



GM'S REPORT

PEOPLE POWER



Don Englet
GENERAL MANAGER

Over the past few months, there has been a lot on my mind.

After more than six years as general manager and two-and-a-half decades on the board of trustees, Dan McNaull retired from Firelands Electric at the end of August. Personally, I was preparing to step into my new role as the cooperative's next general manager. In addition, another employee was transitioning into my previous position as director of operations. As I reflected on these changes, I started

thinking about my own experience at Firelands Electric and what makes our co-op unique.

Next spring, I will celebrate 25 years with Firelands Electric. During this time, I've witnessed many changes in the cooperative and in the electric industry as a whole. Whether these changes had a positive impact on our small, member-owned electric utility, or they challenged us in some way, one thing always remained the same — the commitment and dedication of the people behind the power.

In the field

Because they are on the front lines, lineworkers are usually the first co-op

employees who come to mind. On your road, or even in your backyard, they are always visible, working with thousands of volts of electricity high atop power lines. Ready to work 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, they face all types of weather conditions to ensure that our members have safe, reliable power.

Although lesser known, the co-op's right-of-way coordinator is another critical part of our operations team. He oversees the contractors who routinely clear trees and other vegetation from power lines to prevent outages. You can also find him frequently working alongside line crews during a storm to clear limbs and debris.

Behind the scenes

Other members of the operations department are less visible, working behind the scenes to ensure that all of our equipment and the overall system is well maintained. The director of operations, line superintendent, and engineering staff also plan for the future energy needs of our members and our community by continuously monitoring the co-op's distribution system for needed improvements or upgrades.

Other employees keep our warehouse stocked and organized so that an adequate supply of



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materials is on hand for both planned projects and emergencies. Helping members navigate the process of energizing new construction, making updates to their current service, or simply answering questions about the electricity at their home, farm, or business is also expertly handled by our operations staff.

Here to help

Some co-op employees' roles focus more on customer service. For instance, billing representatives do much more than just process monthly payments. They set up new members to receive service when they move into our service territory. They can also help you with questions about your electric bill and handle inquiries about capital credits, estates, and current outages.

The member services department's primary responsibility is coordinating member programs and events. They organize Firelands Electric's annual meeting, youth programs, and other community outreach events. They also manage the co-op's communications, including this magazine and social media, making sure that members are informed about planned outages, rebates and other incentives, and important electric industry news.

increase in your energy consumption, their goal is to be your trusted resource for information. Co-op members who have questions about solar energy or HVAC options, or need answers to other more in-depth efficiency issues can also speak with our knowledgeable member services staff or even meet with an energy advisor.

Staying in sync

Members like you are at the heart of everything we do. As the general manager, it is my responsibility to make sure that all 27 employees of the

Firelands Electric team are working together to best serve our members. The electricity we provide literally powers our homes, our lives, and our communities. And it takes every person in the co-op to deliver on this promise.

For nearly 25 years, I've found it rewarding to be part of an organization where the employees take such pride in their work and in their service to the community. With a total of 358 years serving the co-op's members, our employees are second to none. Now, as I officially take on the role of Firelands Electric's general manager this month, I look forward to continuing our co-op's legacy of service excellence. After all, these "people behind the power" are truly at the root of our success.



Delivering savings

Member services and billing representatives are also available to help members with their energy efficiency questions. Whether providing suggestions for lowering your electric use and saving money on your bill or trying to help pinpoint the possible cause of an



Did you know?
Firelands Electric's
27 employees have a total of
**358 YEARS
OF EXPERIENCE**

CO-OP NEWS

Rick Bowers promoted to director of operations

Lineman Rick Bowers was recently promoted to director of operations at Firelands Electric, a position left vacant following Don Englet's transition to general manager of the cooperative.

