GM'S REPORT

COOPERATIVES AND THE COMMUNITIES THEY SERVE

"Local" is the hardware store where you get supplies for your newest home improvement project. It's the restaurant where you meet friends for coffee. It's the small grocery store where they greet you by name.

"Local" is also your electric co-op. Owned by the very members it serves, Firelands Electric Cooperative is as local as you and your neighbors. We've grown with you and with your parents and grandparents before you. We're as unique as you are, and we change to meet the evolving needs of our community.

October is National Co-op Month, and electric cooperatives across the country are celebrating the advantages of being local.

No such thing as typical

In the 1930s, rural communities pooled \$5 startup fees, organized member-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives, and convinced politicians to create a federal loan program to help with costs. They accomplished what others couldn't: bringing reliable, affordable electricity to the most remote parts of the country.

Co-ops are an integral part of our local communities, but we're also part of a larger community across the nation. Nine hundred electric co-ops provide power to more than 19 million businesses, homes, schools, and farms. They provide service to more than half the land in the United States, employ 71,000 people, and invest \$12 billion a year in local economies, which generates 5% of the nation's gross domestic product.

Because electric co-ops are so uniquely local, it's difficult to define a typical co-op. They're big and small. The largest electric co-op serves nearly 350,000 members; the smallest, 113. Firelands Electric Cooperative serves over 9,100 homes and businesses.

Despite only serving rural areas in the beginning, electric co-ops have grown over the past eight decades to also include small communities and even cities. About 40% serve counties classified as rural and 60% serve counties classified as metropolitan. The electric co-op with the densest population, for instance, serves 78 members for each mile of line, while the most remote averages

less than one person per mile. Firelands Electric is at the lower end of this range, serving around nine members per mile of line.

Less pollution, more renewable energy

In recent years, co-ops

became more aware of environmental priorities and started to focus on reducing power plant emissions. From 2009 to 2016, co-ops reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 8%, nitrogen oxide emissions by 24%, and sulfur dioxide emissions by 66%.



Dan McNaull GENERAL MANAGER

Electric co-ops are helping to power growth in alternative energy by leading the way in the development of community solar. Co-op solar capacity has more than quadrupled in the past five years, and 17% of co-op electricity now comes from hydroelectric power, solar, wind, and other renewable sources. Like co-ops around the country, Firelands Electric strives to be the primary source of reliable information for members considering rooftop solar. Our goal is to help members make the best decisions for their specific situation.

Electric co-ops are adapting again as COVID-19 changes everything from how we work to how we say hello to our neighbors. We've modified a lot of things this year, from our annual meeting to everyday work practices, to ensure that safety takes top priority, while continuing to provide our members with affordable, reliable electric service.

The world keeps changing, and electric co-ops will continue to adapt. Each co-op's approach may differ, but they'll do whatever it takes to adjust in ways that make the most sense for the people in their community. *That's* what it means to be a local electric cooperative.

COOPERATIVE CONTESTS



NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH **CONTEST ENTRY FORM**

Please complete the information below and mail your entry to: Co-op Month Contest, Firelands Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 32, New London, OH 44851.

Entries may also be completed online at www.firelandsec.com/contests. Deadline to enter is 4 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 2.

Member's name		
Service address		
City/State/ZIP		
Phone		
 Email		

October is National Co-op Month — and Firelands Electric is celebrating with a special prize drawing!

The National Co-op Month Contest is open to all members of Firelands Electric. Submitted entries will be placed into a drawing for a chance to win one of five prizes.

Grand prize: 32-inch Vizio LED Smart HDTV

Four honorable mentions: 32 GB Fire HD 8-inch tablet

Simply complete the form at left and return to: Co-op Month Contest, Firelands Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 32, New London, OH 44851. Forms may also be completed online at www.firelandsec.com/contests. Entries must be received by 4 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 2, and are limited to one per member. Winners' names will be published in the December issue of Ohio Cooperative Living magazine.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

The A Team recognizes students in grades 6-8 for their hard work and dedication to education. Students whose parents or quardians are members of Firelands Electric Cooperative and who have a minimum of three A's on their most recent report card are eligible to enter.

A drawing will take place at the end of each grading period, and three students will be chosen to receive an Amazon gift card. Winners will also have their photo published in an upcoming issue of Ohio Cooperative Living magazine and be featured on the co-op's website and social media outlets.

