



GM'S REPORT

CO-OP EMPLOYEES HAVE HEART

As an electric co-op, Firelands' primary focus is providing safe, reliable, and affordable power. As a member-owned, not-for-profit organization, we also want to see our community thrive. Firelands Electric Cooperative is only as strong as our membership — what's good for the co-op is good for the community.

Firelands Electric feels strongly about "Concern for Community." This principle is at the heart of what we do. We strive to provide quality electricity at a reasonable cost to keep our community flourishing. But it goes much further than that. This commitment to community is also behind our support of programs like Operation Round Up, scholarships, and electrical safety education. It's what drives us to take part in causes like the annual USO of Northern Ohio Step Up for Soldiers campaign.

Not only does your cooperative make every effort to give back to the community it serves, but so do its employees — friends and neighbors who live and work in this very same community. I take great pride in the fact that Firelands Electric employees support the local area in such a multitude of ways. Some serve as school or fair board members, several coach youth sports, others volunteer at church, and a number help with charity or civic organizations. The list and photos that follow are just a small sample of the numerous ways that Firelands' employees are involved in the community.

It takes more than poles and power lines to make a community. It takes people — people willing to get involved, volunteer, and help their fellow neighbors. Working together to improve the community is part of the electric cooperative legacy. Since the 1930s, when neighbors went door-to-door to first bring power to rural areas, electric co-ops have been about improving the lives of those they serve. Firelands Electric's employees continue this tradition with their strong commitment to community, both on and off the job.



Dan McNaul
GENERAL MANAGER

This February, I encourage you to put your heart into your community. Become involved in your local school, church, or civic organization. No matter how small our efforts, every time we give back, we strengthen our community, which is something we all benefit from.

Community connections ...

Just a few of the many ways that Firelands Electric Cooperative employees give back to our community:

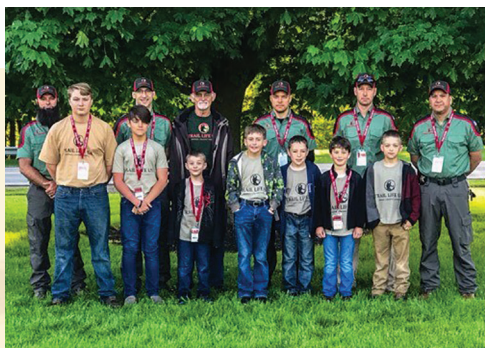
- Director of Operations Don Englet is a member of the South Central Local Schools Board of Education. "I place a very high value on the children of our community, and I appreciate the opportunity to play a small part in helping to develop their future through education," Don says.
- Operations Assistant Holly Beach-Barber is involved with the New London FFA Alumni and Boosters.
- Director of Member Services and Communications Andrea Gravenhorst is an officer with Helping Hands, the parent advisory committee at St. Joseph School in Monroeville.
- General Manager Dan McNaul serves as the administrator/sexton for the Ashland Dickey Church of the Brethren cemetery.
- Communications and Member Relations Specialist Tracy Gibb belongs to the Mapleton Local Schools' Cross Country Team Parents Group.

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Community connections ...



Lead Lineman Fred Hartman is involved with Trail Life at Wakeman Congregational Church. He says, "The group helps young men grow in character, understand their purpose, serve their community, and develop practical leadership skills."



Consumer Service and AMI Coordinator Stephanie Schmidt, left, serves as head deaconess at the New London Christian and Missionary Alliance Church. As part of her duties, Stephanie helps coordinate the free community meal and fellowship held on the third Wednesday of every month.



Journeyman Lineman Dave Sumpter and his son T.J. take part in the St. Baldrick's Foundation annual head-shaving to raise money for childhood cancer research. This year, his younger son, A.J., will participate for the first time. Over the past four years, Dave and his family have raised over \$10,000 for this worthy cause.



Journeyman Lineman Chris Rowland coaches fastpitch softball and is a captain with the New London Volunteer Fire Department. Chris also helped implement REACT, a support group for firefighters.

CO-OP NEWS

Thank you!



Northern Ohio

For the 12th year in a row, Firelands Electric Cooperative served as a donation location for the USO of Northern Ohio's Step Up for Soldiers annual drive.

