



GM'S REPORT

BRINGING THE *Energy*



Don Englet
GENERAL MANAGER

Co-op employees help power the community both on and off the clock

It might sound cliché, but keeping the lights on truly does take teamwork. Linemen maintain and repair power lines. The accounting department keeps records that ensure invoices are paid and expenses minimized. Communicators provide information regarding outages, events, and the programs available to our co-op members. Each and every Firelands Electric employee is integral to the cooperative's day-to-day operations.

The well-being of our community is no different. Residents count on businesses and organizations to keep everything running smoothly. From the corner grocery to sanitation services and everything in between, we rely

on them to provide the goods and services we need and want. And like Firelands Electric, their employees are at the heart of these institutions.

Essential for the operation of the co-op, our employees are also key figures in the community we serve. They volunteer their time with an endless number of groups — youth sports, 4-H clubs, civic organizations, schools, churches, and much more. It would be impossible for me to list all of the ways that Firelands Electric's employees contribute to the well-being of our community. However, since the co-op will be celebrating a special Lineman and Employee Appreciation Week April 13 to 18, I wanted to at least share a few examples of how these men and women “bring the energy” day after day, both on the job and after they clock out.

WORKING FOREMAN PHIL PICKERING — With more than 20 years of experience, Phil is one of a dozen Firelands linemen who help keep power flowing to our members and the co-op community. From outage restoration to line construction, repairs to installation of new equipment, he has been involved with nearly every type of work on Firelands' distribution system — all of which are necessary for keeping our community energized.

In addition to his job at the co-op, Phil powers his community by serving as a 4-H advisor for the County Line Kids Club in Lorain County. A former 4-H member himself, Phil is a firm believer in the skills and other advantages that youth can develop through 4-H.

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DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND IT ANDREA GRAVENHORST — Andrea has spent a significant portion of the past 26 years making sure that both her fellow employees and Firelands’ members have access to the most effective and secure applications for managing the co-op’s accounts. Her position also includes member communications and energy education, as well as rebate programs.

Like Phil, Andrea serves as a 4-H advisor for the Monroeville Fortune Finders Club. She volunteers with her sons’ football, basketball, and robotics programs, as well as the St. Joseph Catholic School and Church. One of Andrea’s current passions is serving on the Norwalk Area United Fund board of directors, where she assists with fundraising efforts and providing grants to local charitable organizations.

CONSUMER SERVICE/AMI COORDINATOR STEPHANIE SCHMIDT — Later this year, Stephanie will celebrate 25 years with Firelands Electric’s billing department, where she handles budget billing and processes payments and capital credits for estates. She also manages the metering system, which includes syncing meters with the co-op’s software following a new installation, transfer, and substation maintenance.

With a strong commitment to service, Stephanie took on the role of Head Deaconess at the New London Alliance Church in 2019. She oversees the half-dozen deaconesses who prepare and serve meals, offer prayer and emotional support, and send cards of encouragement to those in the church family and surrounding area.

COMMUNICATIONS AND MEMBER RELATIONS SPECIALIST TRACY GIBB — Tracy has spent nearly 13 years keeping our members up to date on their cooperative and the many programs we offer. She oversees Firelands’ pages in this magazine, social media accounts, and many of our youth programs and member contests.

At the beginning of the year, Tracy joined the board of trustees for the New London Public Library and the Ashland County Historical Society. As an advocate of life-long learning, she hopes to play at least a small part in encouraging others to explore their community and the world at large.

ENGINEERING AND OPERATIONS DATA COORDINATOR MELISSA WILSON — Responsible for maintaining and updating the cooperative’s digital mapping system, Melissa will wrap up her eighth year with Firelands this fall. Her mapping duties provide linemen in the field with detailed information on the type of equipment installed and where it is located, which is essential for reliability and safety.

For nearly 15 years, Melissa has also held the position of fiscal officer for New London Township. Her primary responsibility is keeping records to help the trustees maintain the township’s financial health. Melissa has recently taken on a similar role for the New London United Methodist Church.

