**GM'S REPORT** 

## BEHIND THE POWER



Dan McNaull GENERAL MANAGER

April showers might bring May flowers, but they can also produce spring storms, causing lightning, high winds, and even power outages. But, when the weather takes a turn for the worst, you can rest easy knowing that Firelands Electric Cooperative's linemen are ready.

The job of a lineman goes far beyond just climbing poles or extending the boom on a bucket truck to repair wires. Linemen use the latest technology

to locate outages and troubleshoot problems, and they provide the routine upkeep needed to keep your power flowing. Firelands Electric's linemen are responsible for maintaining 996 miles of line across four counties to bring power to the more than 9,200 homes, farms, and businesses in our local

community, regardless of the weather or holidays. While the increased use of technology means that some of the linemen's tools have changed over the years, their dedication to the job has not.

Tackling one of the most dangerous jobs in the U.S., linemen perform tasks next to high-voltage power lines on a daily basis. Braving stormy and challenging weather conditions can make their work even more hazardous. To help keep them safe, linemen always wear specialized protective clothing and equipment when on the job. This includes special fire-resistant clothing that reduces the risk of injuries from burns and sparks, as well as insulated and rubber gloves and footwear to protect them from electrical shock.

Being a lineman takes years of specialized training, ongoing education, and a sense of service and commitment. To celebrate this dedication, the co-op is setting aside April 10-17 as Lineman Appreciation Week. So, if you see a member of Firelands Electric's line crews during this week, please pause to say "thank you" to the power behind your power. Let them know you appreciate their hard work to keep the lights on.



#### FIRELANDS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE **LOCAL PAGES**

IN THE COMMUNITY

to a vast number of rural areas for the first time, they improved the quality of life for people across the nation. Today, co-ops uphold this commitment to community through Youth Tour, scholarships, rebates, energy education, and many other member programs. With your help, Firelands Electric Cooperative also preserves this legacy through Operation Round Up, which is funded by members like you volunteering to have your monthly electric bills rounded up to the next dollar.

While an individual member's spare change may not be able to make a significant impact on the greater good of the community, by pooling together contributions from other co-op members, Firelands is able to make these small amounts accomplish big things. The average monthly contribution per member is only 50 cents just \$6 a year. But, by combining the contributions from the 7,700 members who participate in Firelands' Operation Round Up, the program collects nearly \$3,900 per month. In 2022, members helped Firelands Electric award 12 charitable grants totaling \$40,210, for just the cost of some spare change.

# MAKING A BIGUET Change with small change



In March 2022, Firelands Electric's Operation Round Up awarded a \$5,000 grant to 4-H Camp Ohio. The facility serves campers from across the state, including those from Ashland County. The funds are being used to construct a high ropes course. While supply chain issues have caused a delay in the course's construction, Camp Ohio hopes to have it completed in time for the summer 2023 camp season.

2022 Operation Round Up Report	
Assist with purchase of medical equipment — Richland County	\$ 250
Assist with funding for first responder equipment — Ashland County	\$ 8,188
Assist with charitable organizations — Ashland County	\$ 1,956
Assist with building repairs — Ashland County	\$ 2,500
Assist with charitable organizations — Huron County	\$ 4,861
Assist with repair of food pantry freezer — Richland County	\$ 7,500
Assist with building repairs — Huron County	\$ 2,500
Assist with funding for camp equipment — Ashland/Licking County	\$ 5,000
Assist with upgrades to public recreation areas — Huron County	\$ 7,455
Total (January 2022—December 2022):	\$ 40,210
Total since Operation Round Up started in 1995:	\$ 1,290,674



## integrity community commitment accountability innovation

The money collected and awarded always stays within the communities where our members live and work. Roughly 200 local organizations in Ashland, Huron, Lorain, and Richland counties have benefited from nearly \$1.3 million in Operation Round Up grants 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 have included schools, fire departments, childcare centers, health care facilities, youth groups, qualifying families and individuals, and numerous other charitable organizations.

Individually, we may only have a minor effect on our communities, but together we can move mountains.