From Nov. 11 through Dec. 11, Firelands joined forces with local radio stations WLKR-FM and K96-FM to collect health and wellness items, canned goods, snacks, games, and other items that will be delivered to military personnel from 29 counties throughout northern Ohio.

Co-op members, employees, and the community dropped off enough donations to fill the back of the radio station's minivan — making it one of the most successful campaigns in recent years. A special thank you to Pepperidge Farm of Willard and their employees and the South Central Local Schools community for their generous contributions!



Firelands Electric's Scott Carbary (right) and 95.3 WLKR/K96 WKFM's station manager Bill Forthofer (left), load up donations from this year's USO of Northern Ohio Step Up for Soldiers Drive.

WINTER SAFETY

It's no surprise that winter months bring increased potential for fire risks and electrical safety hazards. During the coldest months, members are using additional electrical devices and appliances, like space heaters and electric blankets.



The National Fire Protection Association estimates that 47,700 home fires occur each year in the U.S. due to electrical failure or malfunction. These fires result in 418 deaths and 1,570 injuries annually. This winter, safeguard your loved ones and your home with these electrical safety tips from the Electrical Safety Foundation International.

- 1. Don't overload outlets.** Avoid using extension cords or multi-outlet converters for appliances and portable space heaters — they should be plugged directly into a wall outlet. If you're relying heavily on extension cords, you may need to contact a qualified electrician to add additional outlets to address your needs.
- 2. Never leave space heaters unattended.** If you're using a space heater, turn it off before leaving the room. Make sure heaters are placed at least 3 feet away from flammable items. Please note that space heaters take a toll on your energy bills. If you're using them throughout your home, it may be time to upgrade your home heating system.
- 3. Inspect heating pads and electric blankets.** These items cause nearly 500 fires every year. Inspect your electric blankets and heating pads — look for dark, charred, or frayed spots and make sure the cord is not damaged. Do not place any items on top of a heating pad or electric blanket and never fold them when in use.



TRUSTEE ELECTIONS

LOOKING FOR MEMBERS LIKE YOU

Firelands Electric Cooperative is guided by a board of trustees — trustees who are also members of the co-op. Seats on this board are incredibly important positions in our community. It is this board's responsibility to represent co-op members' best interests when making significant decisions, which can affect issues such as service rates, work plans, and rights-of-way.

The board needs men and women who understand their community's needs. It is crucial to elect strong leaders, selected from a diverse pool of candidates, to guide the cooperative. Fresh perspectives help the cooperative enact policies that keep our community competitive, so members are always encouraged to run in our board elections.

Firelands Electric's board is a democratically elected body nominated by members of the cooperative's service territory and voted into position by members who choose to participate in the co-op's open election. Any co-op member who is in good standing and resides in a district with an open spot on the board is welcome to run for that position.

Starting in 2020, Firelands Electric will hold elections via mail and online ballot, rather than at the annual meeting. More details regarding this new voting process are outlined on the following page.

Board members for districts 1, 3, and 6 will be elected this year. Interested candidates are required to collect 20 member signatures from within their district and submit an election application by Friday, March 20. Petitions are now available at the Firelands Electric Cooperative office, located at 103 Industrial Drive, New London.

Trustees matter and can make a difference. Call 1-800-533-8658 or visit www.firelandsec.com for additional information on how to run for our board of trustees and to find out more about the election process.

BOARD DISTRICTS

District 1: Richmond, Norwich, and Greenfield townships

District 2: New Haven, Ripley, Greenwich, Ruggles, Cass, and Blooming Grove townships

District 3: Peru, Bronson, Fairfield, and Hartland townships, and Fitchville Township west of State Route 250

District 4: Clarksfield and Rochester townships, Fitchville Township east of State Route 250, and north of CSX rail in New London municipality and New London Township

District 5: Monroe, Green, and Lake townships

District 6: Butler, Clear Creek, Orange, Weller, Milton, and Mifflin and Madison townships north of State Route 42