The list above doesn’t even begin to recognize every contribution that your cooperative employees make to our community. However, I hope this brief list prompts you to thank the lineman, billing representative, or accounting clerk that you often see at the grocery store or baseball game for powering both your homes and businesses — and your community.



innovation
accountability
community commitment
integrity

YOUTH PROGRAMS



Education helps shape the leaders of tomorrow. That's why Firelands Electric includes it as one of our seven core principles. The A Team is a cooperative program designed to encourage students in their pursuit of academic excellence. Students in grades 6 to 8 are invited to participate and be recognized for their hard work and dedication to education.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Winners of February drawing receive \$15 gift cards



Brienne Hedrick
*St. Joseph Catholic School
Daughter of Tom and Jane Hedrick*



Ella Rosendaul
*Hillsdale Middle School
Daughter of Scott and
Jessica Rosendaul*

Send us your grade card and win!
Next drawing is April 10.

How you can win

Students in grades 6 to 8 who have a minimum of three A's on their most recent report card and whose parents or guardians are members of Firelands Electric Cooperative are eligible to apply. A copy of the report card should be submitted by mail to Attn: The A Team, Firelands Electric Cooperative, 103 Industrial Drive, New London, OH 44851. Report cards may also be emailed to members@firelandsec.com.

Be sure to include the student's name, school, grade, address, phone number, parents' or guardians' name(s), and an email address on your entry.

Complete program details are also available at www.firelandsec.com/team.



Braydon Brown
*Hillsdale Middle School
Son of Quinn and Rachel Brown*



YOUTH PROGRAMS



our
FUTURE

Co-op awards \$12,000 in scholarships

In February, Firelands Electric awarded nine scholarships to members of the class of 2026 who reside in homes served by the cooperative. Applications were submitted by students from Ashland, Crestview, Loudonville, Lucas, Mapleton, New London, Norwalk, South Central, and Willard high schools.

The co-op also awarded a career scholarship to one pre-June 2024 graduate returning to post-secondary education to pursue a certificate or degree in a vocational or tech field.

Additional information about Firelands Electric's scholarships and other youth programs is available on our website at www.firelandsec.com/community.