Hired as an apprentice in 2008, Rick has more than 16 years of experience as a lineman. After completing his certification at Marion Technical College in 2012, Rick was promoted to journeyman lineman. In 2023, he became a lead lineman, responsible for running a crew that did everything from routine line maintenance and outage restoration to constructing new services.

In the past, Rick has volunteered to provide mutual aid to other electric cooperatives in the U.S. that faced thousands of power outages following hurricane-related storm damage. In 2016, he also participated in a two-week rural electrification project in Guatemala, where he joined linemen from several Ohio cooperatives to bring electricity to the remote mountaintop village of La Soledad for the first time. In December 2022, he graduated from Cooperative Leadership Edge, a statewide program designed to hone the skills of future co-op leaders.

In his new role, Rick will be responsible for making sure that the energy needs of Firelands Electric's members are met — and that their electricity remains safe, reliable, and affordable. One of his primary duties will be working

with the linemen, right-of-way workers, and engineering staff to coordinate the maintenance of Firelands Electric's power lines and other equipment. Rick will also oversee the design and construction of the co-op's distribution system, as well as plan for any upgrades that may be needed.

Rick is looking forward to stepping into the director of operations position. "I've had the privilege of working with a great group of dedicated employees at Firelands for more than a decade and a half," Rick says. "And I'm eager to continue to do so — as well as provide our members with exceptional service — for many years to come."

Rick and his wife, Natalie, live in the New London area and have two adult children, Alex and Sam. When not working for Firelands Electric's members, Rick likes to coach softball, fish, and spend time with his two grandchildren, Vinny and Evie.



Rick Bowers



HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS!

Submit your application for a chance to spend **OCT. 22** in Columbus, exploring Ohio's history and government with your cooperative.

For details and the link to apply, visit www.firelandsec.com/cooperative-youth-day.

**DEADLINE IS
SEPTEMBER 20**



YOUTH PROGRAMS

THE INSIDE SCOOP

Students win behind-the-scenes look at linework

Three elementary students recently had the opportunity to get a private tour of Firelands Electric Cooperative and have lunch with some of our linemen.

In May, as part of National Electrical Safety Month, Firelands Electric sponsored a contest for children in kindergarten through fifth grade to help teach them about lineworker safety equipment. Those who submitted the five-question safety quiz and entry form had their names entered into a drawing for a chance to spend a day at the cooperative.

On July 31, students and their adult guests spent over an hour touring the cooperative's facility in New London. They had the opportunity to get an up-close look at a bucket truck and track machine, as well as try out some of the safety gear, including rubber sleeves and overshoes. Firelands Electric linemen Rick Bowers, Chris Kent, and Zach Hart demonstrated pole climbing and showed attendees how they can use an extendo stick to replace a fuse from the ground. The linemen also answered questions from both students and their guests about the generation of electricity, working during a storm, and the training that linemen must complete. Following the tour and demonstrations, winners enjoyed a pizza lunch with the line crew. Each student also went home with a gift bag of electrical safety activities, Firelands swag, and their own junior lineman hard hat.

"Our annual electrical safety contest is a wonderful way to connect with our younger members," says Communications and Member Relations Specialist Tracy Gibb. "This is the co-op's second year holding our Lunch with a Lineman contest, and we really hope to see interest in this program grow. It an excellent opportunity for students, and they get some great one-on-one time with the cooperative's line crews and other staff."



On July 31, Lunch with a Lineman Safety Contest winners (front, l-r) Dalton Felter of New London, Graham Painter of Willard, and Vinny Robson of New London received an inside look at lineworker gear and equipment from Firelands Electric linemen (back, l-r) Zach Hart, Rick Bowers, and Chris Kent.



To view additional photos from this event, check out our Flickr page at www.flickr.com/photos/firelandsec/albums or scan the QR code.