The deadline for the next drawing is Dec. 10. Visit www.firelandsec.com/team for complete details.

OPERATIONS

PROTECTING OUR POLES

Most of us drive by rows of utility poles every day. But how much do we really notice them? These oftenoverlooked watchmen play an important role in delivering reliable power to the members of Firelands Electric Cooperative. In fact, it takes over 25,800 utility poles to support the nearly 1,000 miles of lines that provide electricity to the more than 9,100 homes and businesses served by the co-op. That's why it's so critical for the co-op to protect and maintain these poles.



Basketball hoops, deer stands, and other unauthorized items should never be attached to utility poles. They not only create a hazard for linemen, but also cause the poles to deteriorate faster.

Wind and storms have an obvious effect on utility poles — sometimes snapping them right in half — but other elements of nature can also have negative consequences. Excessive moisture, insects, and woodpeckers can cause poles to deteriorate. People can be harmful to poles as well, even if they don't intend to. Anytime a nail, staple, or other fastener is attached, it creates an additional pathway

for water and insects to access and weaken the pole. This is one of the primary reasons that it is illegal to attach anything other than authorized electrical equipment to a utility pole. Anything else — such as advertisements, posters, deer stands, birdhouses, or basketball hoops — can lead to damage and will be removed by the cooperative's employees.

In addition to reducing the life of the pole, unauthorized attachments can also pose a hazard to Firelands Electric's linemen. Nails, tacks, and screws can tear their essential protective gear, like rubber gloves or flame-retardant

clothing, exposing workers to the risk of electrical shock. Signage is also dangerous for the general community, because it can block the view at busy intersections.

As part of Firelands Electric's work plan, utility poles are inspected on a regular basis. This summer, the cooperative contracted Wright's Inspection Services to examine roughly 4,000 poles in the New London and Nova areas. To check their condition, poles are exposed just below the surface and examined for decay or damage, as seen in the photo below. Those that show signs of weakening are then placed onto the co-op's list to be repaired or replaced, depending on the exact nature of the problem.

Regular inspections, along with avoiding unapproved attachments, helps prolong the lifespan of utility poles. A well-maintained pole can last 20 to 30 years — sometimes even longer — and allows Firelands Electric Cooperative to continue providing the safe, reliable, affordable power our members depend on.

If you have questions or concerns about a Firelands Electric utility pole or a possibly illegal attachment to a pole, contact our Operations Department at 1-800-533-8658 or email operations@firelandsec.com.



Periodic testing helps Firelands Electric Cooperative identify utility poles that are weak or damaged, like the one shown above. The co-op adds these poles to its work plan so that they can be replaced.



CAPITAL CREDITS

NOTICE OF UNCLAIMED FUNDS

Official notice is given that the following current or former patrons have cash retirements of capital credits or other payments from Firelands Electric Cooperative that have gone unclaimed for more than four years. According to Article VIII, Section 3, of the Code of Regulations, unless claim is made within 60 days of the second publication of this list, such funds will become an irrevocable gift and assignment by such patron to the cooperative. Inquiries should be directed to Firelands Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 32, New London, Ohio 44851, or by phone at 1-800-533-8658.

This is the first of two notices.

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Continued on page 20D

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FIRELANDS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LOCAL PAGES

Continued from page 20C

EDWARDS, PATRICIA H EDWARDS, ROBERT EDWARDS, WILLARD EIBEL, THOMAS A EICHENLAUB, JACK **ELLIS. SUSAN** EMIG, STANLEY E EMRATH, EDWARD R ENNEMOSER, LEO R ERICSSON, JOHN H **ERSWELL. LAURA** ETZWILER, JUDY EVANS, CAROL EVANS, ROBERT W EVANS, JEFFERY, JR EVEGE, CHASITY S EVENER, CHARLES J EWELL, WILLIAM H FAITH, JANE E FAMILY INITIATIVES OF **HURON COUNTY INC** FANNIN, SHELLEY A FANNIN, BOYD A, JR FARNSWORTH, VIRGINIA FARR, DEBRA A FASSNACHT, DAVID M FEATHERINGILL, DAVID FERNYAK, JOHN C FERRELL, LACK FERRELL, HUGH D, II FETZER, JAMES C FETZER, RON D FEURER, CLARK M FIDLER, EDWIN R FIGLEY, DEAN FINKEL, DENNIS FINLEY, DOROTHY FINLEY, RICHARD M FISH, RUSSELL FISHER, BARBARA J FITZGERALD, LARRY V FLEMING, MICHAEL R FLIGER, ANNELIESE E FLORAL LODGE 260 F & AM FOCKLER, TOM FONTENOT, LESLIE A