Hayley McNaul

FIRST PLACE — \$1,800
HIGH SCHOOL: ASHLAND
COLLEGE: OSU



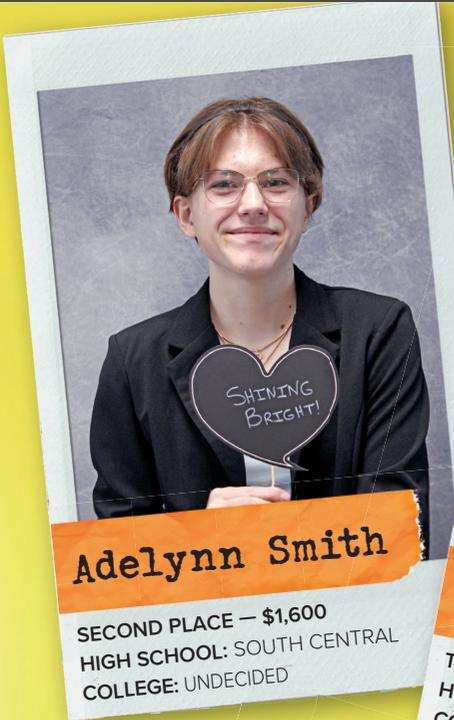
PJ Ryan

CAREER — PRE-JUNE 2024 GRAD
\$1,000
INSTITUTION: STARK STATE



Carlee Hess

CAREER — \$1,000
HIGH SCHOOL: NEW LONDON/EHOVE
INSTITUTION: BGSU FIRELANDS



Adelynn Smith

SECOND PLACE — \$1,600
 HIGH SCHOOL: SOUTH CENTRAL
 COLLEGE: UNDECIDED



Bryan Chaffee

THIRD PLACE — \$1,400
 HIGH SCHOOL: SOUTH CENTRAL
 COLLEGE: OHIO NORTHERN



Adilynn Helbert

FOURTH PLACE — \$1,200
 HIGH SCHOOL: ASHLAND
 COLLEGE: JOHN CARROLL



JUDGES' CHOICE

\$1,000 EACH

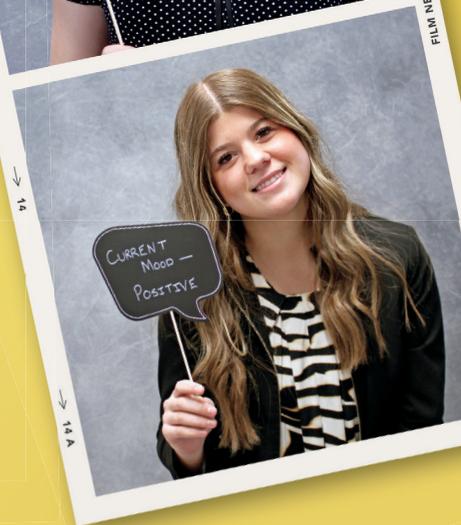
(clockwise from top left)

TAYLOR SMITH

AVA DEEL

MORGAN TRUMPOWER

EMILY LAMOREAUX





IN THE COMMUNITY

still PENNIES [^] HAVE POWER



In today's economy, it takes a lot of pennies to purchase even the most inexpensive items. In fact, according to the U.S. Mint, in 2025 it cost more than three-and-a-half pennies to even create one of these copper-colored coins. This was one of several reasons that the production of pennies was suspended this past November.

Despite the "disappearance" of the physical coins, pennies are still a powerful tool in the cooperative's commitment to our community. How, you ask? By combining the pennies of more than 7,800 of Firelands Electric's members.

For more than 30 years, the co-op's Operation Round Up program has "collected" spare pennies from members who voluntarily have their monthly electric bills rounded up to the next dollar. The average contribution per member is just 50 cents per month, or only \$6 a year. But, by combining the contributions from every co-op member who participates in Firelands' Operation Round Up, the program collects around \$3,900 per month.

In 2025, with the help of members like you, Operation Round Up awarded 19 charitable grants totaling near \$57,000 — all with just spare change.

The money collected and awarded through the program always stays within the communities where our members live and work. Countless local organizations in Ashland, Huron, Lorain, and Richland counties have benefited from the more than \$1.4 million in Operation Round Up grants awarded since the program's launch in 1995.

Grant recipients are selected through an application process conducted every other month by the People Fund Board. Appointed by Firelands Electric's trustees, this group of co-op members oversees the distribution of funds collected through Operation Round Up. Grant recipients include schools, fire departments, childcare

centers, health care facilities, youth groups, qualifying families and individuals, and numerous other charitable organizations.

While the U.S. Mint may have decided that pennies are obsolete, the photos on these pages tell a different story — that pennies remain a powerful force in our community.

For more details about Operation Round Up and a list of the grants awarded in 2025, visit www.firelandsec.com/operation-round.

In July 2025, the New London Library received an Operation Round Up grant to purchase automatic door openers. Prior to their installation, accessibility for the disabled was limited.





Several emergency services organizations were awarded grants from Firelands Electric's Operation Round Up in 2025 to help them better assist our communities.

At left: Firelands Ambulance Service in New London received a grant to purchase ballistic vests that protect EMS crews responding to calls in potentially dangerous situations, including those that involve weapons.

Bottom left: In May, a grant awarded to the Orange Township Fire Department in Nankin was used to purchase gear and shower lockers for the station .

Below: This ice rescue suit was purchased by the Madison Township Fire Department with an Operation Round Up grant. The suit will allow responders to more effectively provide aid in the event of a cold water rescue at the nearby Charles Mill and Pleasant Hill lakes.