Additional information and directions on how to apply for a grant are available at www.firelandsec.com/operation-round or by calling 1-800-533-8658.

Affiliated with a charitable organization in Ashland, Huron, Lorain, or Richland counties that could benefit from a grant?

### Apply for Firelands' Operation Round Up!

Visit www.firelandsec.com/ operation-round for applications and information.



The Polk-Jackson-Perry Fire District was the recipient of a \$4,600 grant in May 2022. The funds were used to purchase and install an interactive training board that not only allows the station to host larger training sessions, but also makes at-home training possible. These classes keep firefighting and EMS personnel up to date on critical skills and techniques in order to better serve the community members in the station's 47-square-mile territory.



The Mifflin Community Volunteer Fire Department (MCVD) was awarded a \$3,588 grant in March 2022 for the purchase of self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) masks for its firefighters. Specifically made for each individual user, the masks provide a better fit for improved safety, while also reducing sanitary concerns that can result from sharing masks.

#### YOUTH PROGRAMS

## \$10,500 IN SCHOLARSHIPS

Firelands Electric is pleased to announce the winners of its 2023 scholarship contest.

Michael Telakowicz of Hillsdale High School was selected as the first-place winner of an \$1,800 scholarship. The son of Kevin and Stacy Telakowicz, he plans to study computer science at the University of Akron in the fall. Telakowicz will also participate in a statewide contest on April 12 at Ohio's Electric Cooperatives in Columbus. During this event, representatives from Ohio's 24 electric co-ops have a chance to compete for additional scholarships worth up to \$4,100.

The second-place winner of \$1,600 is Emma Packard of Ashland High School. Packard is the daughter of Josh and Wendy Packard of Ashland. She plans to study psychology at the University of Mount Union next fall.

Allyson Wigton of Madison Comprehensive High School is the winner of the third-place, \$1,400 scholarship. Daughter of Andrew and Melissa Wigton of Mansfield, she plans to study aeronautical engineering at The Ohio State University Mansfield Campus.

Fourth-place winner of a \$1,200 scholarship is Caitlyn Cutlip of Crestview High School. Cutlip is the daughter of William Cutlip of Shiloh. She plans to study music education and oboe performance next fall but is currently undecided which college she will attend.

The fifth-place winner of \$1,000 is Braden Kiesel of South Central High School. Kiesel is the son of Brian and Laura Kiesel of New London. He will be studying mining engineering at West Virginia University in the fall.

Nathan Humrichouser of Crestview High School is the winner of the sixth-place, \$750 scholarship. The son of Ben and Teresa Humrichouser of Ashland, he plans to study zoology or environmental science next fall but is undecided which college he will attend.

The winners of Honorable Mention scholarships, worth \$500 each, are Makayla Spoerr of Crestview High School and Lydia Chaffee of South Central High School. Spoerr is the daughter of Mike and Megan Spoerr of Greenwich. She will major in agriscience education at The Ohio State University Agricultural and Technical Institute next fall. Chaffee, the daughter of Ben and Jody Chaffee of North Fairfield, plans to major in integrated science education at Bowling Green State University in the fall.

Allison Cawrse of Loudonville High School and Jenna Given of New London High School are the winners of Judges' Choice awards of \$500 each. Cawrse is the daughter of Mark and Becky Cawrse of Loudonville. She plans to study public relations next fall at the University of Akron Wayne Campus. Given, daughter of James Given of New London, plans to major in environmental and field biology with a pre-veterinary focus. She is currently undecided which college she will attend.

Jenna Rathburn of Celeryville Christian School is the winner of Firelands' \$750 Career Scholarship. Rathburn is the daughter of Jeff and Rachel Rathburn of Willard. She plans to attend Cleveland's Lincoln Electric Welding School in the fall and enroll in their comprehensive welding program.

Firelands Electric offers its scholarship contest annually to graduating high school seniors who reside in a home served by the cooperative. This year, the co-op received applications from students attending Ashland, Celeryville Christian, Crestview, Hillsdale, Loudonville, Mapleton, Madison Comprehensive, New London, Pioneer Career and Technology Center, and South Central high schools.

