



GM'S REPORT



Don Englet
GENERAL MANAGER

HELPING STAR STUDENTS SHINE BRIGHTLY

Co-op youth programs provide valuable opportunities

As parents, we always worry about what type of future our children will face. We fret over their education and their career path choices. We stress over their first move away from home. Looking at the bigger picture, we also wonder if the leaders of their generation will be up to the task.

Over the past year or so, I've had the chance to meet a number of your students, and the discouraging reports regarding tomorrow's leaders simply do not align with my personal

experience. My interactions with your children and grandchildren have shown that our local youth are intelligent, inquisitive, and invested in the future of their communities.

Youth and education have always been top priorities at Firelands Electric Cooperative, and our youth programs offer numerous opportunities to help these students grow into the leaders of tomorrow that we need.

Cooperative Youth Day at the Ohio Statehouse is a perfect example of Firelands Electric's dedication to our future leaders. In its second year at Firelands, the program received 25 applications from students scattered throughout our service territory. Ten students from New London, Crestview, and Plymouth high schools were selected to participate in the October 2024 trip.

Firelands Electric's participants joined additional students from Ohio electric cooperatives Lorain-Medina Rural Electric and North Central Electric for an in-depth look at the legislative process on the state level. Students toured the Ohio Statehouse, spent time visiting both the House and Senate floors,



About 50 students from Lorain-Medina Electric, North Central, and Firelands Electric cooperatives got a behind-the-scenes look at Ohio's government during a trip to the Statehouse in Columbus on Oct. 22.

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FIRELANDS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LOCAL PAGES

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and met with Sen. Theresa Gavarone (District 2), Rep. Dick Stein (District 54), and Rep. Riordan McClain (District 87). Staff from the office of Rep. Melanie Miller (District 67) also spoke briefly with the students. Youth Day participants also had the opportunity to ask elected officials questions regarding Ohio's legislative process, current issues on the state and national level, and the path to pursuing a political career. A special sneak peek at the governor's office closed out the day.

(There is also a new award for adults returning to post-secondary education.) You'll find information on how to apply for next June's weeklong, all-expenses-paid Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. Every other spring, the co-op hosts students on a tour of the Cardinal Power Plant in Brilliant, Ohio, which supplies power to one million Ohioans, including Firelands Electric's nearly 9,200 homes, farms, and businesses. Employees have also taken part in mock interviews and financial literacy education at several of the high schools in our service territory.

Younger students can participate in The A Team program, which recognizes those in grades 6 to 8 for excellence in the classroom following each grading period. Those in the elementary grades have an opportunity to get a behind-the-scenes look at the co-op as part of our Lunch with a Lineman Contest. We have also held contests for games and books about electricity. Be sure to keep your eyes open for other upcoming youth contests! (Psst... There will be a new student contest taking place in February or March.)

Being concerned about your children's future is only natural. Everyone wants their children and grandchildren to have a life that is better than their own. I've seen their ambition and heard their well-thought-out inquiries. With students like these — and youth

programs like those available through your cooperative — I think we can rest a little easier knowing our leaders of tomorrow will be well equipped for the future.



Above, students from the EHOVE Career Center watch Journeyman Lineman Matt Whiteside during an electrical safety demonstration.

At right, New London High School students check out a display at the Statehouse Museum in Columbus.



The trip to the Statehouse is just one of many valuable experiences Firelands Electric offers area high school students. Another event took place in November, when the co-op played host to nearly 40 students from the EHOVE Career Center as part of their career exploration day. Co-op employees shared information about their careers and the skills needed to work in their area of expertise. In addition, attendees took part in a tour of Firelands Electric's facility and co-op linemen provided an electrical safety demonstration.

Youth opportunities through your co-op do not stop here, however. If you turn to the next page, you will find several scholarships available to graduating seniors for the pursuit of additional vocational or college education.



Additional information regarding Firelands Electric's youth programs is available at www.firelandsec.com/community. Photos from our youth events can be found at www.flickr.com/photos/firelandsec/albums.

VOTING OPENS FEB. 10

In early February, Firelands Electric members will be mailed voting packets for this year's trustee elections. Voting will take place by mail and online ballot from Monday, Feb. 10, through Sunday, March 23. Results will be announced at the cooperative's annual meeting on Saturday, March 29, at the Ashland University Myers Convocation Center.

In this year's elections, members will select trustees to represent districts 4, 5, and 8. Additional information regarding the role of a Firelands Electric trustee and the voting process is available at www.firelandsec.com/cooperative-elections.

