

# NEWS RELEASE

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## Electric cooperatives partner to host Cooperative Youth Day at the Ohio Statehouse

Students from several area schools participated in Cooperative Youth Day at the Ohio Statehouse on October 25 as part of a program originally launched in 2019.

The one-day trip was co-sponsored by three Ohio electric cooperatives - Lorain-Medina Rural Electric (LMRE) in Wellington, Firelands Electric in New London, and North Central Electric in Attica - and provided 26 high school students the opportunity to tour the Ohio Statehouse and meet area legislators from both the House of Representatives and Senate. The goal of Youth Day is to encourage understanding and participation in the legislative process, and for attendees to witness firsthand how the cooperative model fits in.

“By taking area youth to our state’s capitol and giving them the opportunity to interact with their elected officials, we allow them to begin to understand the importance of participating in the legislative process,” LMRE and North Central President/CEO Ed VanHoose said. “It’s about educating them on Ohio’s history viewed through the cooperative program’s lens, while simultaneously providing them the opportunity to engage directly with the legislators representing them.”

Students from Black River High School in Medina County, New London High School in Huron County, and Seneca East in Seneca County represented the three cooperatives on the trip. Throughout the day, they spent time with Representative Gary Click (District 88), including time on the House floor, as well as with Senators Theresa Gavarone (District 2), Mark Romanchuk (District 22), and Bill Reineke (District 26). Staffers for Representatives Melanie Miller (District 67) and D.J. Swearingen (District 89) also spoke with the students.

Youth Day participants were encouraged to ask questions regarding the legislative process, current issues being discussed on the state and national level, and their personal backgrounds and reasons for pursuing political careers. Following their time at the Statehouse, students spent time at the Ohio History Center studying the natural and industrial history of the area.

“This trip was a remarkable opportunity for our future co-op members and leaders to experience an in-depth look at the legislative process on the state level,” Firelands Director of Communications and IT Andrea Gravenhorst said. “Firelands hopes to continue partnering with other Ohio cooperatives over the next few years and be able to offer this program to even more students.”

Additional photos from the day can be viewed at [www.flickr.com/photos/firelandsec/albums](http://www.flickr.com/photos/firelandsec/albums).

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**CAPTION:** Students from New London, Black River, and Seneca East high schools pose for a photo with Representative Gary Click (District 88) in the House Chambers during the recent Cooperative Youth Day at the Ohio Statehouse. The program was organized by local electric cooperatives Lorain-Medina Rural Electric, North Central Electric, and Firelands Electric.



**CAPTION:** New London high school students and faculty in the rotunda of the Ohio Statehouse during the recent Cooperative Youth Day sponsored by local electric cooperatives Lorain-Medina Rural Electric, North Central Electric, and Firelands Electric.

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