



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT/CEO

# Sharpen your pencils

With all due respect to the TV commercials that describe the back-to-school shopping season as “the most wonderful time of the year,” parents know it can be a frustrating experience to wander the aisles and check off all the items on school supply lists.

From No. 2 pencils and washable markers to three-ring binders in four colors and calculators, it can seem like a scavenger hunt. Yet, as we hustle our children out the door for the first day of the school year, we recognize how important it is that we’ve equipped them with what they need to be successful.

You might be asking what this has to do with Holmes-Wayne Electric Cooperative.

When you look at your electric bill, it’s important for you to know that not only does it reflect the amount of energy you used in the previous billing cycle, it also accounts for the resources your cooperative needs to successfully provide you safe, reliable, and affordable electricity.

The big items on our supply list are obvious to see: poles, wire, transformers, meters, and other equipment needed to connect the power grid to you.

Our line crews need adequate tools and personal protective equipment to both keep them safe and to be effective in maintaining and restoring power. Holmes-Wayne Electric works hard to ensure that rights-of-way are regularly cleared of trees and brush to help reduce potential outages and hazards. We employ member services professionals to help you understand and manage your energy use, and we invest in economic development initiatives to help our community prosper.

The beginning of the school year also reminds me of the importance of continuing education and training for your cooperative staff and board of trustees. Like the hard work that teachers do after the bell has rung, many of Holmes-Wayne Electric’s efforts are also behind the scenes, such as the systems we deploy to detect problems down the line, technological upgrades, and cybersecurity.

The co-op supply list and your school supplies list might look different, but they actually have a lot in common — our community and our families.

Here’s to a safe and successful school year.



Glenn W. Miller  
PRESIDENT/CEO

## Life-saving safety demo

Holmes-Wayne Electric provides a FREE educational opportunity for area schools, community organizations, and emergency personnel throughout our service territory. Our table-top safety demonstration allows participants to see up close the dangers of electricity. If you would like to schedule a demonstration for students or your organization, contact us toll-free at 866-674-1055.





# Above ground or underground?

**W**henever strong storms (like those we endured this past summer), ice, or another natural disaster causes a widespread power outage, people tend to ask a logical question: Why don't they put the power lines underground?

It's one of those questions that seems to have an easy answer — until you start looking at the details. The debate over installing power lines underground comes with lists of pros and cons on each side. But one of those cons tends to drown out the others — COST. When people hear that burying power lines could more than double their electric bill, that tends to end the discussion.

But people keep asking about it because power outages are expensive, too. Wouldn't burying power lines save some of that money?

It's true that underground lines would protect them from wind, ice, and tree branches. But there are more factors to consider. Underground lines are costly, and the decisions are complex.

The cost of installing underground power lines is significant — more than twice the cost of overhead distribution lines, depending on soil, terrain, and number of services.

Overhead lines have their own advantages. While underground lines are less prone to damage, when something goes wrong, finding and repairing a problem up in the air can be a lot easier (and faster) than locating and digging up the exact spot of an underground malfunction. Life cycle costs of underground lines are further increased due to a shorter useful life.

Overhead lines can carry high voltage, but underground cannot. Underground distribution circuits are typically still linked to aboveground facilities, such as substations and transmission lines, so homes and buildings served by underground infrastructure will not necessarily be spared in the event of system-wide outages from a major storm.

Also, underground power lines aren't completely safe from natural disasters. They've been known to get overwhelmed with flooding and digging, or other construction can slice into underground service. But it really all boils down to cost.

Underground lines are more expensive to produce since they have superior insulation that has to be resistant to soil, weather, and chemicals. One of the reasons overhead power lines are cheaper is because they are insulated only at the contact tower, while the underground power lines are insulated all over.



HWEC Lineman Zach Condren and Apprentice Carter Quay build overhead line to provide safe, affordable, reliable electricity to our members.

Although underground service may seem like a great solution, the cost to you — the members — the rural terrain we serve, the lack of reducing outages in major storms, and actually extending outage restoration when underground failure occurs are all reasons why your cooperative equipment is mainly above ground.

While underground service is impractical, your cooperative is using other ways to maintain reliability, including investing in a strong vegetation management program and improving the system design with substation tie lines. Implementing smart grid technology, which allows us to pinpoint problems, divert power through other circuits to minimize outages, and optimize crew deployments is another approach to reducing outages.

As always, your cooperative's best resource is the dedicated, committed staff that is always quick to respond to outages in the safest and most efficient way possible.



**BARRY JOLLIFF**



**LISA GRASSBAUGH**



**GARY GRAHAM**

# 2022 Trustee Election Results

Three seats on Holmes-Wayne’s board of trustees were up for election this year. Re-elected to the board was Barry Jolliff, District 8. Jolliff has served on the board for the past 15 years and is the secretary/treasurer. For the last 10 years, Jolliff has served as the HWEC representative on the Ohio’s Electric Cooperatives board. He holds a master’s degree in agricultural education. “I appreciate having the opportunity to serve my family, friends, and neighbors as part of the HWEC Board of Trustees,” Jolliff says. Active in the local community as a 4-H advisor and playing piano at Church of the Cross, Wooster, he has especially enjoyed teaching leadership skills through recreational activities with Buckeye Leadership Workshops for the past 30 years.

New to the board is Lisa Grassbaugh, representing District 5, and Gary Graham, representing District 9.

Grassbaugh brings a wealth of knowledge in the insurance, investment, and financial planning industries. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in finance and management and brings 32 years of professional experience to the boardroom. Grassbaugh says, “I am willing to put forth the effort necessary to learn what is needed to be an asset to the board and the cooperative. I believe my financial background will add an additional point of view that will be beneficial to board discussions.”

Graham has worked for Ohio State University Extension as a specialist in agricultural and natural resources. With a PhD in natural resources and natural resources management, he also is an assistant professor and a state specialist for syrup production. He is active at Fredericksburg Presbyterian Church as a Sunday school teacher, leader of the safety team, and member of the long-range planning team. Graham says, “I believe in the HWEC mission. HWEC provides service to a large area with diverse topographic conditions and member demographics. The politeness, cooperation, and eagerness to serve its members, from the office staff to the linemen, makes it a great organization. I want to be part of keeping that going.”



## NOTES

Due to June derecho storm coverage and other critically timed information, the annual meeting speeches will be in the October edition of *Ohio Cooperative Living*.



## Play it safe near grain bins.

When moving equipment, be aware of power lines and maintain at least a 10-foot clearance to ensure safety. Follow all guidelines set by the National Electrical Safety Code.



**Holmes-Wayne  
Electric Cooperative, Inc.**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

### CONTACT

866-674-1055 (toll-free)  
www.hwecoop.com

### OFFICE

6060 St. Rte. 83  
P.O. Box 112  
Millersburg, OH 44654-0112

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