



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

# THE *perfect* PERK

Capital credits make your co-op distinctively different

In 1936, a group of farmers went door-to-door collecting \$5 membership fees from their friends and neighbors. These fees, combined with aid from the newly created Rural Electrification Act (REA), made up the original operating capital needed to establish Firelands Electric Cooperative. As the initial poles were set and the first spans of wire were hung, an entire rural community began to reap the benefits of these \$5 investments. Long ignored by for-profit utilities, they would finally have access to electricity for their homes and businesses, just like their city-dwelling neighbors.

Eventually, the founding members of the cooperative would see that initial \$5 returned. To this day, this cycle of investment and return remains an important part of Firelands Electric's cooperative business model — and one of the many ways we are different from other utility providers.

Investor-owned and for-profit utilities get a large portion of their operating capital from the sale of stock to shareholders. As a not-for-profit entity, Firelands Electric does not receive financial support from stockholders. However, we still need operating capital to build and maintain our distribution system to provide you with electricity whenever and wherever you need it.

So, how do we secure this capital? While some of it comes from low-interest loans available to the co-op through the Rural Utility Service (the successor to the REA) and other resources, a significant

portion is received through the investment of members like you.

If Firelands Electric has money left over after covering all of our expenses, any margins are allocated back to our member-owners as capital credits. Reinvested into the co-op, this capital is used to maintain and improve the electrical distribution system, make repairs, and cover any other necessary costs associated with providing members safe, reliable power. You can think of capital credits as your equity — or “share” — in the cooperative.

Just like the co-op's founders, today's members still benefit from the traditional cycle of investment and return. Each spring, margins are allocated to members' capital credits based on the power they purchased. Your annual allocation notice (which you received earlier this spring) lists how much was added to your capital credits for the previous year, as well as your total balance. This capital, or investment, is then used for the day-to-day operations of the co-op, as well as ensuring reliable service for future generations.

When the cooperative's financial position permits, capital credits are retired, with refunds to those members who have been invested in the co-op the longest typically given priority. This year, Firelands Electric is retiring another \$1,000,000 in capital credits to its present and past membership. Those who received electric power from Firelands during portions of 2003 and 2005, along with all of 2004, will be eligible for



Dan Schloemer  
BOARD PRESIDENT

“Returning capital credits to its members shows that the co-op is not just about making money.”

