



GM'S REPORT

# SAFETY STARTS WITH YOU

## Tips for spotting potential electrical hazards

Electricity plays a major role in our everyday lives, from powering appliances, cellphones, and lighting to running heating and cooling systems. It's important to remember, though, that every electrical device has a specific purpose and an expected lifespan. The periodic inspection of electrical equipment for improper use and damage can help prevent dangerous situations in your home.

According to the Electrical Safety Foundation International, each year thousands of people in the U.S. are critically injured or electrocuted as a result of electrical fires and accidents in their own homes. Many of these accidents are preventable. May is Electrical Safety Month, and here at Firelands Electric Cooperative, we think it's the perfect time to look around your home and check for possible safety hazards.

### Ground fault circuit interrupters

Outdoor outlets or those in potentially damp locations, such as a kitchen or bathroom, often include GFCI features. When operating correctly, they are designed to sense abnormal current flows and break the circuit to prevent potential electric shocks.

The average GFCI outlet is designed to last about 10 years, but in areas prone to electrical storms, they can wear out in five years or less. Check them frequently by pressing the red test button. If the power to the outlet turns off, then the GFCI is working correctly. Make sure to hit the black reset button when you are done to restore power to the outlet. Contact a licensed electrician to replace any GFCI outlets that are not functioning properly.

### Loose or damaged outlets or switches

Signs of heat damage or discoloration can serve as an early warning of possible issues with electrical outlets or wall switches, that can create a risk for shock or electrical fire. Loose connections can allow electrical current arcing. If you see any of these warning signs, contact an electrician right away.

### Surge protectors

Power strips with surge protectors can help safeguard expensive electronic equipment from power spikes. Voltage spikes are measured in joules, and surge protectors are rated for the number of joules they can effectively absorb. If your surge protector is rated at 1,000 joules, which is ideal for smaller electronics like printers and smartphones, it should be replaced when it hits or passes that limit. When the limit is reached, protection stops, and you're left with a basic power strip.

Some surge protectors include indicator lights that flicker to warn you when they've stopped working as designed, but many do not. If your electrical system takes a major hit, or if you don't remember when you bought your surge protector, replacement is the best option.



Dan McNaull  
GENERAL MANAGER

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## May is Electrical Safety Month.

### #ElectricalSafetyMonth



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### Extension cords

With the growing number of electrical devices connecting your family to the electricity you get from Firelands Electric Cooperative, having enough outlets in just the right spots can be challenging. Remember, extension cords are designed for temporary use only. If you find yourself using them on a more permanent basis, having a licensed electrician install additional outlets will better protect your home and your family.

If an extension cord gets noticeably warm, it could be undersized for the intended use. If it shows any signs of

