



GM'S REPORT

# A ROLE THAT ONLY MEMBERS CAN PLAY

Members like you ensure the continued success of our cooperative



Don Englet  
GENERAL MANAGER

On August 13, 1938, Firelands Electric Cooperative energized its first power lines, bringing electricity to 53 members in Huron County.

Established by residents of the local rural community in May 1936, Firelands Electric was owned by the members who signed up to receive its electric service and was operated for their benefit on a not-for-profit basis. More importantly, the co-op was governed by a board of trustees made up of the very same members. Elected by the membership, the trustees

determined the service policies and electric rates, and oversaw the general business affairs of the cooperative.

This form of governance oversees the operation of the co-op to this today. And fulfilling our mission of delivering safe, reliable, and affordable electricity continues to rely on the guidance of members like you.

Trustees have the responsibility to make rules and regulations that will ensure Firelands Electric successfully fulfills our mission. This requires effective governance by trustees willing to take on three fundamental roles — financial steward, loyal ally, and member champion.

As a **FINANCIAL STEWARD**, a trustee helps set the price of electricity to be charged to the members, including himself or herself, based on the costs of providing reliable electricity and committed, community-focused service. A trustee works to ensure rates are fair for all members, whether the service is residential, farm, or factory.

As a **LOYAL ALLY**, a trustee is entrusted by the members to act for the benefit of the members. Whether setting policies, monitoring the co-op's performance, approving the budget, reviewing compliance, or providing risk oversight, trustees work for the best interests of the collective membership.

As a **MEMBER CHAMPION**, a trustee listens to the concerns of the members and brings those concerns to board meetings for discussion.

Your co-op was formed by this community, for this community — and it is still governed by your friends and neighbors in this community. As we wrap up another year, it's time to once again start the process of electing trustees who will uphold our mission, while also continuing to put our membership first. In 2026, Firelands Electric members will elect trustees to represent co-op districts 1, 3, and 6. For more information about how you can become a candidate for the cooperative's board, check out the next page.





## APPLY FOR THE PART

Trustee candidate petitions open Dec. 10

In 2026, Firelands Electric Cooperative members will elect trustees to represent the following districts:

- **District 1** – Richmond, Norwich, and Greenfield townships
- **District 3** – Peru, Bronson, Fairfield, and Hartland townships, and Fitchville Township west of State Route 250
- **District 6** – Butler, Clear Creek, Orange, Weller, Milton, Mifflin, and Madison townships north of State Route 42

Trustees are asked to examine industry issues and become familiar with the regulatory and political environment. They review and approve the budget to ensure the co-op provides reliable, yet affordable, electric service. And they must understand and oversee the business affairs of the cooperative.

---

Serving on the board of trustees is a rewarding but challenging experience.

---

Information on how to become a candidate for board trustee has already been mailed and emailed to members living in the districts that will be on the ballot.

Nomination petitions to become a candidate for the 2026 election will be available at the Firelands Electric office beginning Wednesday, Dec. 10, 2025. Potential candidates are required to submit an election application and collect a minimum of 20 member signatures from within their respective districts by 4:00 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 16, 2026. This year, trustees representing districts 1, 3, and 6 will be elected. A map of the board districts is available at [www.firelandsec.com/board-trustees](http://www.firelandsec.com/board-trustees).

Elections will take place by mail and online ballot from Monday, March 2, through Sunday, April 12. Results will be announced at the cooperative's virtual annual meeting, which will take place at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 28.

If you are interested in serving on the cooperative's board or have questions about the election process, please contact the Firelands Electric office at 1-800-533-8658.

