



GM'S REPORT

THE COST OF RELIABLE POWER

Rate adjustment to take effect Jan. 23



Dan McNaull
GENERAL MANAGER

For more than 85 years, Firelands Electric Cooperative has been committed to providing our members with reliable power to run their homes, farms, and businesses. We tackle everything from tree and vegetation management to equipment maintenance and system upgrades to ensure that electricity is there whenever you push a button or flip a switch.

Each year, the co-op runs a 10-year financial forecast that takes into consideration factors such as current

operating costs, inflation trends, and necessary upgrades and replacements of key equipment on our distribution system. We also run a construction work plan study every four years that assesses the entire distribution system to identify and prioritize upgrades required to maximize reliability and minimize outages.

Our present construction plan includes the replacement of two substations, each of which has a transformer that is nearly 60 years old and will soon reach the point where system demand will exceed its capacity. In December 2021, these two substation upgrades had an estimated total cost of \$4.6 million. Today, due to unprecedented rates of inflation, their price tag has increased to \$9.95 million. Delaying or not taking action to upgrade these substations is not an

option — doing so would put our system's reliability at great risk and ultimately end up being even more costly.

In addition to the substation projects, your co-op continues to invest in our tie-line upgrades. These major power lines connect Firelands' substations and are critical for maintaining power via backfeeding from one substation to another when there is an outage.

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EXAMPLES OF MONTHLY BILL WITH AND WITHOUT RATE ADJUSTMENT:

kWh use	Old bill	New bill*	Difference
250	\$71.19	\$74.43	\$3.24
500	\$104.38	\$108.85	\$4.47
1,000	\$168.48	\$175.34	\$6.86
1,188**	\$189.46	\$197.61	\$8.15
1,500	\$224.28	\$234.59	\$10.31
2,500	\$335.88	\$353.07	\$17.19

Rate adjustment will go into effect on Jan. 23, 2024. The first bill to reflect this change will be the statement due on March 14.

**Includes Distribution Charge increase of \$2.00/month for single-phase service and \$6.00/month for three-phase service.*

***A Firelands residential member's average monthly electric usage equals 1,188 kWh.*



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Our latest financial forecasts clearly show that a rate adjustment is needed to keep pace with Firelands' outgoing expenses and planned system upgrades. (See included chart for specifics regarding the adjustment.)

It's also important for us to look to the future and prepare for cultural and economic shifts in the use of electricity, which will result in more electric vehicles and greater electrification of our homes, businesses, and farms. The number of state-of-the-art appliances, large-screen televisions, computers, gaming systems, and smart home features (such as video doorbells and security systems) continues to climb, creating an ever-increasing demand for electricity. Staying abreast of this growth is vital to maintain an adequate power supply for Firelands' members.

For years, Firelands has enjoyed some of the lowest rates among Ohio's 25 electric cooperatives, so the decision to increase them was not made lightly. However, this adjustment is necessary for the co-op to continue providing the ample and reliable power you have come to expect. Following the adjustment, which will go into

effect Jan. 23, 2024, our rates will still be very close to Ohio's 2023 averages. With many other electric suppliers also facing similar rate changes, your co-op may actually remain lower than the state average.

While the news of a rate adjustment is something that none of us likes to hear, the co-op's updated distribution and kilowatt-hour (kWh) charges will allow Firelands Electric to ensure that every member has plenty of safe, reliable power for years to come.

Electricity is a requirement for modern life. It keeps our homes comfortable, lights our homes, refrigerates and cooks our food, washes and dries our dishes and clothing, keeps our showers hot, and powers our entertainment and communications devices. When you consider all of this, the average cost of \$6.50 per day in electricity for a residential home remains a great value.

For the specifics regarding this rate adjustment, please see the chart accompanying this article, visit www.firelandsec.com/rate-schedules, or contact our billing department at 1-800-533-8658.

REMINDER:

PETITIONS TO BECOME A CANDIDATE FOR BOARD TRUSTEE ARE DUE JAN. 5

This spring, Firelands Electric Cooperative members will elect board trustees to represent districts 2, 7, and 9. Members living in any one of these districts are eligible to become candidates. Nomination petitions are available at the Firelands

Electric office and must be submitted by 4:00 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 5. Visit www.firelandsec.com/cooperative-elections or call 1-800-533-8658 for more information.

- **District 2:** New Haven, Ripley, Greenwich, Ruggles, Cass, and Blooming Grove townships
- **District 7:** Vermilion, Mohican, Montgomery, and Perry townships
- **District 9:** South of CSX rail in New London municipality and New London Township



YOUTH PROGRAMS

POWERING TOMORROW'S LEADERS

Supporting youth is an integral part of Firelands Electric's culture — after all, they are the future members of our co-op and our communities. Because of our commitment to tomorrow's leaders, Firelands recently partnered with Lorain-Medina Rural Electric (LMRE) in Wellington and North Central Electric in Attica to offer a new program to area high school students.