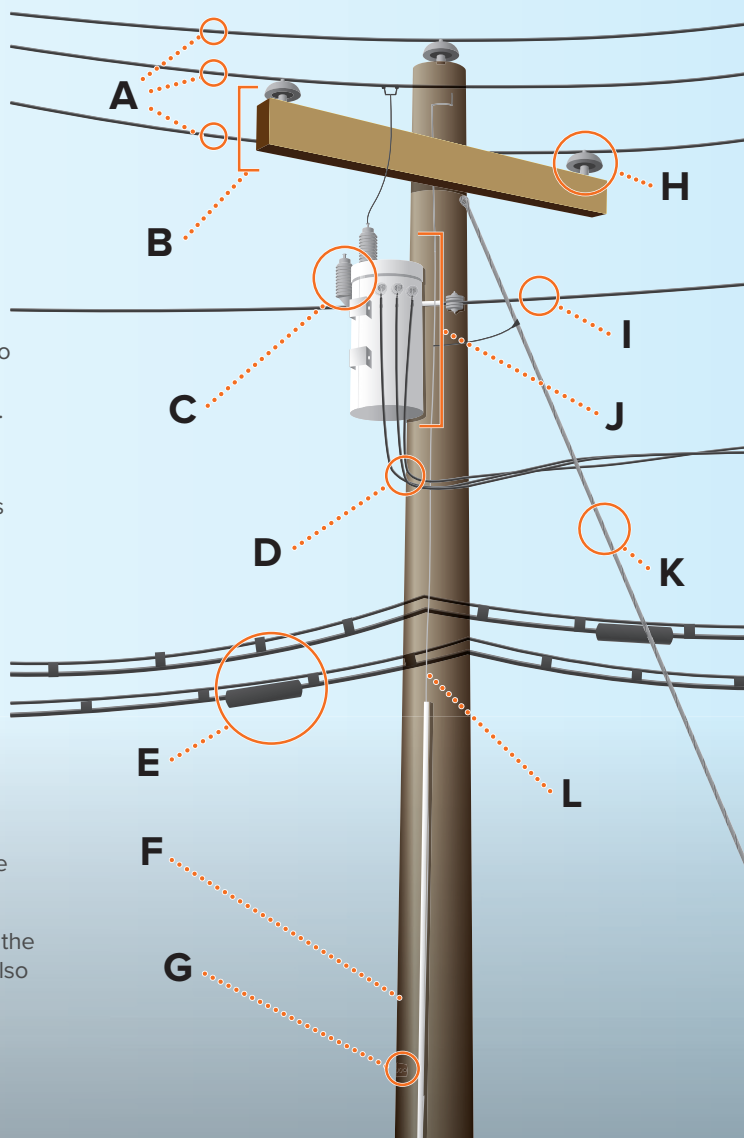
frayed, cracked, or heat-damaged insulation, it should be replaced. If the grounding prong is missing, crimped, or loose, it will not provide adequate protection. Always make sure that extension cords used in outdoor or potentially damp locations are rated for exterior use.

Electricity is an essential necessity for modern living, and Firelands Electric Cooperative is committed to providing safe, reliable, and affordable power to all of our members. We hope you'll keep these electrical safety tips in mind so that you can note — and correct — any potential hazards before damage occurs.

## What's on that utility pole?

**This illustration shows basic equipment found on electric power distribution poles. Not all poles have all of this equipment on them. They vary according to location and the service they provide.**

- A. Primary wires run on top. Each usually carries 7,200 volts of electricity from a substation.
- B. A crossarm holds power lines, allowing required clearances between lines.
- C. Surge arrestors protect the transformer from lightning strikes.
- D. A secondary service drop carries 120/240 volts of electricity to the end user. It has two "hot" wires from the transformer and a bare neutral wire connected to the ground wire on the pole.
- E. Telephone and cable TV lines are typically the lowest wires.
- F. A head-high "birthmark" shows the size of the pole, as well as where and when it was made.
- G. 40-foot poles are sunk 6 feet into the ground.
- H. Insulators (made of porcelain or a composite) prevent energized wires from contacting each other or the pole.
- I. The neutral wire acts as a line back to the substation and is tied to ground, balancing the electricity on the system.
- J. Transformers convert higher voltage electricity from primary wires to lower voltage for use by consumers.
- K. Guy wires help stabilize poles. They also are connected to the pole's ground wire.
- L. Pole ground wire that runs the length of the pole connects to the neutral wire to complete the circuit inside the transformer. It also directs electricity from lightning safely into the earth.



## YOUTH PROGRAMS

# Electrical safety contest winners

Each year, Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) designates the month of May as National Electrical Safety Month.

To help raise awareness of the importance of electrical safety among the cooperative's future members, Firelands Electric sponsored an electrical safety quiz and contest. Children of co-op members in kindergarten through fifth grade were eligible to enter. Students who correctly answered at least six of the eight questions on the electrical safety quiz printed in the March issue of *Ohio Cooperative Living* magazine had their name entered into a drawing for a chance to win one of three restaurant gift cards.

"This contest is a great way for the cooperative to help teach children about potential electrical hazards inside their homes," says Firelands Electric's Communications and Member Relations Specialist Tracy Gibb.

