



GM'S REPORT



Don Englet
GENERAL MANAGER

TRANSFORMING THE NEXT GENERATION

Providing education to our members, employees, and community is among the list of seven principles that guide our cooperative. Whether looking for an article on the energy efficiency of your HVAC system or touring a power plant, Firelands

Electric offers learning opportunities for those from preschool to retirement.

The cooperative is particularly proud of our youth programming. Our littlest community members can explore bucket trucks at area touch-a-truck events or enter for a chance to get a behind-the-scenes look at line work during our annual Lunch with a Lineman Contest. (Read about this year's event on page 18B.) High school students have opportunities to win scholarships or join us for Cooperative Youth Day at the Ohio Statehouse.

One of our most unique and exciting student programs is the annual Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. Held every June in conjunction with Ohio's Electric Cooperatives

and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, this weeklong, all-expenses-paid trip provides high school sophomores and juniors with the opportunity to visit some of our nation's most iconic landmarks and get a firsthand look at U.S. history and government. Each summer, more than 40 Ohio students, and nearly 1,800 from electric co-ops across the country, participate in this one-of-a-kind adventure. Since the mid-1960s, Firelands Electric has sponsored more than 70 students to attend Youth Tour.

Instead of just running through the standard — and let's face it, dry — checklist to describe Youth Tour, this month I'm turning the remainder of my monthly column over to our 2026 delegate, Bryce Hall. What better way to explore Youth Tour than hearing from a New London High School student about his recent trip?

Additional information regarding Firelands Electric Cooperative's youth programs is available on our website at www.firelandsec.com/community. Photos from many of our youth events can be found at www.flickr.com/photos/firelandsec/albums.

AREA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS!

Cooperative
Youth★Day

Oct. 22, 2026

APPLY BY:

SEPTEMBER 11

www.firelandsec.com/cooperative-youth-day

Happy
LABOR DAY

Firelands Electric's office will be closed

MONDAY, SEPT. 7

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



YOUTH PROGRAMS



D.C.

Diaries



Adventures with our 2026 Youth Tour delegate Bryce Hall

Government and policy

Having spent a week learning about youth advocacy and government leadership, would you ever consider running for office one day?

I'm fortunate enough to have had the opportunity to speak with lawmakers and see the inner workings of our federal government on several occasions. Every time I visit D.C., it only solidifies my desire to return there one day as a legislative representative.

After getting a behind-the-scenes look at the U.S. Capitol, what one idea or change would you pitch to congressional leaders that would directly benefit the youth in your community?

I believe that government only works correctly if everyone is properly represented. Because of this, I would like to see youth voter registration

education standards proposed at the federal level. This type of legislation should mandate education about the importance of voting and, more specifically, make registering to vote more accessible to young people.

Did your time learning with NRECA alter your view on how energy decisions at the federal level impact local communities? If so, how?

Learning about the work of NRECA has made me realize that we have very good representation for rural communities and their electrical needs at the federal level. The fact that NRECA is a not-for-profit group makes them a very respected group in D.C., and they truly advocate for their members, focusing only on issues that affect them.

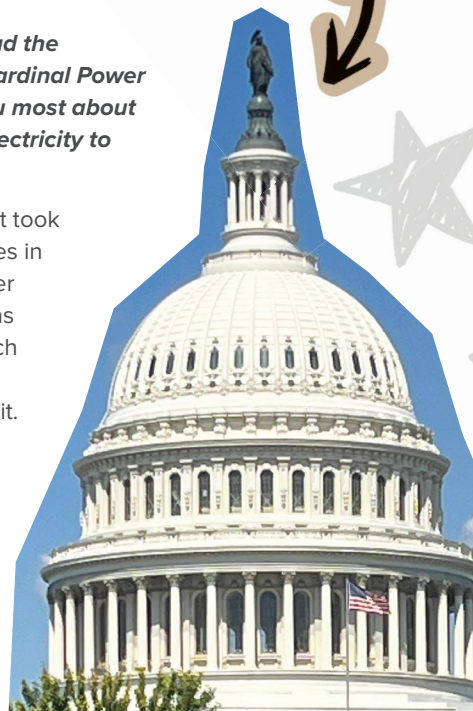
Electric generation

On the way home, you had the opportunity to tour the Cardinal Power Plant. What surprised you most about what it takes to supply electricity to your hometown?