— Mitch Tyson

Mansfield, 35-year member  
of Firelands Electric Co-op

Continued on page 18

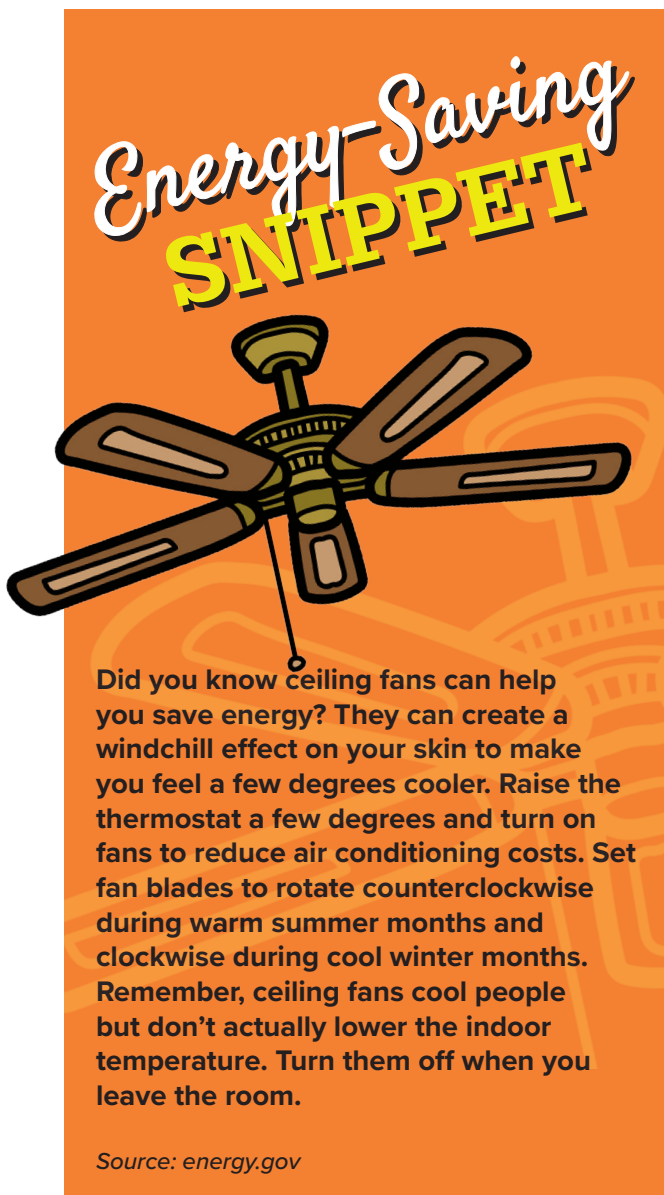


*Continued from page 17*

refunds, which will automatically be applied to the August bills of current members and sent by check to former members.

As a member-owner of Firelands Electric, you invest in the cooperative every time you pay your bill. And by reinvesting capital credits into the cooperative, Firelands is able to uphold its promise — to provide you with dependable power and superior service.

For additional information about capital credits, check out the Q&A on this page or contact the Firelands Electric Cooperative office at 1-800-533-8658.



**Energy-Saving  
SNIPPET**

Did you know ceiling fans can help you save energy? They can create a windchill effect on your skin to make you feel a few degrees cooler. Raise the thermostat a few degrees and turn on fans to reduce air conditioning costs. Set fan blades to rotate counterclockwise during warm summer months and clockwise during cool winter months. Remember, ceiling fans cool people but don't actually lower the indoor temperature. Turn them off when you leave the room.

*Source: energy.gov*

## CAPITAL CREDITS Q&A

### **What's the difference between allocated and retired capital credits?**

An allocation is made annually for every member based upon Firelands' margins for the year and the amount of electricity the member purchased. This amount is set aside to be used as operating capital for maintaining the co-op's distribution system. Co-op members receive an allocation notice every year, which is simply a report showing their capital credits balances for the current and previous years.

A retirement is the portion of a member's capital credits balance that is being refunded. The amount retired is decided annually by the board of trustees based on the financial health of the cooperative.

### **Will I receive a refund every year?**

Like any investment, receiving a payout takes time. The board of trustees authorizes retirements based on the financial condition of the co-op. When a retirement takes place, specific years are selected, and those who were Firelands Electric members during those years are eligible to receive a refund. Typically, members with the longest-standing investments in the co-op receive a refund first. Currently, those receiving refunds have been co-op members for about 20 years.

### **What happens to my capital credits if I move out of the co-op's service area?**

Your capital credits balance remains on the books in your name until the credits are retired. Refund payments are made to both current and former co-op members, so be sure to always provide us with your current mailing address. If a member passes away, the legal representative of their estate should contact the co-op for assistance.

IN THE COMMUNITY

# ENERGIZING EDUCATION

Every summer, Firelands Electric employees set aside time to educate young students about both the wonders and the dangers of electricity. Some of their most recent events include a longstanding tradition, as well as a fairly new one.

As the electric provider for Huron County's 4-H Camp Conger, Firelands has had a relationship with the camp that spans more than five decades. For the past 30-plus years, co-op employees have also volunteered to help campers with electrical projects. In early June, about a dozen Intermediate campers, who will enter high school in the fall, made 10-foot,

heavy-duty extension cords. The following week, an additional 33 Junior campers created small table lamps. "Firelands Electric is a strong supporter of 4-H, and these projects are something we truly enjoy sharing with our younger members," Communications and Member Relations Specialist Tracy Gibb says.



Firelands' involvement with the New London FFA's Safety Town is a more recent addition to the co-op's annual summer schedule. Started four years ago after a similar local program was discontinued, the FFA chapter's event has expanded to include three days of safety education for students in kindergarten through fourth grades. During the co-op's two-hour time slot, Firelands employees present several short lessons on electrical safety, including a miniature-scale demonstration on the dangers of power lines, a cartoon on indoor and outdoor electrical hazards, bingo, and lineworker protective gear.

Learn more about Firelands Electric's youth programs by visiting [www.firelandsec.com/community](http://www.firelandsec.com/community).