Congratulations to the winners of Firelands Electric Cooperative's 2019 Electrical Safety Contest!

- **Katie Nolt, daughter of Kervin and Minerva Nolt of Willard**
- **Isabella Kimberlin, daughter of Benny and Jennifer Kimberlin of Greenwich**
- **Hadley Young, daughter of Brandon and Tiffany Young of Polk**



Firelands Electric employees recently presented \$15 gift cards to the co-op's 2019 Electrical Safety Contest winners. Pictured above is first-grader Hadley Young with Lead Lineman Phil Pickering. Pictured at left is fifth-grader Isabella Kimberlin with Apprentice Lineman Robert Shepherd. Not pictured is fourth-grader Katie Nolt.

## Electrical safety quiz answers

1. Smoke alarms in your home should be tested how often to ensure they work properly?  
B. Twice a year
2. It is safe to run extension cords under carpet or rugs in your home.  
B. False
3. What should you do if you are outdoors and hear thunder?  
B. Seek shelter indoors and wait at least 30 minutes
4. It is safe to leave the kitchen with a burner on, as long as it's a short amount of time.  
B. False
5. How far should items be kept away from space heaters?  
C. At least 3 feet
6. Overloaded outlets can overheat and cause a fire.  
A. True
7. When using an electrical appliance, how far should you keep it from any water?  
A. 10 feet
8. It is okay to play near downed power lines, as long as you are careful.  
B. False





## YOUTH PROGRAMS

# CO-OP SELECTS IARUSSI FOR



Madeline Iarussi  
NEW LONDON HIGH SCHOOL

Firelands Electric is pleased to announce that Madeline Iarussi will represent the cooperative on the 2019 Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. The daughter of Nicholas and Heather Iarussi, Madeline is a junior at New London High School. She will join approximately 40 other students from rural electric cooperatives across the state of Ohio for an all-expenses-paid trip during the week of June 14–20.

Youth Tour, sponsored by Ohio's Electric Cooperatives and Firelands Electric, gives children of members the opportunity to travel to the Washington, D.C., area for an in-depth look into our nation's capital. Participants have the chance to visit sites such as the U.S. Capitol, Gettysburg, the Smithsonian Institution, the Vietnam Memorial, the Kennedy Center, the Supreme Court Building, and many others.

Through educational and sightseeing activities, students gain a personal understanding of American history and their role as a citizen. They also have the opportunity to meet and interact with their U.S. representatives and senators. While student groups are organized at the state level, nearly 1,600 students from across the country come together for Youth Day, where they get to meet and hear featured speakers who provide insight into the important roles that electric co-ops play in their communities.

As part of Youth Tour, students may also be chosen to represent their state on the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) Youth Leadership Council (YLC). One student from each state is selected to come back to Washington, D.C., in July for a leadership workshop that focuses on the electric cooperative industry. YLC members also have the opportunity to attend NRECA's annual meeting the following February.

Firelands' Youth Tour contest is offered annually to high school sophomores and juniors who reside in a home served by the cooperative. Candidates are evaluated on school and community activities, demonstrated leadership, and a written essay. 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/content/youth-programs](http://www.firelandsec.com/content/youth-programs).



## CO-OP NEWS

# Easy as 1-2-3

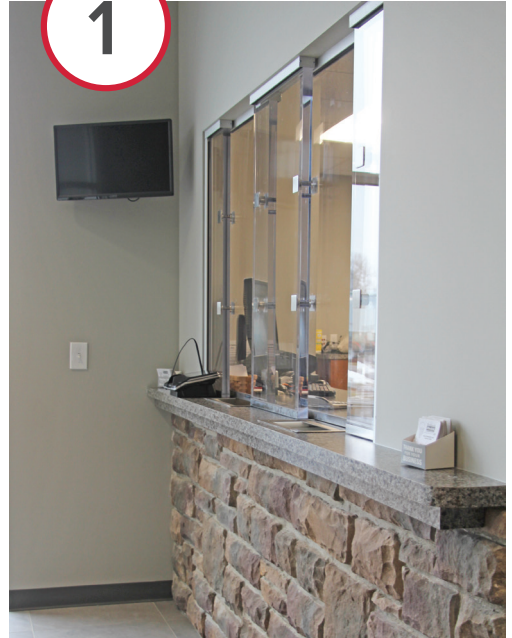
Firelands Electric Cooperative's new facility makes paying your bill in person easier than ever! We now have three great options:

