

Thank a farmer

If you live in a rural area, you know some farmers. Maybe you're one of them. Growing up, I remember people talking about borrowing a wagon or lending a hand in the tobacco patch or the hay field. There's always been a cooperative spirit among Kentucky farmers that preceded electric cooperatives.

This month's calendar includes time to celebrate the contributions of those who produce the food, fiber and fuel vital to everyday living. National Agriculture Week is March 15-21, followed by National Agriculture Day on March 24.

Farming in Kentucky is more than just a small family business. It's a way of life and it has a massive financial impact on the state. Along with supplying the food we put on our tables, hard-working Kentucky farmers—numbering more than 119,000—have a nearly \$50 billion impact on the state's economy. That's plenty of reason to deserve our gratitude, but there's more.

Electric cooperatives and farmers have long been intertwined. Decades before there were member-owned electric co-ops in Kentucky, farmers were realizing the benefits of working together. They formed the state's early agricultural co-ops, which helped them purchase seed and services more cost-efficiently.



By marketing their crops cooperatively, everyone realized a better profit, too.

Farmers who had experienced the benefits of cooperation were on the forefront of bringing electricity to rural Kentucky communities like ours. It was a small group of Fleming and Mason county farmers who did the hard work of organizing our co-op in 1938. And farmers with cooperative leadership experience formed the core of Fleming-Mason Energy's earliest board of directors.

Much about our local communities has changed over the nine decades since Fleming-Mason Energy's first

lines were energized, but some things stay the same.

For instance, we share a commitment to stewardship of the land, water and air. We agree that caring for Kentucky's natural resources is in everyone's best interest—now and in the future.

I'm personally grateful to local farm families for both the vital role they play in our everyday lives and the legacy that is Fleming-Mason Energy. The next time you see a farmer, I hope you'll join me in saying thanks for making our lives better.



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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Spring clean for energy efficiency

Add these five easy tasks to the to-do list

It may still feel like winter outside, but spring arrives this month, and for many that means giving your home a good cleaning. Adding these simple tasks to the cleaning checklist will improve the energy efficiency of your home.

- Vacuum air ducts and vents. Cleaning out dust and dirt helps heating and cooling systems work more efficiently. It can also increase the system's lifespan, too.
- Wash or replace air filters.
Clean air filters in your HVAC system improve air flow, which increases heating and cooling system efficiency. This one project can lower energy consumption by up to 15%. You should be changing air filters regularly to keep your system working at its best all year long.
- Look for leaks. As you wash windows and wipe down door frames, inspect them for cracks and openings where warm or cool air can leak out of the house, causing the heating and cooling system to work harder than necessary. Seal gaps with caulk, sealant or weather stripping.
- Do some dusting. Dust keeps electronics and motors from running at top efficiency. Wipe down your computer, office equipment, electronics, light bulbs and even refrigerator coils.
- Clean the sliding door track. If your home has a sliding glass door, clean out the track. Dirt and grit in the track can ruin the door's seal and create gaps where air can escape, increasing your energy usage and costing you money.

A few small spring-cleaning tasks can make a big difference in your home's energy consumption—helping you save both energy and money.



KENTUCKY'S TOUCHSTONE ENERGY COOPERATIVES

Daylight Saving Time reminder:

Remember to set your clocks ahead one hour on Sunday, March 8, 2026



YARYNA/ADOBE STOCK

SPRING FORWARD

Stay safe after spring storms

Severe thunderstorms are frequent during Kentucky springs. These storms can bring heavy rainfall, strong winds, hail and tornadoes, posing significant threats to safety, power lines and the electrical grid.

Fleming-Mason Energy urges you to make safety a priority to protect yourself and your family following a severe storm. Remember these safety rules:

- Keep people and pets at least 50 feet away from downed power lines. Don't touch anything in contact with a downed line, such as a car, tree or fence. Report a downed line to Fleming-Mason Energy immediately by calling (800) 464-3144.
- Report any power outages to Fleming-Mason Energy. Communicate

with us during an outage via our outage center by calling (800) 464-3144 or (606) 845-2661.