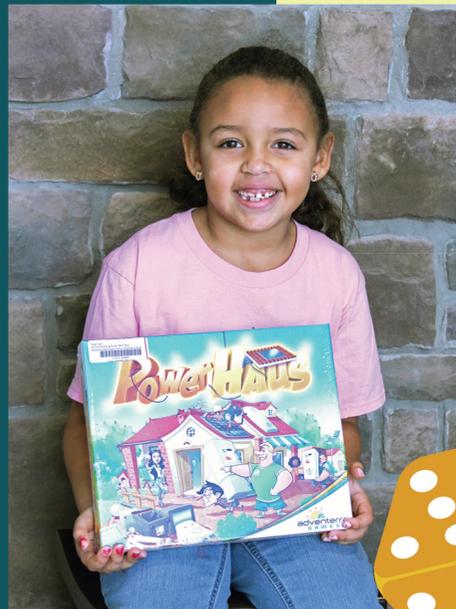
CO-OP CONTESTS

Let the games begin

FAMILY BOARD GAME GIVEAWAY WINNERS

Firelands Electric Cooperative is excited to announce the winners of our Let the Games Begin contest.

Open to co-op members with children living in the home, the contest took place during the month of January. Three families were randomly selected from among the 120 entries to receive a family board game prize package containing five games. The classic games Yahtzee, Sorry, Uno, and Trouble, as well as Power Haus, a board game that teaches players about energy consumption and efficiency (www.adventerragamesusa.com/powerhaus), were included in each package.



Top: The Gable family was one of three families recently selected to win Firelands Electric Cooperative's Let the Games Begin! Contest. Pictured are (back) Amber, Lucas, and Chris, along with (front) Cassidy and Alita.

Middle: Rodney and Christia Harner's six-year-old granddaughter, Avery, holds one of the games included in a prize package won by the couple during a recent contest sponsored by Firelands Electric Cooperative.

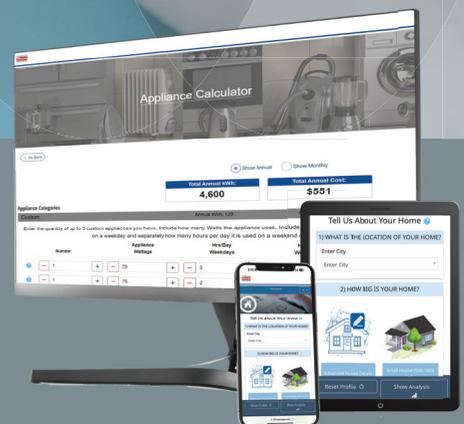
Bottom: Lead Lineman Robert Shepherd (far right) poses with contest winners Faith, Dakotah, and Eva Shipman (front).



integrity community commitment
accountability innovation

Saving money on your electric bill is as easy as turning a screw.

Setting your water heater temperature above 120°F can be a waste of energy and money. Take charge of your energy costs by turning down the temperature. Then, contact your energy advisor at Pioneer Electric Cooperative for other money-saving tips and check out SmartHub's enhanced home use data, which itemizes your electric bill and shows you which appliances are costing you the most. Remember, when it comes to saving energy, you have the power!



Learn more about ways to start saving on your electric bill at www.firelandsec.com/energy-education.

Firelands
Electric
COOPERATIVE
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



REMINDER TO CAST YOUR BALLOT



In 2026, members of Firelands Electric will elect trustees to represent districts 1, 3, and 6.

- Voting will be conducted by mail and online ballot. A third-party, independent provider will manage the election, overseeing the printing and mailing of ballots, the online voting portal, and receiving and tallying all votes.
- Candidate biographies and a paper ballot were mailed to every member in February. A link to video messages from the candidates is available on our website at www.firelandsec.com/cooperative-elections.
- Votes may be cast online via the secure link available at www.firelandsec.com or by returning the completed paper ballot in the envelope provided. If casting your vote online, the account number on record, which is found on your printed or emailed monthly billing statement, will be required.
- Paper ballots must be mailed to the independent provider and cannot be accepted at the co-op office.
- Only original ballots will be accepted — no photocopies are permitted. If more than one ballot is submitted or more than one voting method is used, the first ballot received by the independent provider will be considered final.
- Any ballots received by the independent provider after the close of voting will not be counted, so please allow ample time for delivery if sending by mail.
- Winners of the election will be announced at Firelands Electric's virtual annual meeting, which will be posted in early May. Results will also be posted on the co-op's website and published in *Ohio Cooperative Living* magazine.

VOTING CLOSSES SUNDAY, APRIL 12, AT 11:59 P.M.

LET'S CELEBRATE!