The correct answers to May's lineworker safety quiz, which students completed to enter our contest, appear in red below:

1. Lineworkers have to wear a lot of gear to do their jobs. A lineworker's gear can weigh up to _____.
a. 15 pounds **b. 50 pounds** c. 80 pounds
2. Lineworkers maintain and repair electrical lines, but they do not install them.
a. True (no installation) **b. False** (They maintain, repair, and install lines.)
3. Over _____ hours of training are required to become a lineworker.
a. 300 b. 4,000 **c. 8,000**
4. Lineworkers must wear _____ clothing to protect them from a possible electric arc while working.
a. fire resistant b. extra thick c. rubber
5. Lineworkers must wear special boots when climbing a pole.
a. True b. False

Lunch with a **LINEMAN**



IN THE COMMUNITY

Parades



Several Firelands Electric employees participated in parades in Greenwich, Norwalk, and Rochester this summer. A big thank you to them and their families for representing the cooperative (l-r): Groundman Josh Kirk, Director of Communications and IT Andrea Gravenhorst, and Apprentice Lineman Jake Willbond.

Police

Back in September 2023, Firelands Electric's Operation Round Up awarded a \$3,537.50 grant to the New London Police Department for the purchase of new body armor for their officers. After experiencing several lengthy delays during the manufacturing process, the custom-fitted safety gear finally arrived in mid-June. New London Police Chief Joe Hicks was happy to give us a recent preview of the new equipment and expressed the department's gratitude for the cooperative's grant program and its commitment to the community.

Firelands Electric would like to thank all of our members who support Operation Round Up. Without your small change, we wouldn't be able to support our communities in such a big way! For more information on the Operation Round Up program, visit www.firelandsec.com/operation-round.





Pole-top rescue

A lineworker's training never ends. They regularly take refresher courses and attend classes to stay up to date on the most recent technology and procedures in the industry. Like lineworkers everywhere, Firelands Electric's crews also participate in regular safety training to ensure they are well-prepared in the event of an emergency.

In June, Firelands Electric's linemen completed their yearly pole-top rescue training, which simulates a situation in which a fellow crew member experiences a medical emergency and needs help getting down from the top of a utility pole. The training also includes rescuing another lineman from an extended bucket truck, as well as a CPR refresher.

We hope they will never need to use this training in the field, but Firelands Electric's linemen understand that this type of emergency is a harsh reality in their line of work. And they recognize that practicing for this potential scenario is the best preparation for safely handling an emergency.

To view additional photos from this year's pole-top rescue training, visit our Flickr gallery at www.flickr.com/photos/firelandsec/albums.



To view additional photos from the events on this page and many others, check out our Flickr page at www.flickr.com/photos/firelandsec/albums or scan the QR code.





CO-OP NEWS

MONTHLY BILL MAKEOVER

Your Firelands Electric Cooperative bill looks a little different this month!

This new, easier-to-read layout also contains additional information about your monthly electric use. Some of these features were not available on the previous billing format:

- A graph reflecting your usage for the past 13 months, including average daily temperatures.
- Side-by-side comparisons between your consumption for the current month, previous month, and the same month last year.
- Your average daily use and average daily cost for the current month.
- A more detailed breakdown of your current charges.

How To Read Your New Bill

Refer to the sample bill on the next page and the numbered list below as a guide to reading your new bill.

1. Amount due on account.
2. Your account number.
3. Billing transactions activity since your last bill.
4. Important messages from your cooperative.
5. Service address and meter information.
6. Graph showing monthly usage along with monthly high and low temperatures. You can also compare your usage with the previous year.
7. Detailed list of current charges for electric use.
8. Energy use comparisons and daily averages.
9. Account number and total amount due.
10. Firelands' contact information and ways to pay your bill online and on the SmartHub app.