To view additional photos from these events and many more, check out our Flickr page at [www.flickr.com/photos/firelandsec/albums](http://www.flickr.com/photos/firelandsec/albums) or scan the QR code.





CO-OP NEWS

# GENERAL MANAGER DAN MCNAULL SET TO RETIRE AUGUST 30

When Dan McNaull put his name on the ballot for District 7 trustee in 1991, his intention was to simply be more involved in his community. Already active with the Ashland Dickey Church of the Brethren, the church cemetery, Montgomery Township Zoning Commission, and Ashland Young Men's Business Club, McNaull was also one of the co-owners of Ashland Implement. Little did he know that this decision would also result in an additional seven years as Firelands Electric's general manager, bringing his total years of service to the cooperative's members to more than three decades.

After 26 years on the board, including 18 as board president, McNaull's commitment to the community, experience as a board trustee, and involvement with numerous statewide cooperative committees made him the obvious choice when the time came to name a new general manager when former general manager April Bordas retired in early 2018.

During his tenure as the co-op's general manager, McNaull has experienced both the challenges and rewards of running an electric utility provider. Making sure Firelands' distribution system is adequately prepared for the

future has been particularly difficult, especially considering frustrating — and often unrealistic — governmental regulations that make maintaining a reliable supply of power at an affordable cost excessively challenging. During the second half of his time as general manager, McNaull and his staff have also faced sharply increasing costs, supply shortages, and long lead times to acquire vital equipment.

Despite these challenges, McNaull is proud of what his team of 27 employees has accomplished during his tenure. "We've made tremendous progress in rebuilding, upgrading, and strengthening our distribution lines in several parts of our service area that involve some of the most rugged terrain around," McNaull says. "Putting our long-range, 24-year system upgrade plan in place will help the cooperative stay focused on preparing for the successful future of our members."

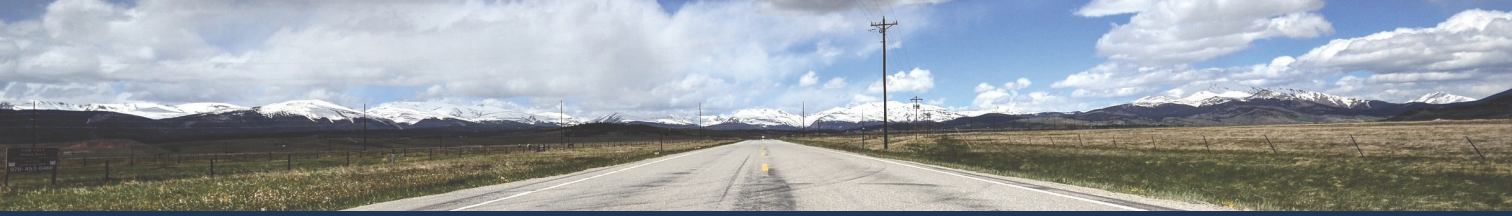
McNaull is also quick to point out that working with Firelands' employees on a daily basis and witnessing their tremendous efforts to provide the best possible service to members, has been one of the most rewarding aspects of his cooperative career. "Their capability to find solutions to problems — both large and small — makes me confident that Firelands' future is in good hands," McNaull says. "Our cooperative business model, with its member-led board of trustees and local employees, keeps Firelands focused on finding the right balance needed to provide safe, affordable, and reliable power to our community."

While McNaull will miss his day-to-day interactions with the cooperative's employees, trustees, and members, he's also looking forward to his August 30 retirement. He and his wife, Debbie, will be retiring to their 1815 McNaull homestead farm, located in Firelands Electric's service territory south of Ashland. Upon his retirement, McNaull plans to enjoy being with his family, including the couple's two adult daughters and two grandchildren, as well as devote more time to attending his grandchildren's activities and volunteering at church and in the community. He's particularly excited about having the flexibility to be outdoors more, doing some of the things he loves most, such as fishing, making maple syrup, and — hopefully — building a primitive log cabin in his woods.