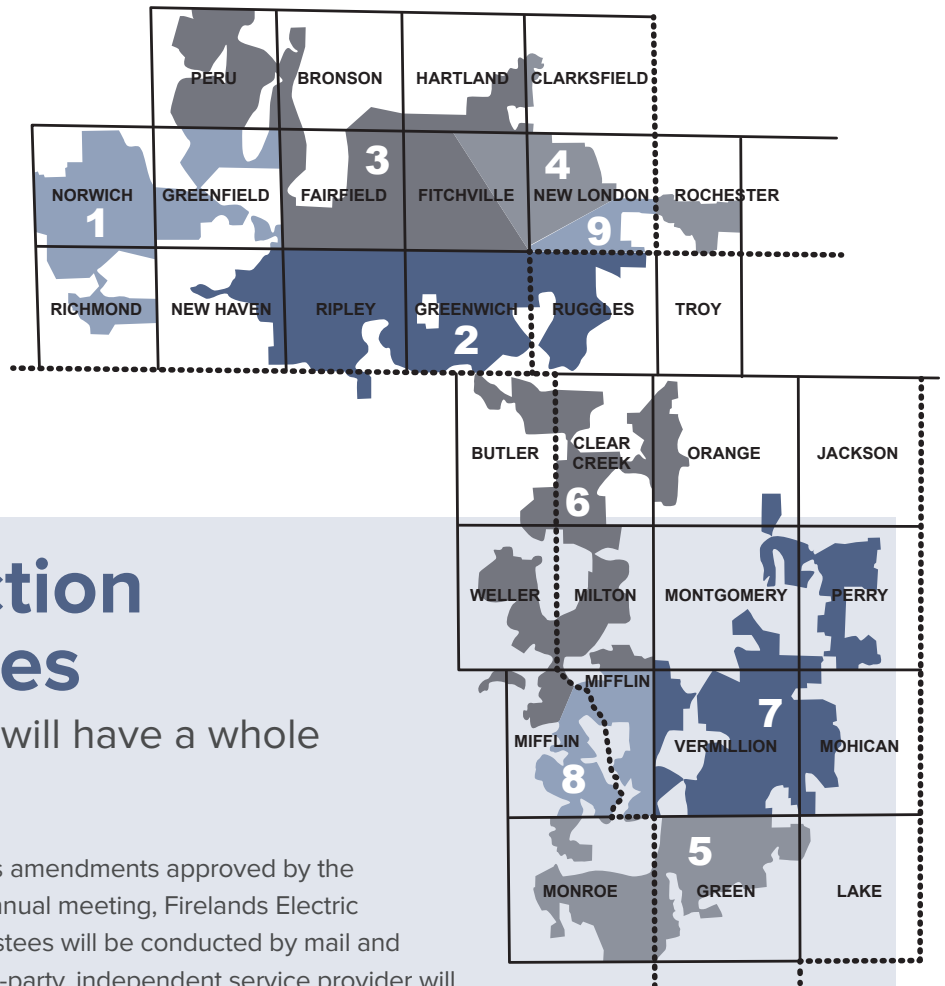
District 7: Vermilion, Mohican, Montgomery, and Perry townships

District 8: Mifflin Township south of State Route 42 in Ashland and Richland counties

District 9: South of CSX rail in New London municipality and New London Township

Firelands Electric Cooperative is governed by a board of trustees, nominated and elected by our members in accordance with our Code of Regulations. Our service area is divided into nine districts, which are based on equitable representation of the geographic areas served by Firelands. Trustees from three districts are elected each year, and those selected by the membership to represent each district serve a term of three years.

Nomination petitions to become a candidate for the 2020 elections are now available at the Firelands Electric Cooperative office.



New election procedures

Trustee elections will have a whole new look in 2020

Per new Code of Regulations amendments approved by the membership at last June's annual meeting, Firelands Electric Cooperative's election of trustees will be conducted by mail and online ballot this year. A third-party, independent service provider will manage the election, overseeing the online voting portal and print and mail ballots and receiving and tallying all votes.

Members will receive candidate biographies and a paper ballot in the mail at the end of April. Votes can be cast online via a secure link available at www.firelandsec.com or by returning a completed paper ballot in the envelope provided. The account number on record, which is found on your printed or emailed monthly billing statement, will be required to cast your vote online.

