when making decisions affecting your electric service. Trustees must be strong leaders who understand the needs of the local area and can help keep the cooperative and the community successful. Firelands Electric needs members like you to fill these important positions.

Members will elect board members to represent districts 2, 7, and 9 in 2021. Any co-op member in good standing who resides in one of these districts is invited to become a candidate for a position on the board. Those interested are required to submit an election application with 20 signatures from co-op members within their district. To view a map of the districts, visit www.firelandsec.com/service-territory.

Applications to become a candidate
for board districts 2, 7, and 9
are due by 4 p.m. on Friday, March 19.

Petitions are available at the Firelands Electric Cooperative office, located at 103 Industrial Drive, New London. Call 1-800-533-8658 or visit www.firelandsec.com for additional information on Firelands Electric Co-op's board of trustees and the election process.

Make a difference — become a candidate for your cooperative's board of trustees.



CAMP CO-OP: WINTER EDITION WINNERS

Firelands Electric received 80 entries in its recent Camp Co-op: Winter Edition contest. Geared toward children ages 5 to 12, ten families were randomly selected to receive a kit filled with a selection of books, science kits, and other activities focused on electricity and energy education.

Thank you to all who entered and congratulations to our winners!

Marson and Isabella Kimberlin of Greenwich

Brody and Brayden Smith of Ashland

Bode and Abbie Bores of Monroeville

Shelby and Sabrina Robinson of Ashland

Ryker Querin of North Fairfield

Aria Vandriest of Ashland

Ian Amburgy of Greenwich

Grayson Barkacs of New London

Ethan and Nolan Jones of Norwalk

Hailie, Brayden, and Gracie Pylant of New London

The Firelands Electric
Cooperative office will
be closed April 2 in
observance
of Good Friday.

*Happy Easter
from*

**Firelands
Electric**
COOPERATIVE
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COOPERATIVE UPDATE

BOARD MEETING *highlights*

Firelands Electric Cooperative's board of trustees met Dec. 22 in person and via teleconference to cover the following items:

- Board President Dan Schloemer reported that the cooperative received 33 membership applications for approval by the board.
- Director of Operations Don Englet reviewed recent activities and projects in the operations department.
- The board reviewed and approved a report from a safety meeting held Nov. 10.
- General Manager Dan McNaul reviewed the Energy Resource Task Force recommendations from Buckeye Power.
- Director of Finance and Accounting Tabi Shepherd reviewed the November financials and reported on recent accounting and billing department activities.
- McNaul reviewed the outage report for November and the status of the current tree trimming program.
- The board reviewed estate capital credit refunds for 2019 and 2020.
- McNaul reviewed the most recent information regarding broadband funding available for co-ops.
- Director of Communications and Technology Andrea Gravenhorst reviewed a report on recent activities involving the member services and IT department, including current rebate programs and contests offered to members.
- McNaul discussed the renewable energy systems currently installed by cooperative members.
- District 6 Trustee Kevin Reidy reported on an OREC Education Committee meeting he attended virtually.
- President Dan Schloemer recognized District 5 Trustee Carl Ayers for his completion of ten years of service to the cooperative.

The cooperative's next board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 23. 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
419-929-1571

OFFICE HOURS

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



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Dan Schloemer
President, District 1

Bruce Leimbach
Vice President, District 4

Carl Ayers
Secretary/Treasurer, District 5

W.E. Anderson
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 McNaul

HAVE A STORY SUGGESTION?

Email your ideas to:
members@firelandsec.com

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