25th Anniversary

Andrea Gravenhorst

CURRENT POSITION: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND IT

ROOKIE YEAR: 1999

STARTING POSITION: CUSTOMER/ COMMUNICATION REPRESENTATIVE

SPOUSE: BOB

FAMILY: SONS, JAYDEN AND ANTHONY

BIGGEST FANS: LYDIA THE LAB AND DASH THE CAT

PREVIOUS TEAM: SYNDICATED RADIO

FAVORITES: SITTING AROUND A CAMPFIRE, THE CLEVELAND BROWNS, LANDSCAPING PROJECTS, AND BABE RUTH CANDY BARS



Office Hours: Monday – Friday, 7:30 am – 4:00 pm
 Website: www.firelandsec.com
 Office/Outage Hotline: 1-800-533-8658
 Automated Payment System: 1-855-940-3960

Member Name: **JOHN DOE**
 Account #: **999999999**

Billing Date: **08/22/2024**
 Current Bill Due Date: **09/14/2024**

Previous Balance	\$106.00
Payment Received	-\$106.00
Balance Forward	\$0.00
Current Charges	\$107.00
Total Due 09/14/24	\$107.00

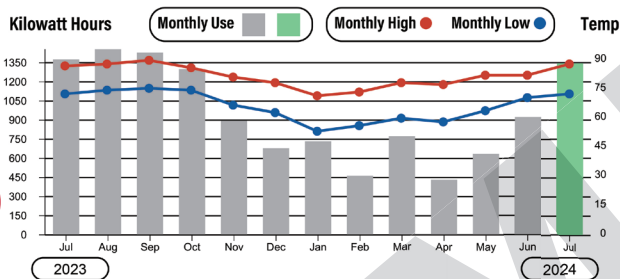
Total Due
\$107.00
 Due Date:
 09/14/24

Important Messages

The office will be closed on Monday, September 2, for the observance of Labor Day.

Service Address: **123 ANY ST.**

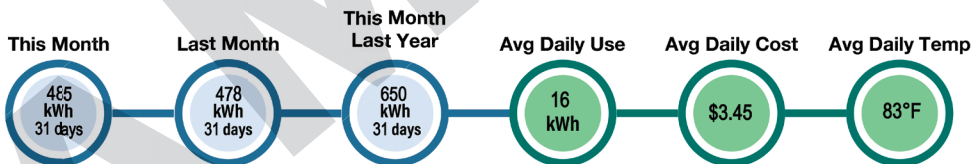
Rate	Meter No.	Reading Dates From	Reading Dates To	Days	Readings Previous	Readings Present	Mult	kWh Usage	kW Reading	kW Usage
RESIDENTIAL	12345678	07/22/24	08/22/24	31	16285	16770	1	485	--	--



Current Service Detail

kWh Charge	485 kWh @ 0.12870	\$62.42
Distribution Charge		\$40.00
Wholesale Power Adj	485 kWh @ 0.00880	\$4.27
Operation Roundup		\$0.31
Total Current Charges		\$107.00

Energy Usage Comparison



103 Industrial Drive
 New London, OH 44851

Pay your bill 24/7 at www.firelandsec.com, by downloading the SmartHub mobile app, or call our automated payment system at 1-855-940-3960.

Please notify Firelands of phone, email, or address changes.

Phone Number: (999) 999-9999
 Email: email@yahoo.com

JOHN DOE
 123 ANY ST
 ANYWHERE, USA 99999

Account Number	999999999
Total Due 09/14/2024	\$107.00
Amount Due After 09/14/2024	\$117.36

FIRELANDS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC.
 PO BOX 32
 NEW LONDON OH 44851-0032





SAFETY

GO ABOVE AND BEYOND FOR A SAFE HARVEST



Like linework, farming is considered one of the most dangerous jobs around. Even with modern GPS and auto-guidance systems, it's still important for farm workers to remain vigilant.

The sheer size and height of farm machinery increases its potential to come in contact with power lines. That's why staying alert, focused, and knowledgeable about electrical hazards and safety procedures is crucial. It's all too easy to get caught up in a busy harvest season and overlook potentially dangerous situations. However, failing to notice overhead power lines can lead to deadly accidents.