Dan McNaull  
GENERAL MANAGER





## DON ENGLET PEGGED AS CO-OP'S NEW GENERAL MANAGER



Don Englet

Following the review of more than 35 applications from multiple states and a rigorous interview process, Firelands Electric's Board of Trustees has appointed Don Englet to serve as the next general manager of the cooperative, effective on the August 30 retirement of incumbent general manager Dan McNaul.

Englet has been an employee of Firelands Electric for nearly 24 years and is the current director of operations, a position he has held for the past six years. Starting his career with the cooperative in March 2000, Englet was soon appointed to the position of engineering services representative. While in this role, he completed his apprentice lineman coursework and handled new services and upgrades. Englet was then promoted to line supervisor in 2005, a position he held for thirteen years prior to promotion to his current role as director of operations.

Englet is a graduate of Mount Vernon Nazarene University, where he earned a Bachelor of Business Administration degree, and the Robert I Kabot Management Internship Program (MIP) through the University of Wisconsin-

Madison. An active member of the South Central Local Schools Board of Education, Englet also serves on the board of the Huron County Chamber of Commerce and the newly formed Huron County Growth Partnership.

"The Board determined that Don was the best fit for the position based on his knowledge of the distribution system, participation in various leadership courses, community involvement, and dedication to Firelands Electric during his time with the cooperative," Board President Dan Schloemer says.

Englet's numerous roles within the cooperative demonstrate his commitment to meet the needs of the members of Firelands Electric. "I fully endorse the board's selection of Don, with the confidence that our members, staff, and community partners are in capable hands," says General Manager Dan McNaul.

Englet and his wife, Sara, live in Greenwich Township in Huron County. They have two adult sons, Clayton and Jackson. Outside of the co-op, Englet enjoys spending time with his family and being involved in their activities, as well as camping, fishing, and hunting.

"Firelands Electric has amazing employees and a dedicated board who are committed to providing excellent service for our members. I am very grateful for, and humbled by, this tremendous opportunity," says Englet.

*Happy Labor Day!*

The Firelands Electric Cooperative office will be closed on  
**Monday, Sept. 2**

As always, emergency service is available 24/7 by calling 1-800-533-8658.



CO-OP NEWS

## MONTHLY BILL GETS MAKEOVER

Your next Firelands Electric Cooperative bill is going to look a little bit different.

After several months of working with National Information Services Cooperative (NISC), who processes our monthly statements, Firelands Electric will be introducing a new bill design at the end of the month.

This new layout will be easier to read, as well as contain additional information about your monthly electric use. Some of these features were not available on your current billing format:

- A graph reflecting your usage for the past 13 months, including average daily temperatures.
- Side-by-side comparisons between your consumption for the current month, previous month, and the same month last year.
- Your average daily use and average daily cost for the current month.

### How To Read Your New Bill

Refer to the sample bill on the next page and the numbered list below as a guide to reading your new bill.

1. Amount due on account.
2. Your account number.
3. Billing transactions activity since your last bill.
4. Important messages from your cooperative.
5. Service address and meter information.
6. Use this graph to see monthly usage along with monthly high and low temperatures. You can also compare your usage with the previous year.
7. Detailed list of current charges for electric use.
8. Energy use comparisons and daily averages.
9. Account number and total amount due.
10. Firelands' contact information and ways to pay your bill online and on the SmartHub app.

**25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

**CURRENT POSITION: ACCOUNTANT**

**Cindy Thompson**

**ROOKIE YEAR: 1999**

**STARTING POSITION: BILLING CLERK**

**SPOUSE: CHUCK**

**FAMILY: 3 ADULT CHILDREN**

**BIGGEST FANS: HER 9 GRANDCHILDREN**

**FAVORITES: VOLUNTEERING AT CHURCH, CRAFTING, AND PEANUT BUTTER M&MS. BUT MOST OF ALL, SHARING LOVE AND A MEAL WITH ALL 17 MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY**





**Office Hours:** Monday – Friday, 7:30 am – 4:00 pm  
**Website:** www.firelandsec.com  
**Office/Outage Hotline:** 1-800-533-8658  
**Automated Payment System:** 1-855-940-3960

**Member Name** JOHN DOE  
**Account #** 999999999

**Billing Date:** 08/22/2024  
**Current Bill Due Date:** 09/14/2024

Previous Balance	\$106.00
Payment Received	-\$106.00
Balance Forward	\$0.00
<b>Current Charges</b>	<b>\$107.00</b>
<b>Total Due 09/14/24</b>	<b>\$107.00</b>

