



HOT LINES

January 2026



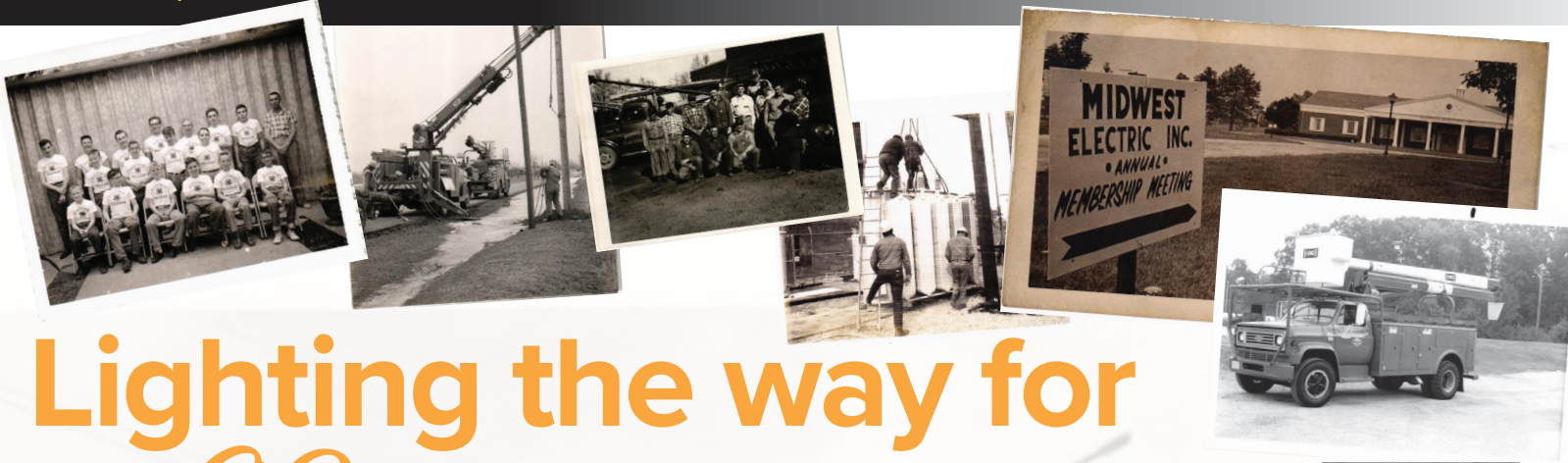
Midwest Electric, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

OFFICE HOURS: Monday through Friday 7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

419.394.4110
www.midwestrec.com

IMPORTANT MEMBER INFO



Lighting the way for 90 years

Midwest Electric's story began in 1936, when rural families across west central Ohio were still living without the convenience of electricity that city residents already enjoyed. A small group of local leaders gathered at the Barr Hotel in Lima to form what would eventually become Midwest Electric, sparking a movement that quickly spread across farms and rural communities. They held town meetings, visited neighbors, and shared the life-changing potential of electric service. Soon, farmers eagerly signed up, maps were drawn, and construction began with the help of low-interest federal loans.



By 1938, the young cooperative was already serving 440 homes and farms with 167 miles of line, operated by just two employees and contracted linemen. As the co-op grew, so did

its identity, evolving from its original Farm Bureau name to "Midwest Electric" by 1939. The office moved several times before settling at the current St. Marys location in the mid-1960s. Through it all, the mission stayed steady: bring electricity to the people who needed it most.

Nearly 90 years later, much has changed, but the cooperative principles remain the foundation. What started as lineworkers using bare hands and uninsulated tools has transformed into a modern, safety-driven operation.

Today, members benefit from technologies like Distribution Automation, digital mapping through GIS, Advanced Metering Infrastructure, and SmartHub tools that offer real-time account management and billing transparency.



Matt Berry, CEO
mberry@midwestrec.com

Even as electricity prices rose from about 5 cents per kWh in the 1930s to around 14 cents today, these increases remain modest compared to the cost of everyday goods. Electricity continues to be one of the best values for essential services. And through partnerships with Buckeye Power and Ohio's Electric Cooperatives, Midwest Electric has maintained rate stability by owning and operating its generating resources—avoiding the volatility seen across much of the energy market.

Beyond keeping the lights on, the co-op has strengthened the region through decades of community support. Scholarship programs, the Community Connection Fund, economic development loans, and more than \$45 million returned to members in patronage cash back highlight just how deeply the co-op invests in the people it serves.