1. Visit our lobby during regular business hours, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and one of our knowledgeable consumer services representatives will be happy to help you.
2. Is it raining or snowing, and you don't want to leave your car? Use our new drive thru window. Simply pull up, press the call button, and we'll be right there to process your payment.
3. Can't make it during office hours? Want to drop your payment and get on your way? Our night drop isn't just for after-hours. Place your payment in the slot located just north of the drive thru and rest assured knowing it is locked safely in our mail room until it is processed.

Rain or shine, day or night, Firelands Electric has you covered!

Don't forget that Firelands Electric also offers online ways to pay your bill. Questions about payment options? Contact our billing department at 1-800-533-8658 or email [billing@firelandsec.com](mailto:billing@firelandsec.com).

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The Firelands Electric Cooperative office will be closed on

**Monday, May 27**

in observance of Memorial Day, so that we may remember all those who gave the ultimate sacrifice serving our country.

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





## COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS



# THE **POWER** OF YOUR CO-OP MEMBERSHIP

Being a member of Firelands Electric Cooperative means you get safe, reliable power at an affordable price. But the benefits of membership don't stop there. Firelands also offers a whole host of other services to our members — and at no additional cost!

### **Rebates**

Who doesn't like to receive money back on their purchases?

Firelands Electric members who install a heat pump or geothermal system may qualify for rebates ranging from \$200 to \$800. Rebates are also available for insulation and air-sealing upgrades. Purchase of an electric water heater, refrigerator, stand-alone freezer, washing machine, dishwasher, or dehumidifier can earn members a one-time bill credit worth \$25 to \$300. Complete guidelines for each type of rebate can be found at [www.firelandsec.com/content/member-programs](http://www.firelandsec.com/content/member-programs).

### **Energy efficiency**

As a member-owned, not-for-profit utility, Firelands Electric wants to help members reduce their energy use and save money. The co-op's website contains links to an abundance of energy information, including usage calculators, tips to boost the efficiency of your home, and even information on renewable energy. Check out the extensive list by searching for "energy education" on our website.

With today's easy access to the internet, the energy information out there is limitless. It can sometimes become overwhelming. If you need help deciphering it all, just call the Firelands Electric Cooperative office at 1-800-533-8658 to schedule an appointment with our energy advisor. It's quick, easy, and FREE!

### **Payment options**

Firelands wants it to be easy to do business with us. That's why we offer so many ways to make your monthly payment. Pay online with SmartHub, drop your payment (day or night) in our night drop, visit our lobby or drive thru window, send us a check by mail, or even have

your payments automatically deducted from your bank account or credit card. Visit [www.firelandsec.com/content/payment-options](http://www.firelandsec.com/content/payment-options) to learn more.

### **Community**

Concern for community is one of the guiding principles of all cooperatives, and Firelands Electric takes this part of our job very seriously. We support numerous youth programs, such as sponsoring students on the annual Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., funding scholarships for high school seniors, and donating our time at 4-H camp.

Co-op employees are always willing to share electrical knowledge with those in our community. Our linemen provide safety demonstrations to area first responders several times a year and teachers are always welcome to request information for their classrooms.

With the help of members who allow their monthly electric bills to be rounded up to the next dollar each month, Operation Round Up allows the co-op to support the numerous charitable groups in our service territory. Since 1995, over \$1.1 million in grants have been awarded to schools, fire departments, healthcare organizations, and much more.