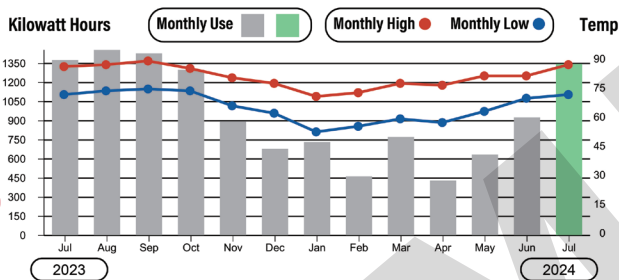
**Total Due**  
**\$107.00**  
**Due Date:**  
 09/14/24

**Important Messages**

The office will be closed on Monday, September 2, for the observance of Memorial Day.

**Service Address: 123 ANY ST.**

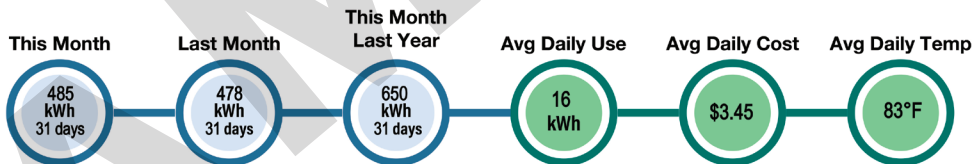
Rate	Meter No.	Reading Dates From	Reading Dates To	Days	Readings Previous	Readings Present	Mult	kWh Usage	kW Reading	kW Usage
RESIDENTIAL	12345678	07/22/24	08/22/24	31	16285	16770	1	485	--	--



**Current Service Detail**

kWh Charge	485 kWh @ 0.12870	\$62.42
Distribution Charge		\$40.00
Wholesale Power Adj	485 kWh @ 0.00880	\$4.27
Operation Roundup		\$0.31
<b>Total Current Charges</b>		<b>\$107.00</b>

**Energy Usage Comparison**



103 Industrial Drive  
 New London, OH 44851

Pay your bill 24/7 at www.firelandsec.com, by downloading the SmartHub mobile app, or call our automated payment system at 1-855-940-3960.

Please notify Firelands of phone, email, or address changes.

**Phone Number:** (999) 999-9999  
**Email:** email@yahoo.com

JOHN DOE  
 123 ANY ST  
 ANYWHERE, USA 99999

<b>Account Number</b>	999999999
<b>Total Due 09/14/2024</b>	<b>\$107.00</b>
<b>Amount Due After 09/14/2024</b>	<b>\$117.36</b>

**FIRELANDS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC.**  
 PO BOX 32  
 NEW LONDON OH 44851-0032





# COOPERATIVE YOUTH DAY 2024



## EXPLORE THE OHIO STATEHOUSE WITH YOUR COOPERATIVE

Firelands Electric Cooperative is looking for high school students to attend this year's Cooperative Youth Day in Columbus!

Do you know a high school student interested in history, government, and politics? Encourage them to apply for this year's Cooperative Youth Day, **BEING HELD ON TUESDAY, OCT. 22, 2024.**

Applying is easy! Simply use the QR code below to fill out your application online, or download a fillable PDF to complete and send to the cooperative.

Cooperative Youth Day is also a great introduction to the Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that takes place in June. Students will be given additional information on this national program during Youth Day.

Check out the January 2024 issue of *Ohio Cooperative Living* at [www.firelandsec.com/ohio-cooperative-living-magazine](http://www.firelandsec.com/ohio-cooperative-living-magazine) or our Flickr gallery at [www.flickr.com/photos/firelandsec/albums](http://www.flickr.com/photos/firelandsec/albums) to learn about last year's Youth Day.

Questions? Contact Firelands Electric at [members@firelandsec.com](mailto:members@firelandsec.com) or call the member services department at 1-800-533-8658.