*Merry  
Christmas  
and  
Happy  
New Year!*

**Firelands  
Electric**  
**COOPERATIVE**  
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

**THE FIRELANDS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE  
OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED**

**DEC. 24, 25, AND JAN. 1**

**AS ALWAYS, EMERGENCY SERVICE  
IS AVAILABLE 24/7 BY CALLING  
1-800-533-8658**





# Class of 2026 SCHOLARSHIPS

## COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS

- FIRST PLACE: \$1,800
- SECOND PLACE: \$1,600
- THIRD PLACE: \$1,400
- FOURTH PLACE: \$1,200
- FOUR JUDGES' CHOICE AWARDS OF \$1,000 EACH

## CAREER SCHOLARSHIPS

**TWO \$1,000 SCHOLARSHIPS** will be awarded to those planning to enroll in a career-based education program. One award will go to a graduating high school senior and the other to a co-op member who graduated prior to June 2024. Qualifying career paths include, but are not limited to, dental hygienist, phlebotomy, nurse, vet tech, electrician, HVAC, plumbing, auto mechanic, or welder.

**Apply by:  
Jan. 23, 2026**

**Firelands  
Electric**  
**COOPERATIVE**  
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Selected finalists for all Firelands scholarships will be interviewed at the Firelands Electric Cooperative office on Monday, Feb. 16, 2026.

The first-place college scholarship winner will also be eligible to compete for up to \$4,600 in additional scholarships at the Ohio's Electric Cooperatives competition on April 7.

Applicants will be judged on a combination of scholastic record, school and community activities, cooperative knowledge, and a personal interview.

Complete program guidelines and applications will be available by Dec. 3 at [www.firelandsec.com/scholarship-opportunities](http://www.firelandsec.com/scholarship-opportunities).



**Visit [www.firelandsec.com/scholarship-opportunities](http://www.firelandsec.com/scholarship-opportunities)  
for complete rules and applications.**





FIRELANDS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE  
**LOCAL PAGES**

# MAKE YOUR MARK!

June 14-20, 2026



A week of building memories, skills, leadership,  
and friendships that will last a lifetime!

Deadline to apply is Jan. 23, 2026

## Experience the trip of a lifetime with Youth Tour!

- Explore Washington, D.C., through historic monuments, world-class museums, and visits with elected officials.
- Build leadership skills and discover how you can make your mark on the future.
- Connect with students from across the country and form friendships that last a lifetime.



Learn more about applying at  
[www.firelandsec.com/youth-tour-experience](http://www.firelandsec.com/youth-tour-experience)



## What do previous delegates have to say?

"Youth Tour is a very informative and interesting trip. You not only get to see the history of the U.S., but also have the chance to see how electric co-ops got started."

I highly recommend networking with delegates from other states so you can learn their stories. I would really like to thank Firelands Electric for sending me on this trip. I got to meet some very nice people that are now great friends."

— Preston Smeltzer, 2025 delegate



"This trip was one of the best trips I have ever been on. I learned so much about cooperatives and how I can contribute to our own. I had an amazing time and formed friendships that will last for a lifetime."

— Madeline Iarussi, 2019 delegate

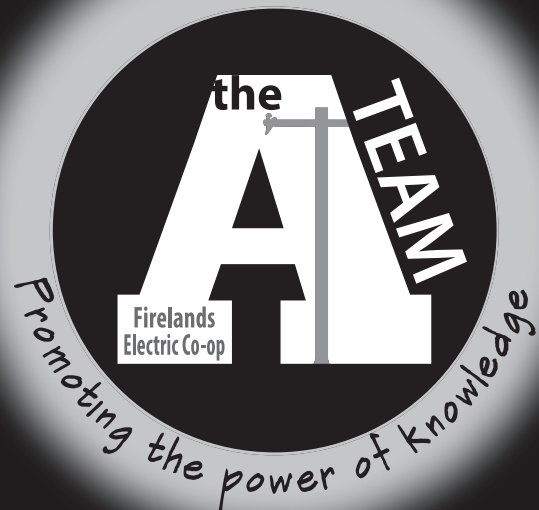
"This trip is about so much more than just the monuments!"