360-degree awareness

Awareness of your surroundings — around, above, and below — and planning safe equipment routes can significantly reduce the risk of accidents. Even with GPS and auto-steering, farm workers must keep a close eye on their equipment's location and be ready to take action if necessary.

Grain bins can pose a potential danger as well. If you plan to install a new grain storage facility, contact Firelands Electric's operations department. Safety requirements can vary, depending upon the size and type of bin, and co-op staff can help you calculate the required distance between power lines and the highest point of the grain bin (including any portable augers) to keep everyone safe. Also reach out to the co-op if you notice a power line that may be too close to an existing grain bin. Our crews are here to help.

If you have questions regarding the position of a power line in relation to a grain bin or any other structure, contact Firelands Electric at 1-800-533-8658. For additional safety information, visit SafeElectricity.org.

SMART HARVEST TIPS

To ensure a safer harvest season, SafeElectricity.org recommends the following tips to avoid electrical accidents on the farm:

- Exercise caution near power lines. Be careful when raising augers or the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- Use spotters when operating large machinery near power lines. Also, ensure the spotters do not touch machinery while it is moving near power lines.
- Lower equipment extensions, portable augers, or elevators before moving or transporting equipment. Do not raise equipment such as ladders, poles, or rods into power lines. Remember that non-metallic materials like lumber, tree limbs, ropes, and even hay can conduct electricity, especially when damp, dusty, or dirty.
- Never attempt to raise or move power lines to clear a path. Doing so could result in electric shock or death.
- Hire qualified electricians. Ensure that qualified electricians handle any work needed for drying equipment and other farm electrical systems.

While rare, the only reason to exit equipment that has come into contact with overhead lines is if the equipment is on fire. However, if it does happen, jump off the equipment with your feet together and don't touch the machinery and the ground at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, hop to safety as you leave the area, making sure to keep both feet in contact with the ground.

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 Amazon gift cards



Riley Trumpower
Lucas Middle School
Daughter of Aaron and
Jodi Trumpower



Kate Trumpower
Lucas Middle School
Daughter of Aaron and
Jodi Trumpower

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



Sandy Stang
Western Reserve Middle School
Daughter of Doug and Katie Stang



COOPERATIVE UPDATE

BOARD MEETING *highlights*

Firelands Electric Cooperative's Board of Trustees met June 25 and covered the following items:

- Board President Dan Schloemer reported that the cooperative received 33 membership applications for approval by the board.
- General Manager Dan McNaull advised that a purchase agreement for the site of the future Hillsdale substation had been signed. He also reviewed the estimated expenditures and timeline for the Coulter substation rebuild project.
- The board reviewed the monthly safety and training report.
- McNaull reviewed a May 23 letter from Kiplinger financial experts on energy cost increases.
- The board reviewed and approved dates and a venue for the next two annual meetings, scheduled for March 29, 2025, and March 14, 2026. Both events will be held at Ashland University.
- Director of Finance and Accounting Tabi Shepherd reviewed the May financial reports and provided an update on recent accounting and billing department activities.

- McNaull reviewed the status of the 2024 tree-trimming plan and the outage report for the past month.
- Director of Operations Don Englet reported on activities in the operations department, including the status of the damaged Fitchville substation and Gladden Road project.
- McNaull advised the board of the upcoming OEC Summer Conference.
- Director of Communications and Technology Andrea Gravenhorst reported on recent activities involving the member services and IT departments.

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 Sept. 24, 2024. 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

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President, District 1

Bruce Leimbach
Vice President, District 4

Carl Ayers
Secretary/Treasurer, District 5

Joe Williams
District 2

Tom Lucha
District 3

Kevin Reidy
District 6

Greg Hess
District 7

Elaine Oswald
District 8

Brian Cucco
District 9

GENERAL MANAGER

Don Englet

HAVE A STORY SUGGESTION?

Email your ideas to:
members@firelandsec.com