For more information on Firelands Electric's scholarships and youth programs, visit our website at www.firelandsec.com/community.

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Michael Telakowicz
FIRST PLACE
HILL SDALE HIGH SCHOOL



Emma Packard SECOND PLACE ASHLAND HIGH SCHOOL



Allyson Wigton THIRD PLACE MADISON COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOL



Caitlyn Cutlip
FOURTH PLACE
CRESTVIEW HIGH SCHOOL



Braden Kiesel
FIFTH PLACE
SOUTH CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL



Nathan Humrichouser SIXTH PLACE CRESTVIEW HIGH SCHOOL



Makayla Spoerr HONORABLE MENTION CRESTVIEW HIGH SCHOOL



Lydia Chaffee
HONORABLE MENTION
SOLITH CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL



Allison Cawrse
JUDGES' CHOICE
LOUDONVILLE HIGH SCHOOL



Jenna Given JUDGES' CHOICE NEW LONDON HIGH SCHOOL



Jenna Rathburn CAREER SCHOLARSHIP CELERYVILLE CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL



**INDUSTRY NEWS** 

### DRIVING TOWARD THE FUTURE

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, electric vehicle (EV) sales doubled from 2020 to 2021, reaching a record high of 608,000. Sales of internal combustion engine vehicles grew by only 3% over this same time span. A good example of the rapidly increasing popularity of EVs is the Ford F-150 Lightning, which was introduced in April 2022. The demand for this electric truck has been so high that orders for the 2023 model were halted by the manufacturer just a month into the new year.

The number of EVs on the road will only continue to grow over the next five to 10 years, and many brands have pledged to convert to manufacturing only EVs within the next three to 12 years. Part of this sales growth stems from more choices in the EV market. Today, more than 80 base models of sedans, SUVs, and minivans are available. The number of automakers that are exclusively manufacturing EVs is also increasing, from recognizable brands like Tesla to growing brands like Rivian, Polestar, Karma, and Lucid.

While the EV market is growing, it has some challenges to overcome before broader adoption takes place. The upfront cost of an EV is still more expensive than a comparable gas-powered vehicle, and many EVs are limited to an average driving range of 250 miles — though there are exceptions. There are EV models with ranges over 300 miles and a handful that are approaching 400, but their initial purchase price is higher.

Ford, Hyundai, Kia, and Nissan offer EV models that are priced around \$30,000 and available federal tax credits can bring the initial costs down considerably. EV range numbers are approaching those of a tank of gas, but EVs require more time to charge compared to a gas-powered vehicle's quick fill-up. Even at the fastest charging level, it takes approximately 20 minutes to charge to 80% capacity. This often makes EVs more suitable for daily driving needs, like commuting or running errands, than for longer road trips.

Access to publicly available charging stations can also pose a challenge sometimes. Charging locations just aren't as plentiful or as geographically accessible as gas stations yet, which makes using an EV for an extended road trip less straightforward. However, the Department

of Transportation and the Department of Energy have teamed up to offer grants to help states and local partners develop a national charging network with EV chargers located every 50 miles on interstates. The goal is to place EV chargers where they make the most sense in terms of business or recreational activities. National parks, convenience stores, restaurants, and local businesses could become popular stops for EV charging.

Compared to using a standard wall outlet, charging times can be shortened by using a Level 2 charger. Level 1 chargers are the standard chargers that come with an EV and provide about 40 miles of range after eight hours of charging, while Level 2 chargers provide about 200 miles.

Chargers consume a lot of power over a short amount of time and require local electric infrastructure to support the increased energy load. If you're considering a Level 2 charger, make sure your home's electrical system is in good shape and give Firelands Electric Cooperative a heads-up. This allows us to ensure that your transformer can safely and reliably provide power. In addition, qualifying Level 2 chargers may be eligible for a \$250 rebate through the cooperative. Visit our website at www.firelandsec.com/electric-vehicle-charger-rebates for details.