### COOPERATIVE YOUTH DAY INCLUDES:

- Tour of the Ohio Statehouse
- Visits with our state legislators
- The Ohio Statehouse Museum
- The Ohio History Center
- Breakfast and lunch for all participants
- Transportation to Columbus from the cooperative office

APPLY BY:  
**SEPTEMBER 20**

[www.firelandsec.com/community](http://www.firelandsec.com/community)





## INDUSTRY NEWS

# OUTWITTING MOTHER NATURE

### Updates to improve reliability in areas prone to tree-related damage

Mother Nature can be a formidable force, and it's next to impossible to control the effects she can have on an electric distribution system. Storms have the potential to wreak havoc on power lines, utility poles, and transformers. And while we can't control Mother Nature, Firelands Electric Cooperative is committed to maintaining reliability, including taking measures to keep the impact of extreme weather events to a minimum.

For starters, we take a proactive approach to tree-trimming in an effort to prevent fallen branches from coming into contact with power lines and creating outages. We also replace or repair damaged poles, wiring, and other equipment as needed. One of the cooperative's current projects takes these precautionary steps even further, however.

Some portions of Firelands Electric's southern service territory have very dense — and very old — trees and other vegetation, making these neighborhoods more prone to outages during a storm. To improve reliability in these areas, the cooperative is installing the Hendrix spacer cable system from Marmon Utility in several locations near Lucas and Perrysville.

Firelands Electric line crews replace poles and power lines in the southern part of the cooperative's service territory with equipment that is more resistant to damage and outages due to fallen trees.

Unlike traditional configurations, the Hendrix system uses insulated wiring. It also replaces wood utility poles with ones constructed from ductile iron, which is known for its resistance to impact. These features help power lines and poles be less susceptible to damage from fallen trees. The most obvious benefit from these updates is improved reliability and fewer outages. The changes will also reduce interruptions in service when line crews are performing repairs or switching power lines to backfeed from other substations.

There are some downfalls to the Hendrix system, however. First and foremost is the higher cost of the equipment itself. The Hendrix system is also more time-consuming to install, maintain, and repair, further increasing the overall cost. While this makes it unfeasible to install in every location in our territory, the savings resulting from fewer incidences of damaged equipment and reduced overtime from line crews makes financial sense for using the system in these outage-prone areas of Firelands Electric's southern territory.

There is one difference between traditional installations and the Hendrix system that is crucial to keep in mind. Since the wiring is insulated, if a tree knocks a power line on a Hendrix system down, the wire will still be energized. This is just another reason to NEVER approach a fallen power line — the risk of injury or electrocution is just too great. To help protect our communities, Firelands Electric has been working in the areas where these updates are being made to ensure that first responders understand the importance of taking the necessary precautions if they encounter a downed power line.

While installing the new Hendrix spacer system will take some time, it will ultimately save the cooperative — and our members — money and reduce the aggravation of power outages.





# 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



**CURRENT POSITION: COMMUNICATIONS AND MEMBER RELATIONS SPECIALIST**

## Tracy Gibb

**ROOKIE YEAR: 2014**

**STARTING POSITION:  
MARKETING AND MEMBER  
SERVICES REPRESENTATIVE**

**SPOUSE: RON**

**FAMILY: ADULT CHILDREN,  
LINDSAY AND BLAKE**

**PREVIOUS TEAMS: BOOKMASTERS  
AND PNC BANK**

**FAVORITES: READING, ART,  
VISITING NEW CITIES, AND  
ANYTHING CHOCOLATE**



# 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



**CURRENT POSITION: ACCOUNTING CLERK**

## Melissa Zacharias

**ROOKIE YEAR: 2019**

**STARTING POSITION:  
BILLING REPRESENTATIVE**

**SPOUSE: JARED**

**FAMILY: SON, JOSH**

**BIGGEST FAN: AUTUMN THE CAT**

**PREVIOUS TEAMS: MSN HEALTHCARE  
SOLUTIONS AND PEDIATRIC  
HOME SERVICE**

**FAVORITES: TAKING JOSH TO  
VISIT THE FAMILY FARM**



## REBATE PROGRAMS

# TAKE A BITE OUT OF YOUR ENERGY BILLS WITH REBATES

An energy-efficient home not only reduces your electricity use — it also lowers your utility bills. To help make your home more energy savvy, Firelands Electric Cooperative offers our members rebates on more than a dozen different purchases and upgrades. Check out some of them below to take a “bite” out of your bill!