**Feb.
7**

Ballots and candidate bios mailed to all co-op members

**Feb.
10**

Voting opens online and by mail

**March
23**

Ballots must be completed online or received by the third-party vendor by 11:59 p.m. today

**March
29**

Election results announced during the co-op's annual meeting at Ashland University

87TH ANNUAL MEETING



*Save
the
date*

MARCH 29, 2025

at the Ashland University Myers Convocation Center

2024

CO-OP MONTH MADNESS CONTEST WINNERS

Nearly 400 entries were received during Firelands Electric's recent Co-op Month Madness Contest. Firelands members who entered the October contest had their names placed into a drawing for a chance to win one of three prizes.

Nancy Castle of Jeromesville (pictured below) was selected as the winner of an OSU tailgating package valued at \$200, plus a \$100 bill credit. Daniel Stotts of Lucas and Shirley Rader of Shiloh each received a \$100 bill credit. A big thank you to all of our members, and congratulations to our winners!





SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

Are you a high school senior planning to learn a trade or attend college after graduation? Perhaps you've been in the workforce but are looking to change careers? Don't miss your chance to apply for one of Firelands Electric's scholarships!

THE CRITERIA:

- Applicants must live in a home served by Firelands Electric Co-op.
- College scholarship applicants must have a grade-point average of 3.5 or above.
- The Career Scholarship for high school seniors requires a cumulative grade-point average of 2.5 or above on a 4.0 scale.
- The second Career Scholarship does not require a transcript, but applicants must have graduated high school prior to June 2023.
- Selected finalists for all scholarships will be interviewed at the Firelands Electric Cooperative office on Monday, Feb. 17, 2025.
- Applicants will be judged on a combination of scholastic record, school and community activities, cooperative knowledge, and/or a personal interview. See individual program guidelines for details.

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.

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 on April 16 at the statewide competition in Columbus, where he or she could win up to \$4,600 in additional scholarships from Ohio's Electric Cooperatives.

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 member who graduated prior to June 2023. Examples of qualifying career paths include, but are not limited to, dental hygienist, phlebotomy, nurse, vet tech, electrician, HVAC, plumbing, auto mechanic, welder, or other trade.



Class of 2025 SCHOLARSHIPS

**Deadline:
Jan. 17, 2025**



Visit www.firelandsec.com/children-members-scholarship for complete rules and applications.

YOUTH PROGRAMS

THE

TRIP OF A LIFETIME



JUNE 15 – 21, 2025

AN ALL-EXPENSES-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 2025 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 by Jan. 17, 2025.**
- 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



ENERGY EFFICIENCY

SCOTT'S ENERGY SPOT: SPACE HEATERS

Efficiency tips from Firelands Electric's energy advisor



Scott Carbarly
ENERGY ADVISOR

It's that time of year again... There is a nip in the air, and everyone has settled in for another north-central Ohio winter. Besides snow, ice, wind, and frigid temperatures, another issue that goes hand-in-hand with colder weather is higher energy bills. For starters, everyone spends more time indoors, so we tend to use more electricity for lighting, cooking, and entertainment. The biggest offender, though, is the increased need to heat your living space — which accounts

for the largest chunk of your monthly energy bills. And this number can skyrocket if you turn to electric space heaters to warm a room, or several rooms, in your home.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration's 2020 survey of residential energy use, 42% of the average member's monthly energy use is due to space heating. Unfortunately, a lot of unscrupulous companies will attempt to take advantage of this high percentage by offering products or services claiming to heat your home for "pennies per hour."

These products will adequately heat areas of your home, but at the cost of MANY pennies per hour. A 1,500-watt heater

(standard for the industry) running on high at the cooperative's competitive electric rate of \$0.12870/kilowatt-hour costs our members \$0.193 cents per hour, per heater to operate. At first glance, that doesn't sound too bad. The average heater runs about eight hours per day in the colder months, which comes out to \$1.54 per day. Still doable, one might say. But, \$1.54 per day for 30 days — that adds 360 kWh and \$46.20 to your monthly bill for every heater! Whew!

The average Firelands Electric residential member uses 1,188 kWh per month. So, one space heater running in the corner would consume almost one-third of their overall kWh PER MONTH. And that is only using one heater for eight hours a day.

"But Scott," you say, "I was told this nice heater with a custom wood finish would only cost pennies per day to heat my home." Truth be told, almost all electric space heaters require the identical amount of electricity to generate the same amount of heat. A phrase this grizzled old energy advisor often uses when comparing one electric space heater to another is "A watt is a watt." It doesn't matter if the electric heater being used is Amish or a \$20 milk house heater from a big box store. The cost to operate them is exactly the same.