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Continued on page 20F

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FIRELANDS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LOCAL PAGES

Continued from page 20E

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Continued on page 20H



FIRELANDS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LOCAL PAGES

Continued from page 20G

STEFANO, JOHN H STEIN, JUDITH STEINER, JONATHAN J STEPHENS, CHRISTA STEPHENS, JAMES STERLING, THOMAS A STEVENS, JAMES M STEVENS, MICHAEL, JR STEWARD, LINN STILES, BETTY C STIMMELL. MIKE STOCKING, JO ANN STOLTZ, NOEL O STONE. EMERALD G STONEHAM, BLANCHE M STONER, KIM STOPE, HILDA STORROW, PATIENCE N STOTTS, WILLIAM STOUT, ROBERT C STRAKA, ARTHUR STRECKER, PAUL J STRENG, JEFFERY L STROMANN, THOMAS D STUMBO, VERONDA SUAREZ, JOSE F SUBICH, PAULINE E SUKOLA, PATRICIA SUMLER, DAN SUTTER, RICKY A, SR SWAFFORD, LARRY E SWERT, ROBIN SWICK, LYNNE K SWINEHART, JASPER H TABAR, ELLEN TABOR, WYLIE TALBOTT, JAMES B, JR TALLMAN, DOROTHEA J TAYLER, PAMELA J **TEAL ENVIROMENTAL CONTRACTING INC** TEDROW, DUANE E TEMPLE, MICHAEL R TENNANT, MARK TESSARI, MARK A

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THE CRESTFORD GROUP

EMPLOYEE NEWS

LISA HAYNES-WAHL CELEBRATES **10-YEAR MILESTONE**

Consumer Services Representative Lisa Haynes-Wahl will observe her 10th anniversary with Firelands Electric Cooperative this month. Lisa started at the co-op as a part-time billing clerk in 2009 and transitioned to her current full-time position in October 2010.

As a consumer services representative, Lisa processes payments, answers billing questions, and serves as a liaison with community agencies.

"Working to help members find a positive outcome to their billing questions or energy use concerns is always rewarding," Lisa says.

"Lisa works very hard to give Firelands' members the best customer service," General Manager Dan McNaull says. "She is always cheerful, extremely knowledgeable, and genuinely cares about the co-op's members."

Lisa graduated from Lorain County Community College with a degree in business management/business administration. When not at Firelands Electric, Lisa likes spending time with her family and two dogs, reading, and working in her flower beds.



Lisa Haynes-Wahl CONSUMER SERVICES REPRESENTATIVE

YOUR SOLAR PARTNER



Solar panels in Ohio typically produce 1,250 kWh per year for every one kilowatt-direct current (kW-DC) of installed capacity.



Firelands Electric Cooperative is here to help you reach your energy goals. Contact us at 1-800-533-8658 or visit www.ohiosolar101.com/fec to get started.



COOPERATIVE UPDATE

BOARD MEETING highlights

Firelands Electric Cooperative's board of trustees met *July 28 and covered the following items:*

- Director of Operations Don Englet reviewed recent activities and projects in the operations department.
- The board reviewed and approved a report from a safety meeting held June 12, which included a summary of OSHA's written safety and health programs.
- General Manager Dan McNaull discussed the results of the co-op's onsite review for the 2020 Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program. He reported that the co-op was commended by the observation team for its improvement in several areas.
- Director of Finance and Accounting Tabi Shepherd reviewed the June financials and reported on recent accounting and billing department activities, including the reinstatement of disconnections and late fees on July 13.
- McNaull reviewed the outage report for June and the status of the 2020 tree trimming program.

- Trustee Kevin Reidy reported on an OREC meeting he attended earlier in July.
- The board discussed the co-op's current coronavirus safety practices in the office and in the field. In light of the pandemic, the board decided to cancel this fall's ACRE for Co-op Owners breakfast. The board will consider holding the event again in 2021.
- Director of Communications and Technology Andrea Gravenhorst reported on recent activities involving the member services and IT departments, which included the cooperative's rebate programs and the updated website scheduled to go live by the first of August.

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 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 27, 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





















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