Only original ballots will be accepted; no photocopies are permitted. If more than one ballot is submitted, or more than one voting method is used, the first ballot received by the independent service provider will be considered final.

Voting will open on Friday, May 1, and will close Wednesday, June 17, at 11:59 p.m. Paper ballots must be mailed to the independent service provider and *cannot* be accepted at the co-op office. Any ballots received by the independent service provider after the close of voting will not be counted, so please allow ample time for delivery if sending by mail.

Winners of the election will be announced at Firelands Electric Cooperative's annual meeting on Saturday, June 20, at Ashland University's Myers Convocation Center. Results will also be posted on the co-op's website and published in *Ohio Cooperative Living* magazine.



RIGHT-OF-WAY MAINTENANCE

RIGHT-OF-WAY MAINTENANCE EQUALS RELIABILITY

One of Firelands Electric Cooperative's most essential yearly projects is right-of-way clearing, or vegetation management. Keeping power lines clear of tree limbs and brush helps the co-op:

- Reduce power interruptions
- Improve service reliability
- Restore outages more quickly
- Avoid unexpected and costly repairs
- Create a safer environment for crews and the community

What is a right-of-way?

A right-of-way is the strip of land underneath or around power lines and transformers that Firelands Electric Cooperative has the right and responsibility to maintain and clear. We must keep trees and other vegetation a proper distance from equipment in order to prevent harm to people or disruptions in electric service. Specifications vary, but a general rule of thumb for maintaining a safe right-of-way is 20 feet of clearance on either side of primary lines. The area above poles and wires should be kept completely clear of all vegetation. For pad-mounted transformers (those installed on the ground), shrubs and other plants should be kept a minimum of 10 feet away.

Why is it important?

Trees and small animals cause a substantial number of power outages every year. While the co-op has little control over the animals, our crews can take steps to reduce the impact of downed trees. Clearing the right-of-way is vital to keeping our members' power on. Branches and limbs that come into contact with power lines can cause voltage fluctuations, blinking lights, or even an outage for cooperative members.

Right-of-way clearing also keeps your family safer by ensuring that tree branches and vegetation do not become energized due to close contact with a downed power line or other electrical equipment. With the

ability to carry up to 34,500 volts, a power line touching a tree branch can be incredibly dangerous — even deadly. Be mindful when around trees that are close to power lines and make sure children know that climbing trees near power lines or playing near pad-mounted transformers is extremely dangerous.

How the co-op gets the job done

Firelands Electric maintains 995 miles of line, which bring power to nearly 9,100 homes and businesses. This gives Firelands Electric's right-of-way maintenance crews a big job to do. Each year, we make a plan for tree contractors to work in specific areas of the cooperative's service territory to keep ahead of any potential issues.

If a tree invades the right-of-way, the cooperative's vegetation management team will trim back branches and brush using any combination of chainsaws, bucket trucks, tree climbers, brush chippers, or mowers. We occasionally use chemical control methods to stop low-growing plant species, which can climb and outgrow trees near power lines.

If you have existing trees on your property that are in danger of making contact with the cooperative's power lines, we encourage you to notify us. For more information on the cooperative's vegetation management program, questions about tree trimming, or assistance in selecting the right tree to plant, visit our website at www.firelandsec.com/content/right-way-clearance or contact Firelands Electric's System Right-of-Way Coordinator James Miller at 1-800-533-8658.



James Miller
SYSTEM RIGHT-OF-WAY
COORDINATOR

Plant the Right Tree in the Right Place

Trees beautify our neighborhoods, and when planted in the right spot, can even help lower energy bills. But the wrong tree in the wrong place can be a hazard ... especially to power lines.