— Leah Carnegie, 2017 delegate

ON THE COVER: 2025 Firelands Youth Tour delegates Preston Smeltzer and Jaycee Hazen.

The A Team recognizes students in grades 6 to 8 for their hard work in the classroom. Students who live in a home receiving its power from Firelands Electric Cooperative and who have a minimum of three A's on their most recent report card are eligible to enter.

A drawing will take place at the end of each grading period, with three students selected to receive a \$15 prepaid Mastercard. Winners will also have their photos published in an upcoming issue of *Ohio Cooperative Living* magazine and be featured on the co-op's website and social media outlets.



**THE NEXT DRAWING  
WILL BE DEC. 10.**

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





POWER GENERATION

# CREATING KILOWATTS

Forty-one Firelands Electric Cooperative members, employees, and Hillsdale Middle School students visited the Cardinal Power Plant on Oct. 1.

Following an introductory presentation, attendees participated in a guided tour of the plant, which is located along the Ohio River, in Brilliant, Ohio. Highlights of the Cardinal tour included the state-of-the-art control room and electrostatic precipitators that remove 99% of all fly ash particles. Another point of interest was the 423-foot-high closed-cycle cooling tower, which keeps evaporation loss below 1.8%. These two features are just a portion of the more than \$1.2 billion in environmental measures that make Cardinal one of the cleanest coal-fired power plants in the world.

Owned by Ohio's 25 distribution cooperatives, Buckeye Power's Cardinal Plant has the capacity to produce 1,800 megawatts of electricity. Power is generated at 23,000 to 25,000 volts, and transformers outside the plant then increase the voltage to 138,000 and 345,000 volts to transmit it efficiently to cooperative members' homes and businesses. The plant provides electricity for more than one million Ohioans in 77 of the state's 88 counties.

To produce electricity, the plant's pulverizers grind coal into a fine, powder-like consistency. The powdered coal is then burned at high temperatures to turn water into steam. This steam is directed into turbines, which drive the generator that produces electricity.

Further information about Firelands Electric Cooperative's power supplier, Buckeye Power, is available at [www.firelandsec.com/power-supply](http://www.firelandsec.com/power-supply). View additional photos from the 2025 Cardinal Plant Tour at [www.flickr.com/photos/firelandsec/albums](http://www.flickr.com/photos/firelandsec/albums).





"I had the opportunity to see the Cardinal Power Plant as an 8th grader. Now, more than 45 years later, I was able to take my students.

I think it is really important for my students to see the process of producing energy and all the steps that must happen before they flip the switch."

— *Todd Miller*

Hillsdale Middle School Teacher

"I was very impressed with the investment made and technology implemented to clean, capture, and properly dispose of any by-products from the generation of power using coal as an energy source."

— *Joe Williams*

Greenwich,  
District 2 Trustee

"The seemingly simple concept of power generation is not even close to simple, but is one of the most complex and intriguing things about electric science."