EVs may not be the ideal choice for everyone, but if you are considering one, Firelands Electric is here to help. Our energy advisors and operations personnel can assist with charging questions, as well as determine whether your home's electric service is up to the task. They can also provide recommendations if upgrades are necessary. As your cooperative, we're proud to be your trusted energy partner — and we're here for you.

Wondering what it's like to be a rural Ohio EV owner? We asked some of the cooperative's members who own one. Make sure to check out their personal experiences on the next couple of pages.

Coming up next month:

We'll take a look at the impact of EVs on the local, state, and national electric grid.



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#### **EV** owner **Q&A**

We recently sat down with three co-op members to discuss their experiences as EV owners in rural north-central Ohio. Below are their thoughts on some of the most common considerations that come up when deciding whether an EV is right for you.

#### **STEPHEN ARON** — Perrysville Vehicle: 2019 Tesla 3

Average daily commute: 40 miles one way (Stephen is semi-retired and makes this trip a few times a week.)



**Pros of owning an EV:** For Stephen, the biggest plus of owning his Tesla is simply driving it. He's found the quality of the car to be exceptional and enjoys the experience. "I never get tired of driving it," he says. As an added bonus, his EV has eliminated trips to the gas station and, with no fluids to worry about, has greatly reduced his overall vehicle maintenance. Locating public charging stations for a Tesla — the most popular make of EV — is usually no trouble. Plus, a 25-minute charge at any Tesla Supercharger adds an impressive average of 150 miles to Stephen's range. The car's computer also takes road and weather conditions into consideration, providing him with real-time information on his remaining charge and mileage.

Challenges of driving an EV: Although locating charging stations hasn't been problematic for Stephen, he points out that it is something to keep in mind when taking longer trips. It's important to remember

to include the time needed to recharge in your travel plans. Stephen also notes that colder weather does decrease the battery's efficiency, slightly reducing its range in the winter months.

Recommendations for co-op members considering **an EV:** Stephen's No. 1 piece of advice — take a test drive. He also reminds fellow co-op members that, like anything new, driving an EV does take some getting used to. But once you do, you'll love it, he says.

What prompted you to purchase an EV: Having the opportunity to drive a friend's Tesla helped Stephen make the decision to buy one of his own.

#### JONATHAN WILSON — Ashland Vehicle: 2021 Kia EV6

Average daily commute: 25 miles one way

**Pros of owning an EV:** Even with an increase of about \$50 per month on his electric bill, Jonathan says he still saves around \$200 each month by eliminating gasoline purchases. He's also found that the weight and all-wheel drive feature of his EV allow it to perform well in the snow. But like Stephen, simply driving his Kia is what Jonathan likes most. "The acceleration is phenomenal and wicked fast. It's just fun to drive," he says.



Challenges of driving an EV: While Tesla's charging station locations are gathered on a single app, Jonathan notes that isn't the case for other EVs. He keeps about a half dozen apps on his smartphone in order to locate

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charging stations if he is traveling long distances. The biggest challenge Jonathan has encountered, however, is poor maintenance on charging stations. Because charging stations are typically not tested or serviced on a regular basis, he has often arrived at a station only to find that it is broken or inoperable.

**Recommendations for co-op members considering an EV:** Jonathan has several recommendations for those looking into buying an EV. First of all, do your homework and don't rely on the dealership for information. Unfortunately, dealers aren't always the most knowledgeable about the details, he says. Make sure to think about home charging options ahead of time, and check on rebate qualifications through numerous avenues, including federal and state levels.

What prompted you to purchase an EV: Jonathan was initially interested in purchasing a Tesla, but having owned several Kia vehicles in the past, he ultimately opted for the EV6 when they first became available.

**ROY WALLACE** — Ashland **Vehicle:** 2020 Chevy Bolt EV

Average daily commute: Retired.