As Midwest Electric approaches its 90th anniversary in 2026, it proudly reflects on the vision and hard work of its founders and early employees. Their dedication helped build a cooperative rooted in reliability, service, and community—and that legacy continues today. With gratitude for its members and a commitment to innovation, Midwest Electric looks ahead to the next 90 years of powering and uplifting the communities it was built to serve.

Read more about our history on our website, in your *Ohio Cooperative Living* magazine, and follow us on Facebook for more photos and history fun facts.



TREE SEEDLING

reimbursements from Midwest Electric

Midwest Electric has a special offer to help you plant trees in the right place this spring. We will reimburse you for buying a tree seedling packet from your local Soil & Water Conservation District.

- Special offer limited to the first 300 members; limit \$15 reimbursement. Purchase must be from the SWCD to be reimbursed.
- The reimbursement will be in the form of an electric bill credit. You must send us your receipt or proof of purchase to receive the reimbursement.

Instructions:

Contact your local SWCD. Typically, they require an order form that can be mailed or downloaded from their websites, and they require payment when your order is placed. Deadlines are usually in early March.

- **Auglaize County SWCD, 419-738-4016**
- **Mercer County SWCD, 419-586-3289**
- **Van Wert County SWCD, 419-238-9591**
- **Darke County SWCD, 937-548-1715**
- **Shelby County SWCD, 937-492-6520**
- **Putnam County SWCD, 419-523-5159**

Seedling delivery is normally mid-April. The SWCD typically sends out a postcard with the pickup time and location.

PUBLIC SAFETY DAY

Thursday, January 22
9:00 a.m., 2:30 and 7:00 p.m.

Bring your team and experience a live-line demonstration in our shop. You'll learn the dangers of high-voltage electric lines and how to keep you and your team safe!

RSVP by calling 419-300-1316.



Join our Member Engagement Group

Midwest Electric is forming the next Member Engagement Group to support the cooperative principle of Education, Training, and Information. This small group of approximately 20 members will meet four times over the year to learn about cooperative operations and provide input that may help guide future member services and initiatives. Participation also offers helpful insight for those who may be interested in future board service.

Details:

- Meetings held at our St. Marys office
- Topics include Co-op 101, Financials 101, Power Grid & Distribution 101, and Future Challenges
- Stipend provided for each meeting

Members interested in serving may contact Matt Berry at mberry@midwestrec.com or 419-300-1307.

2026 GRADS

Are your parents Midwest Electric members?
If so, you could win your share of

\$11,000

in scholarships!

Deadline to apply: February 13, 2026



To obtain complete rules and applications, scan the QR code or visit Midwestrec.com/scholarships.

Community Calendar

- ◆ Dec. 24-25 **Office Closed for Christmas**
- ◆ Dec. 31 **Office closes early at 11:30 a.m.**
- ◆ Jan. 1 **Office closed for New Years**
- ◆ Jan. 3-4 **Tri-State Gun Show**, Allen County Fairgrounds, Lima, for more info contact, Manetta Obringer 419-647-0067.
- ◆ Jan. 8 **The World of Rock N' Roll**, Veterans Memorial Civic & Convention Center, Lima, www.limaciviccenter.com/worldofrocknroll
- ◆ Jan. 11 **Lockkeepers Cabin Fever Hike**, Lockkeepers' House, New Bremen, www.htparks.org/2026-lockkeepers-cabin-fever-hike
- ◆ Jan. 17 **Craft Beer & Wine Fest**, Shipyard Sports and Events Center, Celina, www.facebook.com/events/1552103725992755
- ◆ Jan. 22 **Midwest Public Safety Day**, 9 a.m., 2:30 p.m., and 7 p.m., RSVP by Jan. 15 by calling the office at 419-300-1316
- ◆ Jan. 22 **Mrs. Doubtfire The Musical**, Veterans Memorial Civic & Convention Center, Lima, www.limaciviccenter.com/mrsdoubtfire
- ◆ Jan. 25 **Dinosaur World Live**, Veterans Memorial Civic & Convention Center, Lima, www.limaciviccenter.com/dinosaurworld
- ◆ Jan. 30 **Lorrie Morgan with Special Guest Jamie O'Neal**, Niswonger Performing Arts Center, Van Wert, www.vanwertlive.com/events
- ◆ Jan. 31 **Fleetwood Gold – America's Fleetwood Mac Experience**, Grand Opera House, St. Marys, www.grandoperahouselive.com/events
- ◆ Jan. 31 **Game Show Night Out**, Romer's Catering St. Henry, <https://romerscatering.com/events/>

Happy Holidays