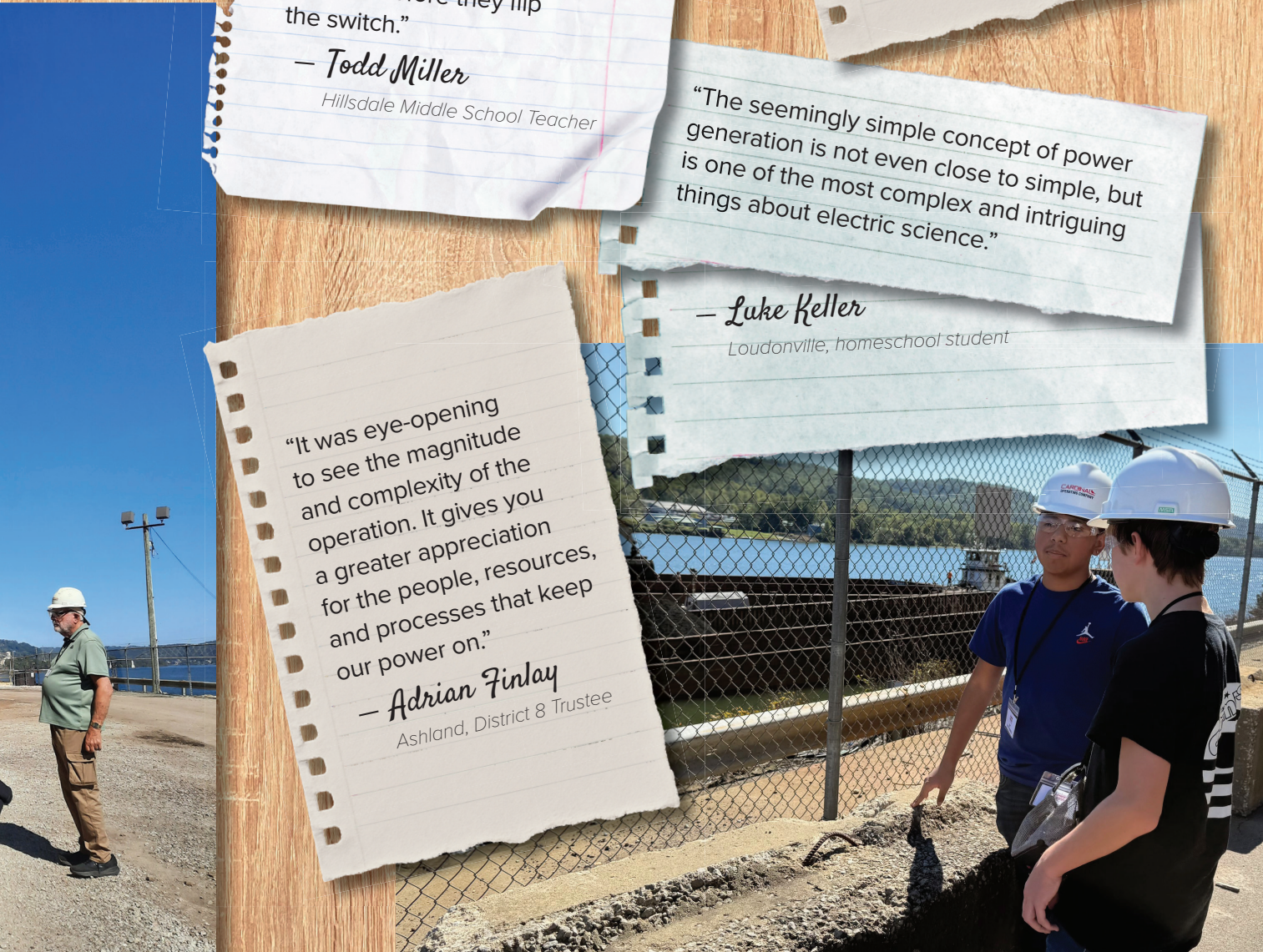
— *Luke Keller*

Loudonville, homeschool student

"It was eye-opening to see the magnitude and complexity of the operation. It gives you a greater appreciation for the people, resources, and processes that keep our power on."

— *Adrian Finlay*

Ashland, District 8 Trustee







## ENERGY EFFICIENCY

# SCOTT'S ENERGY SPOT: GENERATORS

Tips from Firelands Electric's energy advisor

On a recent road trip, I noticed a billboard from the Emergency Management Association that had the cast of the cult classic movie "Zombieland" staring down at me with the caption, "Be prepared, have a plan." While this tip may not be helpful during a zombie apocalypse, being prepared to safely operate a portable or whole-house generator during a power outage is always good advice. So, let's take a few minutes to review generator maintenance, operation, and safety procedures — before an emergency occurs.

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the greatest danger when operating a portable generator is carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless, and tasteless gas that can cause death in as little as five minutes at certain levels. Data from the CPSC showed that between 2011 and 2021, 770 people in the U.S. died of CO poisoning while using portable generators. In 2024, that number reached 92.