With all of that being said, these heaters do have their place in a member's home, if needed. If you only spend time in one to two rooms of your home for most of the day, depending on these portable heaters as a main source of heat can work well to keep you comfortable. If you need to heat several rooms, or will need several heaters to do the job, it's best to consider other long-term — and more economical — alternatives. And if you need help deciding what is best for your home and your situation, call your co-op. Our call center will be happy to put you in touch with me so that I can help you get the most out of your energy dollars.



FILTERING OUT THE FACTS

The do's and don'ts of furnace filters

As air flows through your heating system, the filter collects dust, dirt, pet hair, and other airborne particles, keeping the air in your home clean. Over time, this debris builds up on the filter. Not only does this allow dirt to enter the air, but it also reduces the efficiency of your furnace by making it run longer or more frequently. This, in turn, increases your electric bill.

To keep your heating system operating at its most efficient this winter, follow these filter tips:



- **CHANGE YOUR FILTER REGULARLY** — Don't wait until your filter looks full. By then, it's already causing your furnace to use more energy. Instead, replace the filter on a set schedule. Most HVAC manufacturers recommend every two to three months, but check your specific unit's requirements to make sure.

- **BE FLEXIBLE** — Just because you're scheduled to replace the filter every three months doesn't mean you should always wait that long. Change the filter if it looks dirty. You may need to increase how often you replace it if you are doing a home renovation project or add a new pet to your household. More frequent replacements may also be necessary if a member of your household has allergies or a respiratory condition.
- **LISTEN TO YOUR FURNACE** — If you notice your furnace turning off and on more frequently, check the filter. An HVAC system that runs more often than normal is a common sign that your filter is clogged and needed to be replaced.
- **CHOOSE THE RIGHT FILTER** — An incorrectly sized filter may not fit snugly or provide adequate filtration. Check your owner's manual, the furnace door, or the manufacturer's website to find the exact size you need. And don't skimp on the efficiency rating. Filters are rated from 1 to 20 MERV (minimum efficiency reporting value). The higher the number, the more efficient the filter. For your average home, filters rated between 8 and 13 MERV are sufficient for removing most dust particles, but you may want to consider something rated higher if you or family members suffer from allergies.

Dirty filters are a major cause of HVAC system failure. Changing them regularly will make your home more comfortable and efficient, saving you money and possibly some big headaches down the road.

For additional information, including tips for selecting the right filter, visit www.firelandsec.com/energy-education.

SPACE HEATER

safety

Extension cords and power strips are not equipped for the electric output of a portable heater.



COOPERATIVE UPDATE

BOARD MEETING *highlights*

Firelands Electric Cooperative's Board of Trustees met Oct. 22 and covered the following items:

- Board President Dan Schloemer reported that the cooperative received 34 membership applications for approval by the board.
- General Manager Don Englet reviewed the monthly safety and training, tree-trimming, and outage reports.
- Director of Operations Rick Bowers reported on activities in the operations department.
- Englet reviewed appointments for the 2025 People Fund board. Following discussion, the board appointed Jodi Davidson to represent District 4 and David Seiss for District 8.
- The board reviewed and discussed an initial draft of the 2025 capital budget. Updates will be reviewed at the next board meeting.
- Englet reviewed expenses for the Coulter substation rebuild and provided a recap of several meetings he recently attended.
- Director of Communications and Technology Andrea Gravenhorst reported on recent activities involving the member services and IT departments.
- Englet reminded the board of the PAC recognition breakfast on Oct. 25.
- Director of Finance and Accounting Tabi Shepherd reviewed the September financial reports and provided an update on recent accounting and billing department activities, including the results from a recent successful inventory audit.
- Englet advised that the petition postcards for the 2025 trustee elections had been mailed out on Oct. 18.
- Schloemer reported on a recent OREC board meeting he attended, including statistics on the mutual aid by Ohio's electric cooperatives provided to several areas of North Carolina impacted by recent hurricanes.

The cooperative's next board meeting is scheduled for Jan. 28, 2025. 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



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Dan Schloemer
President, District 1

Bruce Leimbach
Vice President, District 4

Carl Ayers
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Brian Cucco
District 9

GENERAL MANAGER

Don Englet

HAVE A STORY SUGGESTION?

Email your ideas to:
members@firelandsec.com

