

## Off and running

### *Fleming-Mason Energy invests in education*

This issue of *Kentucky Living* has an unmistakable racing theme, from Kim Perry's Derby Festival art to a feature on Derby-winning jockey Brian Hernandez Jr. But as the flowers bloom and warm weather returns, another kind of race is shaping up as well. High school students across the commonwealth are graduating. Before you know it, they'll be off and running—to careers, to further education and beyond.

Education has always been a priority for Fleming-Mason Energy. In fact, it's one of the seven cooperative principles that distinguish the cooperative model from other types of businesses. We are deeply invested in advancing education, training and information, not only for our employees, but also for our consumer-members and for the next generation. We do this in many ways.

At Fleming-Mason Energy, we believe in investing in our community's future through supporting education programs. Each year, we send promising high school students on the Frankfort and Washington, D.C., youth tours, where they learn about government, leadership and the

cooperative business model alongside peers from across the nation. These students return with expanded horizons and fresh perspectives on what's possible for their futures.

We're also proud to offer scholarship opportunities that help ease the financial burden of higher education and vocational training for families in our service area. These scholarships represent our commitment to fostering local talent and helping students achieve their dreams without the weight of excessive student debt. The Kentucky Chapter of Women in Rural Electrification, or WIRE, also offers three \$1,000 scholarships to Kentucky college students each year. To learn more about this opportunity, visit [kyelectric.coop](http://kyelectric.coop) and search "WIRE."

Beyond financial support, our team participates in career fairs at local schools, sharing about the career paths available within the electric cooperative network. From lineworkers to engineers, accountants to communicators, we showcase the breadth of opportunities available right here in Kentucky.



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Our school-based demonstrations bring energy concepts to life in classrooms throughout our service territory. Whether it's teaching electrical safety or explaining how the grid works, these hands-on experiences spark curiosity and learning.

As we celebrate this season of achievement and new beginnings, Fleming-Mason Energy is proud to play a small role in powering your educational journey. Your race is just beginning—and we can't wait to see where you go.

### **At your service, 24/7**

**Should you experience an electric outage, cooperative employees are standing by to respond 24/7. To report an outage, call 1-800-464-3144.**

**Brandon Hunt**  
PRESIDENT & CEO



**Contact us:**  
In Fleming County:  
(606) 845-2661

**Other Counties:**  
(800) 464-3144

**Hours:**  
7:30 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.

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# Empower yourself for storm safety

Almost a year ago, storms tore through Kentucky, producing straight-line winds, 16 tornadoes and landslides. Lives were lost and damages amounted to tens of millions. Electric grid damages caused widespread outages lasting days.

This catastrophic event is a stark reminder of the need for heightened weather preparedness during storm-prone months.

That's especially true in May, the peak period for tornadoes in Kentucky.

At Fleming-Mason Energy, safety is our top priority because it prevents injury and safeguards the lives of every person living and working along our lines. Understanding what to do before and during a storm is crucial to staying safe.

As we enter this typically hazardous weather month, we urge every member to share the responsibility for safety.

• **Prepare now.** Before severe weather is in the forecast, assemble an emergency kit, identify safe places to shelter and have a family communications plan. Members dependent on an electric medical device should prepare for the possibility of an outage. Visit [ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) for an emergency kit checklist and comprehensive information on preparing for severe storms and possible outages.



• **Stay alert.** When there's a possibility of severe weather, make sure you have a way to receive alerts any time of the day. Then, pay close attention to those messages.

Also, know the difference between a tornado watch and a tornado warning. A watch means conditions are favorable for severe thunderstorms that may contain tornadoes, so be prepared to get to a safe place. A warning means a confirmed or suspected tornado is in the area. Get to shelter immediately.

Finally, know that preparation and monitoring weather is central to Fleming-Mason Energy's storm plan, too. Co-op employees are mobilized and properly equipped to begin power restoration as soon as it's safely possible following a damaging storm.

In May, and every month, let's all stay safe out there.

# Cooperatives support Special Olympics Summer Games for 13th year

More than 1,200 athletes and hundreds of coaches and family members will gather June 6-7 at Eastern Kentucky University for the Special Olympics Kentucky Summer Games.

Our co-op and other Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives are proud sponsors of the games. The Summer Games include track and field, soccer, bocce and rhythmic gymnastics.