- If you lose power, keep your refrigerator and freezer closed to preserve food. Food in the fridge will last up to four hours, and a full freezer will be safe for 48 hours, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
- Never operate a portable generator inside your home. Always keep it outside for proper ventilation.
- Only a qualified, licensed electrician should attempt to connect a portable generator to your home or business's main electric panel. If connected improperly, power can backfeed onto utility lines, creating a dangerous situation for line crews.



Find weather-related safety tips, information about storm restoration and more at www.fme.coop.

Always on

It's a given that when a switch is flipped in a Fleming-Mason Energy member's home or business, the place will light up. The electric industry has a word for this "always on" assurance: reliability.

Providing dependable electricity is Fleming-Mason Energy's core mission. But the reality behind that promise is complex. It requires dedication to many facets of making electricity including reliability, cost-competitiveness and safety. We accomplish this while remaining committed to member-driven service and meeting rising demand.

How do we do it? Here are just some of the tools Fleming-Mason Energy uses to ensure reliability:

- **Innovation**—Integrating technology and modernizing where possible to boost the electric grid's resilience and capacity. This includes using drones to do the jobs expensive helicopters once did, or using applications and paperless billing instead of snail mail.
- **Demand management**—Teaming with members for demand response programs like SimpleSaver to shift energy use and reduce strain during peak times. Learn more at www.simplesaver.coop.



- **Infrastructure investment**—Upgrading distribution lines and implementing advanced inspection to maintain existing infrastructure.
- **Strategic partnerships**—Collaborating with East Kentucky Power Cooperative, our wholesale power supplier, and other Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives on vital infrastructure projects.
- **Policy advocacy**—Working with lawmakers to address regulatory hurdles and ensure policies support reliable, cost-competitive power.

These tools and more help Fleming-Mason Energy remain resilient.

A fresh start

Nature turns over a new leaf in March

Most people have considered January the beginning of the year since the times of the Romans. But in the world of nature, March is truly the time of new beginnings.

Cold days certainly remain ahead, but this month is when we can all heave a sigh of relief, looking forward to warmer weather. Soon, the first crocuses will appear, along with daffodils and redbuds.

Birds we haven't seen all winter will return, and one night this month, we'll hear the first spring peepers—tiny frogs that come out of hibernation and make themselves known with a chorus of nighttime chirps.

This issue of *Kentucky Living* celebrates the changing season with an article about the Kentucky Garden Trail, highlighting spectacular gardens across the state. We explore planting gardens for birds, which also benefits native plants and pollinators. We also speak with consumer-members about canning fresh produce at home—a skill that comes in handy when spring planting pays off.

March is nature's new year, and there's no better time to revisit your aspirations for 2026, whether that's health and wellness, serving in your community, taking up a new hobby or just planting your best garden yet.

At Fleming-Mason Energy, we

understand the value of fresh starts and new beginnings. We continually improve our processes, our skills, our technology and our safety culture, and every day is an opportunity to serve you better. We also understand the importance of working together in our communities. We are owned by the people we serve—that's what makes us a cooperative. On snowy days and sunny days alike, we're here to serve.

During this month's fickle weather, keep watch for those first crocuses and listen for spring peepers. Whatever March brings, we'll be working alongside you to power our community through every season.

SPRING INTO SAFETY On the farm

Safety tips for farmers this planting season

- Make sure farm equipment like planter arms and sprayers safely clear overhead power lines. Stay at least 20 feet away from power lines in all directions.
- Consider asking your electric cooperative to move overhead lines around buildings or frequently used pathways.
- Keep a safe distance from power poles and guy wires.
- If your farm equipment becomes entangled with power lines, stay on the equipment, call 911, keep others away and stay calm.
- If you are planning a controlled burn, mow and remove vegetation at least 15 feet around any pole prior to burning. Apply fire retardant to the area as recommended by the manufacturer prior to the burn period.
- Prevent fires from passing under power lines, as smoke contains carbon particles that conduct electricity.