With that being said, the No. 1 rule for generator safety is to NEVER operate any generator in an enclosed space, including an attached garage with the overhead door open or an enclosed porch or patio. Always place the generator at least 20 feet away from the home with the engine exhaust pointed away from windows or doors. If you need to protect your unit from the rain or snow (remember — water and electricity don't mix!), use a ventilated canopy or enclosure specifically designed for generators. You can find them at many home improvement stores and online.



Scott Carbary  
ENERGY ADVISOR

Some of the newer portable generators do have built-in safety monitors that will shut the unit off if elevated levels of CO are detected in an enclosed space. However, for other models, and for members that have older generators, battery-operated CO detectors should be installed throughout the home to alert occupants of elevated levels of the gas.

Before refueling, shut off your generator and let it cool for at least 20 minutes. Make sure to have a supply of extra fuel and store it properly in an ANSI-approved container in a well-ventilated area and away from any heat source. Adding a fuel stabilizer to your stored supply will help prevent it from degrading over time.

For homes equipped with a standby generator, make sure the area around the unit is free from shrubbery and landscaping,





leaving a one- to two-foot clearance on all sides. Check the battery often and be familiar with starting the generator manually, in case it does not do so automatically. Also, test your generator regularly to ensure that it will start when you need it.


For portable generators, use only extension cords that are rated to carry the proper flow of electricity to your unit. In other words, make sure cords are intended for outdoor use and able to handle the total electrical load for all systems and appliances that are connected. Cords should always have grounded, three-prong plugs and be free of cuts or abrasions.

Finally, don't attempt to feed your home by plugging the generator into an outlet in your home. By doing this, the generator's power is free to travel out onto the power lines, creating an electrocution risk for both your cooperative's linemen and your family. It's vital (and required by law) to install an industry-approved automatic transfer switch (such as the Generlink or Trifecta) or a breaker interlock to prevent power line backfeeding.

Having a generator may not protect you from a zombie invasion, but it can be an important tool during an electrical outage. And following the safety guidelines outlined here will allow you to use it without worry. If you are considering purchasing a generator and would like help with sizing and safe installation, please reach out to the Firelands Electric Cooperative office at 1-800-533-8658 to schedule a free consultation appointment. We're here to help!

Get account  
info delivered



**YOUR  
WAY**



OUTAGES  
BILLING  
PEAK ALERTS  
firelandsec.smarthub.coop

smart hub

**15<sup>th</sup>**  
Anniversary

**CURRENT POSITION: DISTRICT 5 TRUSTEE, SECRETARY/TREASURER**

**Carl Ayers**

**ROOKIE YEAR: 2010**

**SPOUSE: JANET**

**FAMILY: DAUGHTER AND SON-IN-LAW, KATHY AND NATE DAVIS**

**OTHER POSITIONS PLAYED:**  
PARTNER AT AYERS FARM —  
A SEVENTH-GENERATION FAMILY FARM

**PREVIOUS POSITIONS: ARMY MEDIC  
IN VIETNAM**

**FAVORITES: MILK AND JANET'S  
COOKIES, SOIL CONSERVATION,  
AND WOODWORKING**

**CATCHPHRASE: BETTER  
TO WEAR OUT THAN  
RUST OUT**





IN THE COMMUNITY

## CONNECTING WITH MEMBERS *at the* Ashland County Fair

Firelands Electric Cooperative places great value in supporting the local community and our youth. One way we do this is to sponsor local fairs and festivals.

In addition to remaining a longtime supporter of the Ashland County Fair, the cooperative decided to head back to the fair in-person this year. This was a great opportunity for employees to engage with members of the community.