**Pros of owning an EV:** For Roy, many of the advantages of owning an EV are economical ones. In addition to avoiding costly trips to the gas pump, his Chevy Bolt requires minimal maintenance, and the battery is rated for eight years or up to 100,000 miles. It also conserves energy by using regenerative braking. This process



recaptures energy created by the movement of the EV as it slows down. This energy can then be stored in the battery for later use. Regenerative braking also helps reduce pollution and wear on the car's brake system.

**Challenges of driving an EV:** Since a large portion of Roy's driving is done locally, he typically charges his EV at home and hasn't faced any significant difficulties with charging or driving his Bolt.

**Recommendations for co-op members considering an EV:** Roy believes the major reluctance for many to own an EV is the anxiety associated with locating charging stations. "In reality, this fear is much greater than the actual issue," he says. To alleviate this concern, and others, Roy recommends renting an EV before you decide to buy. "I rented a Nissan Leaf for a couple of months, which eventually helped me make my decision to get an EV."

What prompted you to purchase an EV: Roy's decision to purchase his Chevy Bolt, which did have a previous owner, was ultimately because he wanted to do his part to reduce pollution and help the environment.



Before you dig, call 811 or visit call 811.com to mark underground utility lines. 811 is a free service that helps keep our community safe.



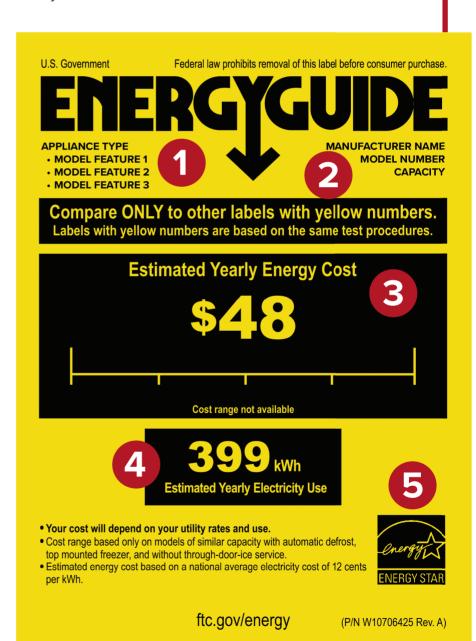


### **HOW TO READ AN APPLIANCE ENERGY GUIDE**

When shopping for new appliances, make sure to check the yellow Energy Guide for efficiency information on the model you are considering. This label can tell you:

- 1. Key features of this appliance. Models included in the comparison range (see no. 3) also have these same features.
- 2. The manufacturer, model number, and size/capacity of this particular appliance.
- 3. Estimated yearly cost to operate this model, based on the national average cost of electricity. The graph below this reflects the cost range of similar models (if they are available).
- 4. This specific model's estimated yearly electric consumption in kilowatt-hours.
- 5. The ENERGY STAR logo will be located here if the appliance has been certified. If this area is blank, this specific model is not **ENERGY STAR-certified. New** appliances that are ENERGY STAR-certified are typically 10%-40% more efficient than models that haven't received this certification. **Firelands Electric offers** co-op members rebates on some ENERGY STAR-certified appliances. Visit www. firelandsec.com/appliancerebates for details.

To learn more about the ENERGY STAR program, visit www.energy. gov/energysaver/shoppingappliances-and-electronics.



#### 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 6-8 are invited to participate and be recognized for their hard work and dedication to education.

### ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Winners of February drawing receive Amazon gift cards



**Conor Nickle** Norwalk St. Paul Middle School Son of Bill and Sarah Nickle



**Kevin Wilson** Western Reserve Middle School Son of John and Jenny Wilson

#### Send us your grade card and win! The next drawing will be held on April 10.

#### How you can win

Students in grades 6-8 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, P.O. Box 32, New London, OH 44851. Report cards may also be emailed to members@firelandsec.com.

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

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



South Central Middle School Daughter of Scott and Penny Oney

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**ENERGY EFFICIENCY** 

### YOUR ELECTRIC BILL IS UNIQUE

Electric bills are as unique as snowflakes or fingerprints. No two are alike. Every household uses electricity differently, making it impossible for your usage — and your bill — to look exactly like that of your friend, neighbor, or family member.