MEMBER APPRECIATION DAY

MAY 21, 2026

at Firelands Electric Co-op's facility in New London
Details coming soon!



Happy Easter

The Firelands Electric office will be closed

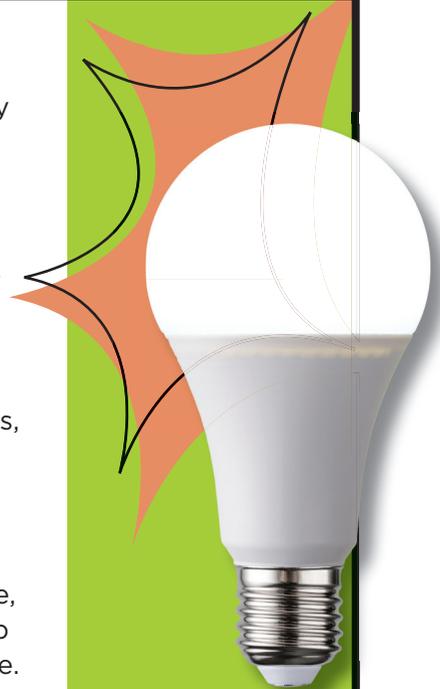
APRIL 3
in observance
of Good Friday.

**Firelands
Electric**
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ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

As spring arrives, take advantage of milder temperatures to save energy at home. Open windows on pleasant days to bring in fresh air instead of running your HVAC system. It's also a great time to replace dirty air filters, which helps your system run more efficiently and improves indoor air quality. As daylight increases, turn off unnecessary lights and rely on natural sunlight when possible. Small seasonal adjustments like these can reduce energy use, lower monthly bills, and help keep your home comfortable.



REIDY EARNS NATIONAL CREDENTIAL



Firelands Electric Board President Dan Schloemer (right) recently presented District 6 Trustee and Board Vice President Kevin Reidy with his Director Gold Credential certificate from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). This designation is awarded to co-op trustees who have already earned their Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) and Board Leadership Certificate (BLC) and who wish to continue to learn throughout their service. Unlike the CCD and BLC certificates, Director Gold includes a continuing education requirement which calls for directors to earn three credits of approved course work and/or conferences every two years to maintain their status.



COOPERATIVE UPDATE

BOARD MEETING *highlights*

Firelands Electric Cooperative's Board of Trustees met Jan. 27 and covered the following items:

- Board President Dan Schloemer reported that the cooperative received 43 membership applications for approval by the board.
- General Manager Don Englet reviewed the monthly safety and training, tree-trimming, outage, personnel, and joint-use billing reports. He also provided information on the 2026 depreciation rates.
- Director of Operations Rick Bowers reported on activities in the operations department.
- The board reviewed updates on the AEP and First Energy project in New London, the Coulter substation rebuild, and plans for the new Hillsdale substation. Englet advised that the remaining structural material for the Coulter sub should be available in March.
- Englet reviewed plans for the 2026 annual meeting, which will be held virtually. It was also decided to hold a separate member appreciation event at the co-op's facility on May 21.
- Director of Finance and Accounting Tabi Shepherd reviewed the December financial reports and provided an update on recent accounting and billing department activities.
- Englet provided an overview of the employee safety program.
- Director of Communications and IT Andrea Gravenhorst reported on recent activities involving the member services and IT departments.

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 Tuesday, April 28. If you would like to attend the next scheduled meeting, please contact the Firelands Electric office at 1-800-533-8658.

FIRELANDS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

OUTAGE HOTLINE

1-800-533-8658

OFFICE

103 Industrial Drive
New London, OH 44851
1-800-533-8658

OFFICE HOURS

Mon.-Fri. 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
www.firelandsec.com



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Dan Schloemer
President, District 1

Kevin Reidy
Vice President, District 6

Carl Ayers
Secretary/Treasurer, District 5

Joe Williams
District 2

Tom Lucha
District 3

Lon Burton
District 4

Greg Hess
District 7

Adrian Finlay
District 8

Brian Cucco
District 9

GENERAL MANAGER

Don Englet

HAVE A STORY SUGGESTION?

Email your ideas to:
members@firelandsec.com