### **Stay in the know**

In today's busy world, we realize how difficult it can be to keep up with everything. We offer several convenient ways to help you stay connected with us, allowing you to choose which way works best for you! Firelands Electric provides several electronic options, including SmartHub text and email notifications, e-newsletters, and social media. If you prefer printed communications, we've got that covered as well. Members can receive the latest co-op news in the local pages of *Ohio Cooperative Living* magazine and through messages on their bill.

While our main purpose is to provide our members with reliable, affordable electric power, Firelands Electric Cooperative offers so much more. We are your trusted source of energy information and a proud supporter of the communities that we serve.

For questions about any of the co-op's programs, please visit [www.firelandsec.com](http://www.firelandsec.com) or contact our office at 1-800-533-8658.

## ANNUAL MEETING

# SAVE THE DATE

## YOUR ANNUAL MEETING IS JUNE 22

Join us for Firelands Electric Cooperative's 81st annual meeting on Saturday, June 22, at the Ashland University Myers Convocation Center. Members attending will elect trustee representatives for board districts 4, 5, and 8. A district map is available at [www.firelandsec.com/content/board-trustees](http://www.firelandsec.com/content/board-trustees). Make a difference with your vote!



Your annual meeting will feature a complimentary hot breakfast buffet for members and their immediate families. All members are welcome and encouraged to attend the business meeting, but seating for the hot breakfast is limited, so make sure to RSVP.

Official annual meeting registration cards will be mailed to members in mid-May. Members must bring their official registration card on June 22 to receive a \$5 bill credit on their August electric bill, to get a complimentary membership bag and gifts, and to be entered in special prize drawings.



- REGISTRATION BEGINS: 8:30 a.m.
- BREAKFAST SERVED: 8:30 to 9:15 a.m.
- BUSINESS MEETING AND CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES: 9:15 to 10:15 a.m.
- SPECIAL PRIZE DRAWINGS: 10:15 a.m.

Your RSVP for the breakfast must be submitted before June 14. It can be completed online at [www.firelandsec.com/content/annual-meeting-members](http://www.firelandsec.com/content/annual-meeting-members), OR by contacting Firelands Electric's office at 1-800-533-8658.



## COOPERATIVE UPDATE

# BOARD MEETING *highlights*

*Firelands Electric Cooperative's board of trustees met Feb. 26 and covered the following items:*

- Board President Dan Schloemer reported that the cooperative received 25 membership applications for approval by the board.
- The board reviewed a report for a safety and training meeting held on Feb. 14.
- Director of Finance and Accounting Tabi Shepherd reviewed the January financials and reported on recent accounting and billing department activities.
- The board reviewed proposed changes to the Code of Regulations with Attorney Dave Harwood. These changes will be brought to the membership for consideration at the annual meeting on June 22.
- Director of Electric Operations Don Englet reported on wind damage caused by recent high winds and the repairs that were required. Englet also reviewed other recent activities in the operations department.
- General Manager Dan McNaull advised the board that arrangements for the public auction of surplus equipment and supplies were complete. Andy Suvar

Auctions will be conducting the sale at the co-op's former facility on Saturday, April 20 at 10 a.m.

- The board discussed public use of the Carl Bruce Community Room in the new facility.
- A job description for the position of groundman was taken into consideration and approved by the board.
- McNaull reviewed with the board the cooperative's Strategic Goals Report.
- Director of Member Services and Communications Andrea Gravenhorst reported on recent activities involving the member services department.
- McNaull advised the board that petitions are now open for trustee candidates for districts 4, 5, and 8.

Firelands Electric Co-op is democratically controlled and governed by local people committed to policies that result in a safe and reliable electric system, fair rates, financial responsibility, and superior member service.

The cooperative's next board meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. on Tuesday, May 28, at Firelands Electric's new facility, located at 103 Industrial Drive, New London.

### 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

Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.-5 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

W.E. Anderson  
District 8

Steve Gray  
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**  
Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 