Congratulations to the winners of our Ashland County Fair prize drawing! Firelands Electric Cooperative District 6 Trustee Kevin Reidy (right) recently presented Rebecca Good of Mansfield with her prize package, which included an Igloo electric cooler and Ohio State blanket, valued at \$200. Doreen Bailey of Ashland (not pictured) was the recipient of a \$50 bill credit.



## STEP UP FOR SOLDIERS DRIVE



Members of Firelands Electric and the surrounding communities can deliver donated items to the cooperative's office, located at 103 Industrial Drive in New London. Items may be dropped off in the collection boxes located right inside the front entryway during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Visit [www.firelandsec.com/uso-ohio](http://www.firelandsec.com/uso-ohio) for more information and a list of requested donation items.

**LAST DAY TO DONATE IS DEC. 19**





## GIVE A H.U.G. THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

Perfect for that hard-to-buy-for person on your gift list, a Firelands Electric H.U.G. (home utility gift) allows anyone to give the gift of electricity.

Available for any amount, H.U.G.s may be purchased year-around by both co-op members and non-members. Recipients must be Firelands Electric members, and the gift-giver must have the first and last name of the intended recipient, as well as the member's service address, to ensure the gift is applied to the correct account.

H.U.G.s will appear as a credit on the recipient's next monthly bill and may remain anonymous. If you wish to let the receiver know about your gift, simply ask Firelands' office staff to send the recipient a "You've received a H.U.G." notice. We'll take care of the rest!

Visit [www.firelandsec.com/hugs](http://www.firelandsec.com/hugs) or contact the co-op office at 1-800-533-8658 for more information.

## Stealing electricity and meter tampering are crimes!

Stealing electricity or tampering with a meter is serious business — and it's against the law! This includes anyone other than the co-op removing the electric meter tampering tag or pulling the meter. Theft of utility electricity is a first-degree misdemeanor if the value of the stolen electricity plus any utility equipment repairs is less than \$150. It's a fourth-degree felony if more than \$150.



Tampering crimes carry similar penalties. Tampering is defined as "to interfere with, damage, or bypass a utility meter, conduit, or attachment with intent to impede the correct registration of a meter or the proper function of a conduit or attachment." Conviction of tampering can mean from six months in jail and a \$1,000 fine to up to five years in jail and a \$2,500 fine.

Meter tampering costs all of us. And it's downright dangerous. If you witness someone tampering with an electric meter, please contact Firelands Electric Cooperative at 1-800-533-8658.

## STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

Firelands Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), at any USDA office, or call 1-866-632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter by mail to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; by fax to 202-690-7442; or email to [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).





## COOPERATIVE UPDATE

# BOARD MEETING *highlights*

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

- Board President Dan Schloemer reported that the cooperative received 35 membership applications for approval by the board.
- General Manager Don Englet reviewed the monthly safety and training, tree-trimming, outage, and personnel reports.
- Director of Operations Rick Bowers reported on activities in the operations department.
- Englet provided a recap of the cooperative's participation in the recent Ashland County Fair.
- The board reviewed the 2025 Summer Rate Report.
- Englet and the board discussed potential plans for the 2026 annual meeting of members, noting the declining number of participants. The board decided to hold a virtual annual meeting in the spring and an in-person member appreciation event in late spring or early summer. Further discussion will take place at the next board meeting.
- Trent Fern, the cooperative's engineering consultant from Alpha Engineering, presented information about the 2026-2029 Construction Work Plan and answered the board's questions about the plan.
- Director of Finance and Accounting Tabi Shepherd reviewed the August financial reports and provided an update on recent accounting and billing department activities.
- Englet recapped recent electrical safety demonstrations provided by cooperative linemen.
- Schloemer recapped an OREC meeting he recently attended.
- Director of Communications and IT Andrea Gravenhorst reported on recent activities involving the member services and IT departments.

The cooperative's next board meeting is scheduled for Friday, Dec. 19, prior to the employee-trustee Christmas party. 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](http://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](mailto:members@firelandsec.com)