The teamwork and vision it took for the electric cooperatives in Ohio to establish the power plant was remarkable. I was surprised to hear how much power this plant produces and how much we rely on it. Seeing how cooperation among the state's co-ops benefits Ohio was very eye-opening.



New London High School student and Firelands Electric Cooperative delegate Bryce Hall (front left) gathers with fellow Ohio Youth Tour participants on the steps of the U.S. Capitol for a photo.





resilience, and my generation will bring that to everything they set their mind to. Getting to meet so many people across our great state has shown me that there are people my age who do care about the future. They are passionate and believe that we can make the future better for us and generations to come. I have no doubt that Ohio and our nation as a whole will be well taken care of by today's youth.

Sage advice

What one thing did you see or do that potential future delegates should keep in mind if trying to decide whether to apply for a future Youth Tour?

Getting out of your hometown is such an important experience. I think everyone should have the chance to see a city like D.C. Meeting the people, learning the history, and being immersed in the pride of our nation's capital is such an eye-opening experience that will make you realize how much potential you hold in your future.

The cooperative model

A lot of delegates mention they didn't truly grasp the 'cooperative business model' until taking this trip. How would you explain an electric co-op and its advantages to a classmate?

The cooperative model isn't like a normal business model. The goal of any co-op is to serve the people who invest in and rely on it. Co-ops aren't for profit; they don't make money. For example, when you pay your electric bill to Firelands Electric Co-op, they don't just put your money in the bank. They invest it into the electricity needs of the members. Your payments go toward updating electrical infrastructure and keeping your homes powered.

Meaningful connections and seeing the sights

If you had to pick just one monument, museum, or historic site from the tour that impacted you the most, which would it be and why?

When we went to the Supreme Court to have lunch, we were able to go upstairs and sit in the actual hearing room. The idea of being in the main meeting room of the Supreme Court was just amazing, especially when you realize how many historic decisions have been made in that courtroom.

One of the seven cooperative principles is 'Concern for Community.' Based on the people you met on Youth Tour, in what way do you think your generation is going to make Ohio a better place?

I believe my generation is going into adulthood at a very hard time. Just the idea of buying a house feels like an impossible task. However, I think this adversity will bring



What is one piece of advice you would give to next year's high school sophomores and juniors considering applying for the tour?

Talk to everyone. Get to know people from backgrounds different than yours. Be open to learning from other people and making new friends. It can be overwhelming to be so far from home and surrounded by people you don't know, but the best way to move past that is to get to know them.





YOUTH PROGRAMS

SPARKING curiosity

Students get behind-the-scenes look at electric co-op

Two area elementary students and their adult guests recently had the opportunity to participate in a special event at Firelands Electric as part of the cooperative's fourth annual Lunch with a Lineman Contest.

Open to students in kindergarten through fifth grade, the contest focuses on learning about electrical safety. Those who completed and submitted this year's home electrical safety checklist had their names entered into a drawing for a chance to spend a morning behind the scenes at the cooperative.

On July 22, winners Caleb Stang and Sadie Young toured the cooperative's facility in New London, getting an up-close look at bucket trucks, trying out linemen's safety gear and tools, watching a pole-climbing demonstration, and participating in a safety activity. Firelands Electric linemen Robert Shepherd, Zach Hart, Colt Cross, and Zach Collins, along with Energy Advisor Scott Carbary, answered questions from both students and their adult guests about their day-to-day work and the importance of using proper safety precautions around electricity.

Following the tour and demonstrations, students enjoyed a pizza lunch with the line crew and other co-op staff. Each student also went home with a gift bag filled with electrical safety activities and books, Firelands swag, and their own junior lineman hard hat.

"This event is a fun opportunity for students to get one-on-one time with the cooperative's line crews and other staff, while also learning about the prevention of electrical safety accidents," says Communications and Member Relations Specialist Tracy Gibb. "The number of contest entries has grown substantially over the past four years, and we hope to see that trend continue."



Sadie Young and Caleb Stang (front, l-r) recently took part in a behind-the-scenes tour of Firelands Electric as part of the cooperative's Lunch with a Lineman contest. The New London and Monroeville St. Joseph students are pictured with linemen (back, l-r) Colt Cross, Zach Hart, and Robert Shepherd.



