

March 20, 2002

The North Eastern Farm Bureau Electric Cooperative, Inc. was formed May 28, 1936 in the Farm Bureau office, 38 Wooster Street in Norwalk, Ohio. The early months of its operations were conducted from this office. During the next year and-a-half, possible ways of providing electric service to the rural areas was explored, including a serious consideration of merging with the new Lorain-Medina organization.

The ultimate path which the cooperative took appears to have begun on November 30, 1937 when the trustees met with a representative from the Rural Electric Administration who presented the steps necessary to become an REA financed rural electric cooperative. On December 17, 1937 the trustees asked REA for approval to begin the process to change the name of the corporation to Firelands Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Another move in the growth of the cooperative was to establish its headquarters in North Fairfield. On March 16, 1938 the board agreed to rent the first floor and basement of the Hippert building. With an REA loan, technical assistance, and the employment of a contractor, the first lines were built. In the late summer of 1938 they were energized with power being supplied from the Norwalk City municipal generating plant.

### The New London Acquisition

Electric Service in the village of New London began in 1898 with direct current provided by a generating plant on South Railroad street. The plant was owned and operated by the village. By 1924 the advantages of alternating current were evident and local people formed a stockholder corporation known as the New London Power Company. The company purchased the municipal system and built a transmission line along the A C + Y railroad to Huntington where it received <sup>a-c</sup> power from the Cleveland + Southwestern Railway Line, an interurban railway company.

within a couple of years the New London Power Company stockholders sold to outside interests and the company eventually became part of the Samuel Insull midwest utility empire. Insull could not survive the great depression and his empire fell apart in 1932. It was through the long process of distributing his many holdings that the New London Power Company was offered for sale and was purchased by Firelands. The deed and bill of sale was dated December 29, 1942.

The acquisition of the village of New London prompted another move of the headquarters of Firelands. The lease of the North Fairfield facility was cancelled as of April 30, 1943 and by that time the move had been made to 3 East Main Street in New London.

By early 1943 it was realized that a different source of power had to be provided for the system. Successful negotiations with the Ohio Public Service Company resulted in the need to construct a 33 KV transmission line from Olena to Fitchville where a substation would be built to serve the area which was then being powered by Norwalk municipal. The transmission line would then be run to New London and serve that system.

In August, 1943 an application was filed with the War Production Board for permission to construct the proposed transmission line. With that approval the project proceeded, made difficult because of wartime shortages of manpower and materials. By the middle of 1944 all was ready for the contractor to begin.

The transmission line from Fitchville served New London until 1972 when a 69KV line was run two miles north of the village to contact the cross-country transmission line of Ohio Edison. The old transmission line from Fitchville to New London carried underbuild at distribution voltage which continued to be used,

Around 1948 headquarters moved again. Firelands purchased a factory building on Prospect Street. It allowed the scattered storage of line materials, poles, transformers and trucks to be brought together in one location. Space for the office operation was located in the front of the building. In 1975 a new office building was built on an adjacent lot and faced on West Main Street.

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