A common variable that makes one bill different from another is the family's comfort level. During colder months, a family with their thermostat set at 72 degrees will pay around 10% more in energy costs than a family who sets their heating system at 68 degrees. The same theory applies in the summer months. An air conditioner set at 76 degrees will use about 15% less energy than one set at 70 degrees. Generally speaking, you save or spend a difference of about 2% to 3% on your heating or cooling bill for every degree, depending upon which way you adjust the thermostat. Programmable thermostats that manage the settings automatically, or smart thermostats that allow changes to be made remotely, can help manage your home's temperature, and reduce your energy usage, when you are away.

How a family uses hot water is another significant factor in the size of its bill. Taking baths or long showers, using the dishwasher after every meal, and running the washing machine with less-than-full loads can contribute to a larger bill. As for the water heater itself, setting the temperature no higher than 120 degrees will help reduce energy consumption.

The weatherization of your house is also a major factor in determining how much electricity you use. A home with the recommended amount of insulation certainly uses less energy than a home that is under-insulated. In addition, outside air infiltration can cause your heating and



cooling systems to work harder to maintain your desired temperature. Caulking around outside windows and doors and inside electrical openings will not only stop drafts, but also help keep your bill down.

The main thing to remember is that your bill is just that your bill. It shows electric use by you and your family, and only you and your family have the power to make that bill smaller.

Want to start making efficient use of your electricity? Begin by looking around your home. Check to see if you can adjust the thermostat on your HVAC system or water heater a little. Add a power strip to easily turn off electronics or appliances when they're not in use. Or visit Firelands Electric's website at www.firelandsec.com/ energy-education to find additional efficiency tips.

Your family is unique, and using these tools can help you create an energy management plan that fits your needs. If you have specific energy efficiency questions, contact Firelands Electric at 1-800-533-8658. Our energy experts will be happy to help!



As a reminder, the Firelands Electric Cooperative office will be closed April 7 in observance of Good Friday.





#### **COOPERATIVE UPDATE**

## BOARD MEETING highlights

Firelands Electric Cooperative's Board of Trustees met *Jan. 24 and covered the following items:* 

- Board President Dan Schloemer reported that the cooperative received 36 membership applications for approval by the board.
- General Manager Dan McNaull reviewed an allemployee training event that took place on Jan. 16.
- Director of Operations Don Englet reported on recent activities and projects in the operations department, including line construction bids for 2023.
- McNaull reviewed a report on a safety and training event held Dec. 19 and 20, as well one that took place on Jan. 10 and 11.
- The board discussed an OSHA-required noise study conducted in December. Results found that noise levels were within the recommended ranges.
- McNaull reviewed pole attachment invoices.
- Schloemer and trustees Kevin Reidy, Rob Turk, and Elaine Oswald reported on recent training events that each attended. Topics included board meeting protocols, financials, and electric vehicles.

- McNaull shared that a project with North Coast Wireless Broadband to add a significant number of attachments to the cooperative's poles has been completed. These attachments will allow North Coast to expand its internet service to underserved areas in Firelands' territory later this year.
- Director of Finance and Accounting Tabi Shepherd reviewed the December financials and reported on recent accounting and billing department activities.
- McNaull reviewed the monthly tree-trimming and outage reports.
- Director of Communications and Technology Andrea Gravenhorst reported on recent activities involving the member services and IT departments, including upcoming elections and several community programs currently taking place.

The cooperative's next board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 25. 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





















Dan Schloemer President, District 1

Bruce Leimbach Vice President, District 4

Carl Ayers Secretary/Treasurer, District 5

Elaine Oswald District 8

Tom Lucha District 3

Gene Lamoreaux District 2

John Martin District 9

Kevin Reidy District 6

Rob Turk District 7

#### **GENERAL MANAGER**

Dan McNaull

#### HAVE A STORY SUGGESTION?

Email your ideas to: members@firelandsec.com