### Appliances

Cooperative members who replace existing appliances with new ENERGY STAR-certified models can receive bill credits ranging from \$25 to \$100 per appliance.

- Refrigerator or stand-alone freezer — \$100 bill credit
- Dishwasher, clothes washer, or clothes dryer — \$50 bill credit
- Dehumidifier — \$25 bill credit

### Electric water heaters

- Replacement of an existing electric water heater with a new qualifying model that meets or exceeds the cooperative's energy efficiency requirements — \$150 bill credit
- Add a load management device to an existing electric water heater that does not already have one installed — \$50 bill credit

### Heat pump and geothermal systems

Cooperative members who purchase and install new or replacement geothermal or air-source heat pump systems that meet or exceed the co-op's energy efficiency standards can also qualify for rebates. These incentives do require participation in the cooperative's Cool Returns load management program, except for communicating or ductless systems.

- All-electric geothermal system — \$700 to \$800 rebate
- All-electric heat pump system — \$400 to \$500 rebate

- Dual-fuel geothermal or heat pump system (added to a fossil fuel furnace) — \$200 to \$300 rebate
- Ductless or mini-split heat pump system — \$300 rebate

### Other rebates available

- Level-2 electric vehicle charger — \$250 rebate
- Smart thermostat — \$150 bill credit
- Professionally installed air-sealing and insulation upgrades

Improving energy efficiency is a great way to save on your utility bills. The cooperative's budget for rebate programs is limited and rebates are offered on a first-come, first-served basis. The current program year is effective July 1, 2024, to June 15, 2025. For a complete listing of Firelands Electric Cooperative's rebate programs and incentives, as well as the specific eligibility requirements, visit [www.firelandsec.com/member-programs](http://www.firelandsec.com/member-programs). Questions regarding these programs should be directed to the co-op's member services department by calling 1-800-533-8658.





COOPERATIVE UPDATE

# BOARD MEETING *highlights*

*Firelands Electric Cooperative's Board of Trustees met May 28 and covered the following items:*

- Board President Dan Schloemer reported that the cooperative received 30 membership applications for approval by the board.
- General Manager Dan McNaull provided information regarding the replacement of the Fitchville substation transformer that had been damaged by lightning in March. Following discussion, the board approved ordering the new transformer from Niagara Power Transformer.
- The board reviewed the report from a safety and training meeting held on May 15.
- McNaull provided updates on the Hillsdale substation project, Coulter substation expenses, and the emergency transformer to be used at the Fitchville substation until the new permanent one can be installed.
- The board reviewed and approved the cooperative's 10-year financial forecast.
- Following discussion, the board unanimously approved the retirement of \$1 million in capital credits to be refunded to former and current members in August.

- Director of Finance and Accounting Tabi Shepherd reviewed last month's financial reports and provided an update on recent accounting and billing department activities.
- McNaull reviewed the status of the 2024 tree-trimming plan and the outage report for the past month.
- Director of Operations Don Englet reported on activities in the operations department.
- McNaull provided information on orientation for the new board trustees.
- Director of Communications and Technology Andrea Gravenhorst reported on recent activities involving the member services and IT departments.
- McNaull updated the board on recent training events attended by several employees, upcoming educational opportunities for the board, and the latest information on the EPA's new greenhouse gas regulations. Schloemer provided additional information regarding the efforts of Ohio's cooperatives regarding the EPA rules.

The cooperative's next board meeting is scheduled for August 27, 2024. 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  
P.O. Box 32  
New London, OH 44851  
1-800-533-8658

**OFFICE HOURS**

Mon.-Fri. 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.  
[www.firelandsec.com](http://www.firelandsec.com)



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Dan Schloemer  
President, District 1

Bruce Leimbach  
Vice President, District 4

Carl Ayers  
Secretary/Treasurer, District 5

Joe Williams  
District 2

Tom Lucha  
District 3

Kevin Reidy  
District 6

Greg Hess  
District 7

Elaine Oswald  
District 8

Brian Cucco  
District 9

**GENERAL MANAGER**

Dan McNaull

**HAVE A STORY SUGGESTION?**

Email your ideas to:  
[members@firelandsec.com](mailto:members@firelandsec.com)