Launched by our two fellow co-ops in 2019, Cooperative Youth Day at the Ohio Statehouse gives attendees the chance to witness firsthand how our state government works and the role it plays in the cooperative and in their communities. Students are also encouraged to participate in the legislative process.

The one-day trip took place on Oct. 25 and included a tour of the Ohio Statehouse and an opportunity to meet some of the students' legislators from both the House of Representatives and Senate. Participants also spent some time on the House floor.

Twenty-six students from Black River High School in Medina County, New London High School in Huron County, and Seneca East High



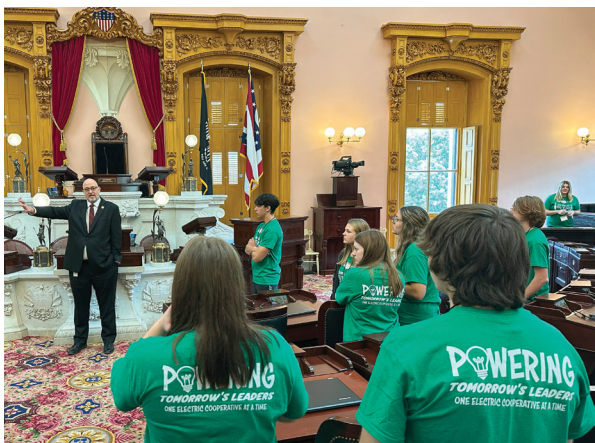
On Oct. 25, students from New London, Black River, and Seneca East high schools joined Firelands Electric and neighboring co-ops Lorain-Medina Rural Electric and North Central Electric for an in-depth look at our state government.

School in Seneca County represented the three cooperatives on the trip. Throughout the day, they spent time with Rep. Gary Click (District 88) and 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 and current issues being discussed on the state and national level. Following their time at the Statehouse, students visited the Ohio History Center to explore the natural and industrial history of the state.

"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 so that we can offer this program to more students in the coming years."

To view additional photos from Youth Day, visit www.flickr.com/photos/firelandsec/albums.





YOUTH PROGRAMS

Are you a high school senior planning to learn a trade or attend college after graduation? Don't miss out on your chance to apply for one of Firelands Electric's scholarships!

THE CRITERIA:

- Applicants must be graduating seniors who live in a home served by Firelands Electric Cooperative.
- The Career Scholarship requires a cumulative grade-point average of 2.5 or above on a 4.0 scale.
- All other scholarships must have a grade-point average of 3.5 or above.
- Selected finalists will be interviewed at the Firelands Electric Cooperative office on Monday, Feb. 19, 2024.
- Applicants will be judged on scholastic record, school and community activities, cooperative knowledge, and a personal interview.

Complete program guidelines and applications are available at www.firelandsec.com/children-members-scholarship, by contacting Firelands Electric's member services department at 1-800-533-8658, or by visiting your high school guidance department.

Application deadline: Jan. 19, 2024

Visit www.firelandsec.com/children-members-scholarship for details.

CLASS OF 2024 SCHOLARSHIPS

THE AWARDS:

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS

First place:	\$1,800	Fifth place:	\$1,000
Second place:	\$1,600	Sixth place:	\$750
Third place:	\$1,400	Two Honorable Mentions:	\$500 each
Fourth place:	\$1,200	Two Judges' Choice awards:	\$500 each

The first-place college scholarship winner will also be eligible to compete at the statewide competition in Columbus on April 16, where he or she could win up to \$4,300 in additional scholarships from Ohio's Electric Cooperatives.

CAREER SCHOLARSHIP

This \$750 scholarship is for students planning to enroll in a career-based education program following graduation. Examples include, but are not limited to, dental hygienist, phlebotomy, nurse, vet tech, electrician, HVAC, plumbing, auto mechanic, welder, or other trade.



integrity
accountability
community commitment
innovation

APPLY FOR THE

TRIP OF A LIFETIME



JUNE 15 – 21, 2024

AN ALL-EXPENSE-PAID TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

WHAT IS YOUTH TOUR?

- An unforgettable experience in Washington, D.C., sponsored by Firelands Electric and Ohio's Electric Cooperatives.
- A weeklong, all-expenses-paid trip giving outstanding high school students the opportunity to meet with congressional leaders, make lifelong friends from across the country, and visit many of the historic sites in and around our nation's capital.
- Firelands Electric Cooperative will choose up to two delegates to attend the 2024 Youth Tour.

HOW TO APPLY

- Be a current high school sophomore or junior.
- Reside in a home receiving power from Firelands Electric Cooperative.
- Submit a completed application, including the portion completed by a school official.
- Include a letter of recommendation from a guidance counselor, principal, teacher, or community or organization advisor.
- **Apply by Jan. 19, 2024.**
- Be eager to join this one-of-a-kind program and experience a trip to Washington, D.C., like no other!