LARGE TREES

Height/spread of more than 40 feet, such as:

- Maple
- Oak
- Spruce
- Pine
- Birch
- Sweetgum
- Linden

MEDIUM TREES

Height/spread of 25 to 40 feet, such as:

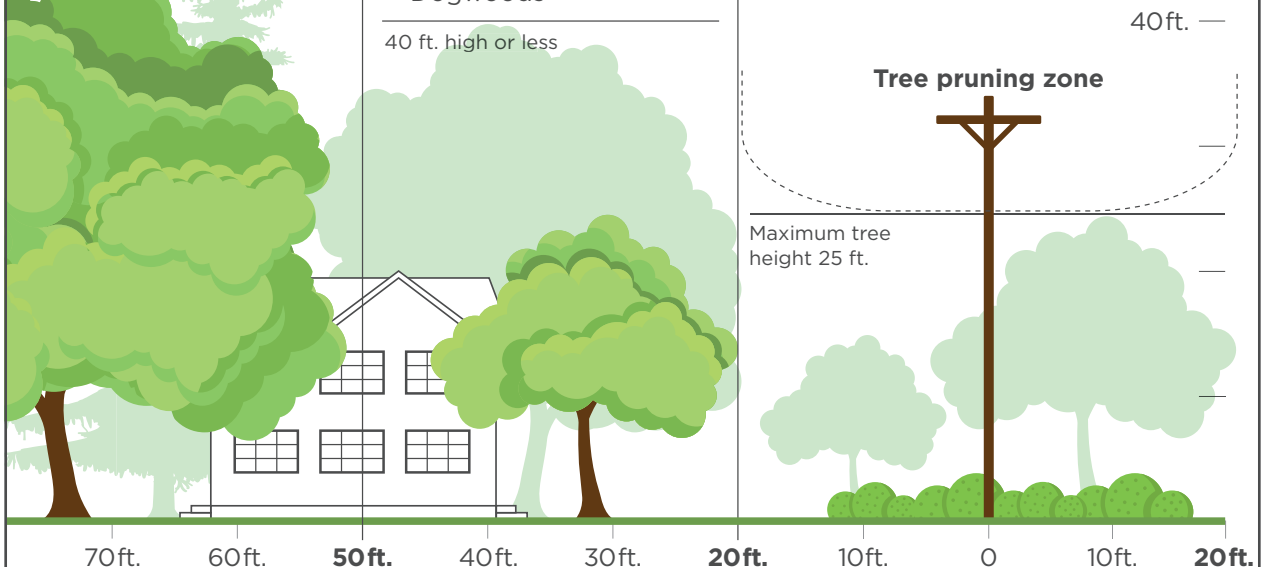
- Washington hawthorn
- Golden rain tree
- Eastern redbud
- American arborvitae
- Dogwoods

SMALL TREES

Height/spread of no more than 25 feet, such as:

- Star magnolia
- Crabapple
- Lilac

Avoid planting within 20 feet of power lines. When planting within 20 feet is unavoidable, use only shrubs and small trees.



Source: The Arbor Day Foundation and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

2020 RIGHT-OF-WAY MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

Vegetation management and right-of-way tree maintenance is tentatively scheduled in 2020 for the following areas and will include brush hogging, cutting, trimming, and any necessary tree removals:

- Ashland County — Ruggles, Orange, Montgomery, Vermilion, and Mohican townships
- Huron County — Greenwich, Ripley, Cass, Blooming Grove, and Fitchville townships
- Lorain County — Rochester Township
- Richland County — Butler Township



REBATE PROGRAMS

SAVE MONEY

WITH FIRELANDS ELECTRIC CO-OP'S REBATES

To encourage members to make energy-smart purchases, your cooperative offers a variety of energy efficiency and load management programs and rebates. Some of Firelands Electric Cooperative's member programs date back over 35 years, and the co-op regularly updates them to reflect advances in technology and energy efficiency.

In addition to offering incentives for geothermal and heat pump systems, electric water heaters, and weatherization upgrades, the cooperative also offers savings on several ENERGY STAR-listed appliances. In July 2019, Firelands Electric introduced a new rebate program for cooperative members who install a Level 2 (240-volt) electric vehicle charger.

Check out the chart at the right for more information on the co-op's current rebates. A complete listing of all Firelands Electric rebate programs and incentives, as well as their specific eligibility requirements, is available at www.firelandsec.com/content/member-programs.

Note: Some rebates and incentives require members to participate in the cooperative's load management program by having a PeakBuster device installed on the applicable appliance.