Cooperatives provide more than 100 volunteers every year to help events go smoothly. Once again, our co-op will have hot air balloon rides, courtesy of Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives during the morning.

"We are proud to help make the Special Olympics State Summer

Games possible and to make it an unforgettable day for the athletes," says Lori Ulrich, marketing and public relations manager. "We are inspired by their courage and compassion, and we are proud to support them and the communities we serve."

This is the 13th year of the partnership between Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives and Special Olympics Kentucky.

The State Summer Games are Special Olympics Kentucky's largest competition of the year. This will be the 31st year of competition at Eastern Kentucky University. Each athlete qualifies through participation at a regional or area-level event.



**When planning home improvement projects, do you know when to DIY and when to hire a professional?**

**Home rewiring, breaker box replacement and adding a large number of electrical outlets should be left for the pros. Faulty electrical installations can lead to large expenses and even injuries or death.**

If you're doing work yourself with power tools, be careful.

- Use ground fault circuit interrupters, or GFCIs, with power tools to protect against electrical shock. Use caution when cutting or drilling into walls where electrical wires or water pipes could be.
- Never use power tools without the proper guards or near live electrical wires or pipes.

If your home improvement includes additional outlets, make sure your electrical panel and service can handle the added load.

Call 811 several days in advance if digging is part of the project so the underground utilities can be marked.

Contact your electric utility if your meter must be removed or relocated to accommodate renovations to your property.



TIM WEBB

ADOBE STOCK/KNOWLEGALLERY



# Gear for gardeners

## *Suit up for safety while working with outdoor power equipment*

Lawn care and gardening season is in full swing here in the Bluegrass State. Fleming-Mason Energy urges you to be safety conscious when tackling outdoor chores.

Outdoor work involving power tools comes with potential safety risks. To protect against hazards, make sure you're wearing the proper personal protective equipment. PPE can shield you from flying debris, dust and harmful chemicals that power tools kick up. It can also protect your eyes and ears from damage.

Essential gear for lawn care includes the following:

- **Eye protection**—Safety glasses or goggles that fit snugly around the face protect eyes from flying rocks and debris.
- **Hearing protection**—Foam earplugs and earmuffs that seal over the ears provide the best protection.
- **Sturdy footwear**—Closed-toe shoes or boots with good traction are best for projects involving equipment with blades.
- **Gloves**—Protect hands from

cuts, scrapes and vibrations by wearing heavy-duty canvas or leather gloves.

- **Head cover**—A helmet with a face shield provides the best protection when there is a risk of flying debris or falling limbs.

Before using power tools, check your PPE to ensure it's in good condition and fits properly. Replace worn-out or damaged safety gear promptly.

Prioritizing safety and using appropriate PPE provides peace of mind.



FOU PHOTO/SHUTTERSTOCK

# Fridge on the fritz?

## *Five signs it's time for a replacement*

Is your food spoiling too quickly? Or is your fridge making too much noise? These could be signs that your refrigerator is dying.

Beyond not doing its basic job of keeping food cold and fresh, a refrigerator on the fritz typically uses more electricity, meaning it's also wasting energy dollars. Here are some warning signs that it's time to send your old fridge packing.

- **Spoiled food.** If food is prematurely going bad, it's an indication that your fridge isn't maintaining a cold enough temperature.
- **Loud noises.** A loud buzzing noise or a rattling often means a failing motor or compressor.

- **Overheating motor.** If the back of the fridge feels excessively hot (warm is OK), it's a sign that the motor is overworked and possibly on the brink of failure.
- **Sweating.** Condensation inside and outside the refrigerator means that warm air is getting inside, and cold air is escaping. This is a serious problem.
- **Frosty freezer.** A freezer that looks like the inside of an igloo can be evidence that evaporator coils or other defrost system components are failing.

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, refrigerators have a typical life expectancy of 12 years. At that



ANDREY POPOV/SHUTTERSTOCK

point, the unit is likely using a lot more energy than newer models, and problems with performance would be expected. You'll have to decide then if repairs are worth the cost or if replacing it for a newer, more energy efficient model is the best choice for you.

When shopping for a replacement, look at Energy Star-certified models. They are about 9% more efficient than standard refrigerators.