To view additional photos from Firelands Electric Cooperative's recent events, scan the QR code or visit www.flicker.com/photos/firelandsec/albums.



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 July drawing receive \$15 gift cards



Payton Burkholder
C.E. Budd School — Loudonville
Daughter of Josh Burkholder



Alyssa Todd
C.E. Budd School — Loudonville
Daughter of Isaac and Alison Todd

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



Lizzie Stevens
South Central Middle School
Daughter of Chris and Mindy Stevens

EMPLOYEE NEWS



Stephanie Schmidt
CONSUMER SERVICE/AMI
COORDINATOR — 2026

THE POWER OF SERVICE

Celebrating 25 years of assisting members

Consumer Service/AMI Coordinator Stephanie Schmidt is celebrating 25 years with Firelands Electric Co-op this month.

Hired as a billing clerk in 2001, Stephanie became a billing representative in 2002 and a consumer services representative in 2011. Promoted to her current role in August 2018, Stephanie performs a wide variety of duties, including budget billing, payments, and capital credits estates. She also oversees the monthly billing and is responsible for the cooperative's advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) system.

Stephanie recently shared some reflections on her time with the co-op:

Q: What is the most useful tool you use that didn't exist when you started?

A: For about the first 15 years, connecting, reconnecting, or disconnecting electric service required sending a truck and line crew to a member's home or business. This took time, especially after hours or for locations in the southernmost part of our territory. Today, Firelands has the ability to install a type of meter that can remotely turn the electricity on or off by simply logging into the metering software. This technology speeds up the process tremendously for our members and frees up our linemen to perform other duties.

Q: If you could describe your 25 years at the co-op in just three words, what would they be?

A: Rewarding, thankful, and impactful.

- Rewarding — I love talking with new people every day and being able to help them.
- Thankful — Firelands has always been family-oriented. My coworkers have been extremely supportive and shared many of the big events in my life.
- Impactful — I have met some great people who have had an impact on me, and I hope that I've also been a positive influence to some of them.

Q: What stands out to you as the most significant change in our industry since you started at the co-op?

A: The advances in technology. Our automated metering system makes keeping track of over 9,300 meters so much simpler than the days of manual meter reading. Today, we can get a meter reading in just 60 seconds and send service orders electronically to our lineman. SmartHub has been a great addition for the members, because it provides account access anytime, any place.

Q: When you aren't at work, where are members most likely to run into you locally?

A: When I'm not at the co-op, I'm can usually be found serving at my church, spending time with my family, or taking walks with friends.

Q: What is your favorite local landmark, charity, or community event in our service territory?

A: I love taking my two German Shepherds for walks on the Rails to Trails path in New London.



Stephanie started out as a billing clerk at the co-op in 2001.



COOPERATIVE UPDATE

BOARD MEETING *highlights*

Firelands Electric Cooperative's Board of Trustees met June 23 and covered the following items:

- Board President Dan Schloemer reported that the cooperative received 25 membership applications for approval by the board.
- General Manager Don Englet reviewed the monthly safety and training, tree-trimming, outage, and personnel reports.
- The board reviewed recent events by the cooperative, including the Virtual Annual Meeting and Member Appreciation Day.
- Director of Operations Rick Bowers reported on activities in the operations department, including an update on the Coulter Substation project, which should be completed by the end of August.
- The board approved the retirement of \$1.1 million in capital credits from portions of 2006 and 2007, which will be refunded to eligible current and former cooperative members in early August.
- Director of Communications and IT Andrea Gravenhorst reported on recent activities involving the member services and IT departments.
- Director of Finance and Accounting Tabi Shepherd reviewed the May financial reports and provided an update on recent accounting and billing department activities. She also provided information on the co-op's financial forecast.
- The board discussed the receipt of applications and selection process for filling the vacant position due to the retirement of former District 5 Trustee Carl Ayers.
- Englet provided a summary of the co-op's recent power requirement study and the schedule for the upcoming NRECA regional meeting, which is taking place in Columbus this year.

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, Sept. 22. 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

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1-800-533-8658

OFFICE HOURS

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



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GENERAL MANAGER

Don Englet

HAVE A STORY SUGGESTION?

Email your ideas to:
members@firelandsec.com

Firelands
Electric
COOPERATIVE
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 