LEARN MORE AT
www.firelandsec.com/youth-tour-experience

EMPOWER

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



YOUTH PROGRAMS

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS:

Want to see firsthand how electricity is generated?

CARDINAL POWER PLANT YOUTH DAY

April 25, 2024



Firelands Electric will be selecting up to 40 high school students to join us for a free, all-day trip to the Cardinal Power Plant on April 25.

Located in Brilliant, Ohio, Cardinal is one of the cleanest coal-fired power plants in the world and provides electricity to one million Ohioans, including the members of Firelands Electric Cooperative.

Youth Day applicants **DO NOT** need to be members of the co-op. Any students who attend one of the 16 high schools in our service territory are eligible to apply. And filling out the short online application takes just a few minutes!

Want to join us for a day of touring Cardinal's state-of-the-art facility, food, and fun? Applications will be available starting Jan. 15 and are due by 4 p.m. on Wednesday, March 1.



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

ELIGIBLE HIGH SCHOOLS:

- ASHLAND
- CRESTVIEW
- HILLSDALE
- LOUDONVILLE
- LUCAS
- MADISON
- MAPLETON
- MONROEVILLE
- NEW LONDON
- WILLARD
- SOUTH CENTRAL
- PLYMOUTH
- SENECA EAST
- NORWALK
- ST. PAUL
- WESTERN RESERVE

**FOR COMPLETE TRIP DETAILS AND THE LINK TO THE ONLINE APPLICATION,
VISIT WWW.FIRELANDSEC.COM/COMMUNITY.**

COOPERATIVE CONTESTS

THANKS FOR BEING OUR BIGGEST **fans**

Firelands Electric is pleased to announce the winners of our Biggest Fan Contest!

The contest, which took place in October, was held in celebration of National Co-op Month. Firelands Electric members who entered had their names placed into a drawing for a grand prize tailgating package, which included a tabletop electric grill, BBQ tool set, and apron. Five additional co-op members were randomly selected to each receive a \$50 credit on their November electric bills.

Co-op members also had the option to submit a photo showing off their team spirit. Those who submitted a photo of themselves, their family, and/or their pets sporting fan gear for their favorite high school, college, or professional team earned three additional entries in the drawing.



Congratulations to Liz Harpster of Ashland, who was selected as the grand prize winner of the tailgating package. Winners of the five \$50 bill credits include:

- **CHRISTOPHER HASSMANN** of Willard
- **DAN WILHELM** of Monroeville
- **MATTHEW COMINSKY** of Loudonville
- **JUDITH SHUPP** of Willard
- **CINDY SHIPLEY** of New London



A few of the "biggest fan" photos submitted by our co-op members are included here. To view additional photos, visit www.flickr.com/photos/firelandsec/albums.





COOPERATIVE UPDATE

BOARD MEETING *highlights*

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

- Board President Dan Schloemer reported that the cooperative received 37 membership applications for approval by the board.
 - General Manager Dan McNaull reviewed the proposed 2024 capital budget. Following discussion, approval of the final budget was postponed until next month.
 - The board was reminded that representatives for People Fund board districts 2, 7, and 9 would be named at the next meeting.
 - McNaull summarized the tree-trimming and outage reports for the past month.
 - Director of Finance and Accounting Tabi Shepherd reviewed the September financial reports and provided an update on recent accounting and billing department activities.
 - The board discussed preliminary plans for the cooperative's 2024 annual meeting, which is scheduled for April 6, 2024, at the Ashland University Convocation Center.
 - McNaull reviewed the deadlines for the 2024 trustee elections.
 - The board reviewed updates on transmission projects being completed by AEP and First Energy.
 - McNaull recapped the recent planning and unforeseen cancellation of the America's Electric Cooperatives PAC breakfast.
 - Director of Communications and Technology Andrea Gravenhorst reported on recent activities involving the member services and IT departments, including the upcoming USO drive.
 - McNaull reported on several committee meetings he recently attended at OEC, including one regarding the Buckeye Power Plant.
 - Director of Operations Don Englet reported on activities in the operations department, including updates on the New London 69kV line project.
 - Schloemer recapped a recent OREC meeting.
- The cooperative's next board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Jan. 23. 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



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Dan Schloemer
President, District 1

Bruce Leimbach
Vice President, District 4

Carl Ayers
Secretary/Treasurer, District 5

Gene Lamoreaux
District 2

Tom Lucha
District 3

Kevin Reidy
District 6

Rob Turk
District 7

Elaine Oswald
District 8

John Martin
District 9

GENERAL MANAGER

Dan McNaull

HAVE A STORY SUGGESTION?

Email your ideas to:
members@firelandsec.com