Put the freeze on home heating costs

Use these tips to save on your energy bills this winter

- Seal air leaks and insulate well to prevent heat from escaping and cold air from entering your home.
- Reduce wasted heat by installing a programmable thermostat.
- Open blinds and curtains during the day to allow incoming sunlight to warm your home. Close them at night to keep cold, drafty air out.
- Change furnace filters at least once a month to keep your heating system running at its most efficient.
- Keep the damper on your fireplace closed when not in use to prevent warm air from going up the chimney.



Firelands Electric Co-op 2019-2020 Member Programs

PROGRAM TYPE	AMOUNT	GENERAL REQUIREMENTS
HVAC SYSTEM & LOAD MANAGEMENT REBATES		
All-Electric geothermal systems	\$800* rebate	Installation of a new or replacement all-electric geothermal or heat pump system with a <u>Cool Returns</u> load management device installed . Communicating systems that are incompatible with the load management device will receive the rebate, less \$100*.
All-Electric heat pump systems	\$500* rebate	
Dual fuel geothermal and air-source heat pump systems	\$300* rebate	
All-Electric ductless or mini-split heat pumps	\$300* rebate	
LOAD MANAGEMENT INCENTIVES		
Central air-conditioning systems	\$100* bill credit	Installation of a <u>Cool Returns</u> load management device on a new or existing central cooling unit that does <u>not</u> qualify for other member program incentives.
ELECTRIC WATER HEATER INCENTIVES		
New standard electric water heaters (no existing switch)	\$300* bill credit	Installation of a new or replacement electric water heater that has a 50-gallon or larger tank capacity, with an E.F. of 0.91 or higher that <u>does not already have a load switch</u> .
Replacement electric water heaters (existing switch)	\$150* bill credit	Same as above, except tank has an existing load management switch installed.
Electric heat pump or communicating water heaters (only available on units incompatible with RCS switch)	\$150* bill credit	Installation of a new or replacement electric heat pump or communicating water heater that meets the energy efficiency standards above.
	\$50* bill credit	Installation of load management device on an electric water heater that doesn't meet the cooperative's energy efficiency standards. Solar and on-demand/tankless water heaters do not qualify for this incentive.
ENERGY STAR APPLIANCE REBATES		
Refrigerator & freezer	\$100* bill credit	Purchase of an ENERGY STAR®-certified appliance to replace an existing appliance. Purchase receipt, proof of removal of old appliance, and proof of ENERGY STAR certification required.
Dishwasher & clothes washer	\$50* bill credit	
Dehumidifier	\$25* bill credit	Installation of an ENERGY STAR®-certified dehumidifier with a minimum capacity of 70 pints/day. Purchase receipt for the new appliance and proof of ENERGY STAR certification required.
WEATHERIZATION REBATES		
Air-sealing upgrades	\$400* Rebate	Air sealing and insulation upgrades must be installed by a licensed contractor. All qualifying upgrades must be installed in an electrically heated residential home and meet or exceed required energy specifications.
Insulation upgrades	\$800* Rebate	
ELECTRIC VEHICLE (EV) REBATES		
NEW! Electric Vehicle (EV) Level 2 Charger	\$250* Rebate	Installation of a new, UL-listed electric vehicle (EV) Level 2 (240-volt) charger. Maximum of two rebates per residential member or six per commercial/industrial facility.

*A complete listing of specific eligibility requirements for all incentives is available on Firelands Electric Cooperative's website, www.firelandsec.com.



CO-OP NEWS

A note of *thanks*

November New London maintenance project a success

I want to express my sincere thanks to all of the members of Firelands Electric who were affected by the Nov. 24 planned power outage in the New London area. I am pleased to report that the cooperative accomplished all of our goals and completed the critical maintenance work that was needed to reduce the risk of extended power outages during harsh winter weather.

Turning off power for most of New London was something we did only as a last resort. We understand it was a significant inconvenience for our membership. Our crews did as much work as possible prior to the outage and rerouted power from other substations to minimize the number of people affected. Unfortunately, the distribution grid was incapable of providing backfed power for the entire New London area.

In October, Firelands Electric's Board of Trustees approved a four-year construction work plan that includes equipment that will make it possible to backfeed 100% of New London's power requirements during outages similar to the one in November.

Shutting down a substation and rerouting power from other substations is a major undertaking filled with many potential dangers to equipment

and crews. I am very grateful that our linemen were able to complete the work on Nov. 24 quickly and safely. With the help of our contractor, New River Electrical Corporation, Firelands' skilled crews were able to finish this potentially day-long project in just five hours.

Thank you again, Firelands members, for your patience and understanding during New London's planned outage, and a special thank you to our office staff and linemen for planning, communicating, and completing this major project.

Dan McNaul
General Manager



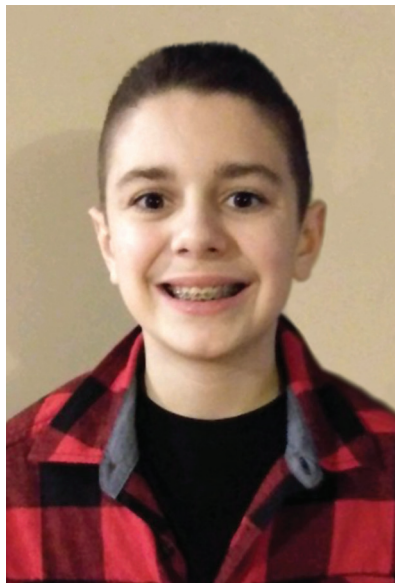
YOUTH PROGRAMS



Education helps shape the leaders of tomorrow. That's why Firelands Electric includes it as one of our seven core principles. Nearly three years ago, the cooperative introduced a program to encourage students in their pursuit of academic excellence. Students in grades 6–8 are invited to become part of “The A Team” and be recognized for their hard work and dedication to education.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Winners of December drawing receive iTunes gift cards



Grayson Donnenwirth
*Crestview Middle School
Son of Andy and Heather
Donnenwirth*



Sophia Hillman
*Ashland Middle School
Daughter of Brian and Julie Hillman*

Send us your grade card and win!
The next drawing will be held on Feb. 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 Co-op 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, the parents' name(s), and email address on your entry.

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



Jacob Packard
*Ashland Middle School
Son of Josh and Wendy Packard*



COOPERATIVE UPDATE

BOARD MEETING *highlights*

Firelands Electric Cooperative's board of trustees met Nov. 26 and covered the following items:

- Board President Dan Schloemer reported that the cooperative received 44 membership applications for approval by the board.
- General Manager Dan McNaull provided a recap of the OEC regional legislative event held Nov. 18 at Firelands Electric's facility.
- The board reviewed and approved a report on a safety meeting held Oct. 16.
- The trustee election process for 2020 was reviewed. Following discussion, the board approved to contract with third-party provider Co-op Ballot, to conduct elections by mail and online voting.
- McNaull asked the board to approve three appointments to the cooperative's People Fund board for 2020. District 1 Trustee Dan Schloemer nominated Mary Reese, District 3 Trustee Steve Gray nominated Donna Woodworth, and District 6 Trustee Kevin Reidy nominated Mike Walter.
- Director of Finance and Accounting Tabi Shepherd reviewed the October financials and reported on recent accounting and billing department activities.
- McNaull reviewed the tree trimming maintenance budget for the remainder of 2019.
- Director of Member Services and Communications Andrea Gravenhorst reported on recent activities involving the member services and IT departments, including recent efforts to publicize the cooperative's new office hours.
- McNaull reviewed the cooperative's monthly outage report for November.
- The board reviewed the final bill from Janotta and Herner for construction of the new facility. It was noted that final costs came in at \$1.06 million less than originally estimated.
- Director of Operations Don Englet reviewed recent activities and projects in the operations department. Englet reported that the work scheduled during the planned power outage in New London on Nov. 24 was completed successfully. He also noted that the estimated six- to eight-hour project was accomplished in under five hours.

The cooperative's next board meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 25, at Firelands Electric's facility, located at 103 Industrial Drive, New London.

FIRELANDS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

OUTAGE HOTLINE

1-800-533-8658

OFFICE

103 Industrial Drive
P.O. Box 32
New London, OH 44851
419-929-1571

OFFICE HOURS

Mon.-Fri. 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
www.firelandsec.com



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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District 3

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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

Firelands
Electric
COOPERATIVE
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative