



GM'S REPORT

The *dedication* of an electric lineman

Lineman Appreciation Day is April 8

Studies consistently rank those who install and repair power lines as having one of the most dangerous jobs in the nation — and for good reason. Laboring high in the air while wearing heavy equipment and working directly with high voltage creates the perfect storm of a dangerous and unforgiving profession. But electric lineworkers across the country are up to the task. These men and women are committed to safety as well as the challenges of the job.

Firelands Electric Cooperative's linemen are responsible for keeping power flowing day and night, regardless of holidays, vacations, birthdays, or other important family milestones. Beyond the years of specialized training and apprenticeships, it takes internal fortitude and a mission-oriented outlook to be a good lineman. In fact, this service-oriented mentality is a hallmark characteristic of linemen. The job requires that they set aside their personal priorities to better serve their local community.

Family support system

To perform their jobs successfully, linemen depend on their years of training, experience, and each other to get the job done safely.

Equally important is their reliance on a strong support system at home. A lineman's family understands and supports their loved one's commitment to the greater community during severe storms and power outages.

This means in times of prolonged outages, the family and their lineman may not see each other for several days. Without strong family support and understanding, this challenging job would be all the more difficult.

Community commitment

In Firelands Electric's service territory and across the country, the mission-focused mentality of helping others often extends beyond the lineman's commitment to their work at the electric cooperative. Linemen are often familiar figures in the community. They can be found coaching youth sports teams, volunteering for local charities, and serving on local advisory boards.

For instance, several members of Firelands' line crews are volunteer firefighters in the community. Others serve on their school's board of education, hold a position on the county fair board, or lend a hand at 4-H camp every summer.

Thank you

Monday, April 8, is Lineman Appreciation Day. Given the dedication of Firelands Electric Cooperative's linemen, both on and off the job, I encourage you to take a moment and acknowledge the many contributions they make to our local community. And if you see their family members in the grocery store or out and about, please offer them a thank you as well.



Dan McNaul
GENERAL MANAGER





IN THE COMMUNITY

STORY BY W. H. "CHIP" GROSS

NEW NESTING PLATFORMS

AWAITING EAGLES AND OSPREYS AT PLEASANT HILL LAKE PARK

For the staff at Pleasant Hill Lake Park, winters are usually a more relaxed time of year, filled with routine park maintenance and planning for the next busy summer season. The past two winters, however, have been anything but typical.

The park has been a blur of activity: A new campground opened last summer, and the previously existing campground got some sorely needed upgrades. Ten new vacation cabins are currently under construction and scheduled to open to the public in 2020.

The needs of wildlife have not been forgotten, either. New eagle and osprey nesting structures were erected over the winter and are now awaiting their feathery tenants.

"The park already had three existing nesting platforms," says Louie Andres, park naturalist. "During the past few months, one was relocated and two more were added."

The work was accomplished in partnership with Firelands Electric Cooperative and the Greater Mohican Audubon Society.

"The platform we relocated had been severely damaged by ice on the lake, to the point it was bent almost 90 degrees," Andres says. "I don't know how the pair of ospreys using the platform last year pulled off a successful nesting, but they did. We relocated that platform closer to shore, so hopefully now it won't experience significant ice damage in the future."

Last year at least two eaglets were produced from the eagle nest at the park, and three to four young birds were fledged from the osprey nests. "Ospreys have been successfully nesting on the lake for a little over a decade," Andres says, "and bald eagles for the past three years."

The 18th annual Mohican Wildlife Weekend April 26–28 should be a good time to see eagles and ospreys checking out the new nesting platforms. "The theme this year is Pick Your Path," Andres says. "We're highlighting all the trails in the area for horse, foot, mountain bike, water, and roads — so many trails to explore in this greater Mohican country."

The weekend includes a full slate of outdoor activities spread over several counties. It begins with a keynote address by Tom Arbour of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources on Friday at Mohican State Park Lodge. Arbour, the land and water trails coordinator for the Division of Parks and Watercraft, coordinates a project to inventory all types of trails across Ohio as part of a national initiative.

An osprey prepares to land at one of five nesting platforms at Pleasant Hill Lake Park. The structures were completed in partnership with Firelands Electric Cooperative and the Greater Mohican Audubon Society. Photo by Irv Oslin.



For a complete listing of events at a dozen different sites, go online to www.mohicanwildlifeweekend.com.

If for some reason you have to miss Mohican Wildlife Weekend, Andres adds that the programs planned at the campgrounds this summer are not just for campers. "For example, nearly every Saturday evening from Memorial Day through Labor Day, we'll be having some sort of live-music event open to the public, and you don't have to be camping to enjoy the activities. So come visit us this summer at Pleasant Hill Lake Park — we'd love to see you!"

Most programs at the park are free, but front gate admission and camping fees may apply. For a listing of 2019 events, go online to www.pleasanthillpark.mwcd.org. Pleasant Hill Lake Park is part of the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District, a system of 16 lakes and dams built in eastern Ohio during the 1930s for flood control and outdoor recreation.

W.H. "Chip" Gross (whchipgross@gmail.com) is Ohio Cooperative Living's outdoors editor.



A bald eagle and red-winged blackbird perch atop a tree at Pleasant Hill Lake Park in Perrysville. Photo by W.H. "Chip" Gross.



One free, easy call gets your utility lines marked AND helps protect you from injury and expense.

The Firelands Electric Cooperative office will be closed April 19 in observance of Good Friday.

Happy Easter from
Firelands Electric
COOPERATIVE
Your Touchstone Energy® Partner





YOUTH PROGRAMS

Co-op awards **\$10,600** in college scholarships



Benjamin Schafer — First place
Monroeville High School



Leah Carnegie — First place
Loudonville High School

Benjamin Schafer of Monroeville High School and Leah Carnegie of Loudonville High School have been selected as the first-place winners of \$1,500 scholarships in the 2019 Senior Scholarship Contest sponsored by Firelands Electric Cooperative.

Schafer was also selected as the top overall applicant and will participate in a statewide contest on April 11 at Ohio's Electric Cooperatives in Columbus. At this event, he will compete with representatives from Ohio's 24 other rural electric co-ops for a chance to win an additional scholarship worth up to \$3,650.

Schafer is the son of Donald and Annette Schafer of Willard and plans to major in aerospace engineering. He is currently undecided as to which college he will attend in the fall. Carnegie is the daughter of Ronald and Kendra Carnegie of Loudonville. She plans to attend Ohio Northern University next fall and pursue a degree in pharmacy.

Second-place winners of \$1,250 each are Maria Phillips of Seneca East High School and Tyler Sherer of South Central High School. Phillips is the daughter of Richard and Barbara Phillips of Willard. She is currently

undecided as to which college she will attend but plans to study applied health science. Sherer is the son of Larry and Tammy Sherer of North Fairfield. He plans to major in nursing or biology at Ashland University in the fall.

Third-place winners of \$1,000 each are Emily Niswander of Lucas High School and Justin Robinson of Plymouth High School. Niswander is the daughter of Chad and Megan Niswander of Lucas. She plans to attend Capital University in the fall, with a major in nursing. Robinson is the son of Jason and Rachel Robinson of Willard. He plans to study civil engineering at Cedarville University.

Fourth-place winners of \$750 each are Emily Crossen of Hillsdale High School and Joshua Mayer of South Central High School. Crossen is the daughter of Jeff and Jennifer Crossen of Ashland. She plans to attend the University of Rio Grande next fall, majoring in early and special education. Mayer is the son of Glen and Donna Mayer of Greenwich. He plans to major in political science and pre-law in the fall. He is currently undecided as to which college he will attend.

Fifth-place winners of \$500 each are Malorie Kinney of Clearfork High School and William Holmes of Hillsdale High School. Kinney is the daughter of Steve and Cathy Kinney of Ashland. She plans to attend Northern Kentucky University in the fall and major in nursing. Holmes is the son of John and Jackie Holmes of Hayesville. He plans to study mathematics and software engineering at Edinboro University.



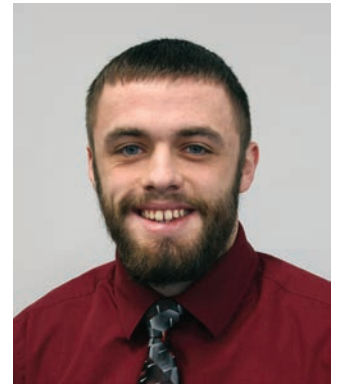
Judges' Choice winners of \$300 each are Gabrielle Ledbetter of New London High School and Owen Reef of Ashland High School. Ledbetter is the daughter of Raymond and Melissa Ledbetter of New London. She plans to attend Capital University in the fall and study mathematics. Reef is the son of Jamie and Amy Reef of Ashland. He plans to major in sports management at Baldwin Wallace University.

Firelands Electric Cooperative, a Touchstone Energy partner, is a member-owned, not-for-profit electric utility serving 9,100 members in the rural areas of Ashland, Huron, Lorain, and Richland counties. Firelands' scholarship contest is offered annually to children of members who are graduating high school seniors and reside in a home served by the cooperative. Firelands was pleased to have received applications this year from students attending Ashland, Clearfork, Hillsdale, Loudonville, Lucas, Mansfield Senior, Monroeville, New London, Plymouth, Seneca East, South Central, Willard, and Wooster high schools.

For more information about the cooperative's youth programs and scholarship opportunities, visit www.firelandsec.com/content/youth-programs.



Maria Phillips — Second place
Seneca East High School



Tyler Sherer — Second place
South Central High School



Emily Niswander — Third place
Lucas High School



Justin Robinson — Third place
Plymouth High School



Emily Crossen — Fourth place
Hillsdale High School



Joshua Mayer — Fourth place
South Central High School



Malorie Kinney — Fifth place
Clearfork High School



William Holmes — Fifth place
Hillsdale High School



Gabrielle Ledbetter — Judges' Choice
New London High School



Owen Reef — Judges' Choice
Ashland High School



YOUTH PROGRAMS



Education helps shape the leaders of tomorrow. That's why Firelands Electric includes it as one of our seven core principles. At the beginning of 2017, the cooperative introduced a new 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 February drawing receive iTunes gift cards



Zuri Immel
Norwalk Main Street
Intermediate School
Daughter of Justin and Brooke Immel



Allie Wilhelm
St. Joseph Catholic Middle School
Daughter of Dan and Jackie Wilhelm

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



Jada Deel
Willard Middle School
Daughter of Lisa Deel and Dana Deel

EMPLOYEE NEWS



Diane White
OPERATIONS ASSISTANT

DIANE WHITE PLANS RETIREMENT

After 26 years of service with Firelands Electric, Operations Assistant Diane White will be retiring from the co-op April 4.

Diane has served Firelands Electric's members in several different roles since 1991. She spent time in the operations and billing departments from 1991 through 1999. After a two-year hiatus to minister to teens, Diane returned to the cooperative as a part-time billing clerk in 2001.

In 2014, Diane was promoted to her current position of full-time operations assistant. She has been responsible for processing underground equipment location requests for the Ohio Utilities Protection Service, setting up electric service for new members, and coordinating new construction with the engineering staff. Diane

also handled crew dispatching and assisted the billing department as needed.

Serving the cooperative's members has been one of Diane's favorite aspects of her years at Firelands Electric. "We are always trying to find new ways to make information more easily available for members," she says, "and the co-op makes every effort to improve all the services it provides."

After retirement, Diane plans to devote more time to volunteering in the community. For the past several years, she has been teaching English as a second language (ESL). The program, which is held in conjunction with the Willard Alliance Church, is designed to assist adult students with communicating effectively in English.

Diane lives in the Willard area with her husband, Bob, who is also retired. The couple intend to travel after Diane's retirement and spend more time with extended family, including their eight children and four grandchildren.

TABI SHEPHERD CELEBRATES 20 YEARS

Tabi Shepherd joined Firelands Electric Cooperative as the work order and cost accountant in April 1999. After moving to the position of accountant in 2001, she continued her education and received a bachelor's degree in business management from Ashland University in 2006.



Tabi Shepherd
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE
AND ACCOUNTING

Promoted to director of finance and accounting in the fall of 2007, Tabi currently oversees the financial records and reporting for Firelands Electric Cooperative. She handles generating and balancing various monthly and yearly statements, as well as preparing reports for the co-op's board of trustees. These records help the board and employees make decisions that keep the co-op financially healthy.

Tabi also supervises the accounting and billing departments at Firelands Electric. This includes the employees who process bills and payments, handle accounts payable and receivable, and manage our metering system.

"I work with a great group of employees," Tabi says. "They are genuinely dedicated to the cooperative's members and providing the best service possible."

Even after 20 years, Tabi says she still enjoys learning something new every day. Advances in technology continue to change how the co-op keeps track of and processes financial and energy use information. "We are always incorporating new methods to improve efficiency within the co-op and make it easier for our members to monitor their electricity consumption," Tabi says.

Tabi and her husband, David, have been married 21 years and live in the rural Greenwich area. The couple has a 12-year-old son, Garrett. In her free time, Tabi enjoys reading, spending time with her family, and caring for their household's three dogs and seven goats.



FIRELANDS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LOCAL PAGES

CO-OP NEWS



Firelands
Electric
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GET A BEHIND-THE-SCENES LOOK AT YOUR CO-OP'S NEW FACILITY

Firelands Electric is inviting cooperative members to visit the new facility during an open house event later this month.

Open to members of Firelands Electric Cooperative and their immediate families, the event is scheduled for Saturday, April 27, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Check out this list of activities that will be offered:

- Take a tour of the new all-in-one facility
- Enjoy hot dogs, sandwiches, chips, cookies, and ice cream
- Watch safety demonstrations
- Participate in a wide variety of children's activities
- Receive a free gift and enter for a chance to win one of several prizes



CO-OP NEWS

AUCTION PLANNED

Firelands Electric Cooperative has contracted with Andy Suvar Auctions to sell surplus office furnishings, equipment, shelving, and numerous other items at its former office and warehouse facilities.

The auction will take place at 1 Energy Place, New London, on Saturday, April 20, starting at 10 a.m.

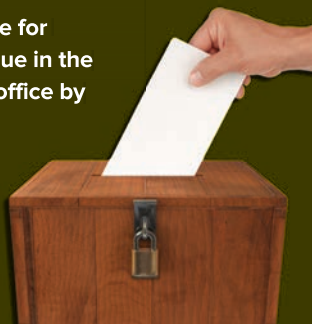
Additional photos of items available may be viewed by visiting www.flickr.com/photos/firelandsec/albums.



BOARD PETITION REMINDER

Petitions to become a candidate for board districts 4, 5, and 8 are due in the Firelands Electric Cooperative office by 4 p.m. on Friday, April 12.

Visit www.firelandsec.com or call 1-800-533-8658 for more information.





OUTAGE RESTORATION

Battling the winter wind

Strong gusts cause widespread power outages

On Sunday, Feb. 24, strong winds affected electric utilities throughout Ohio. Widespread damage to trees, power lines, and utility poles resulted in around 1,200 outages for Firelands Electric Cooperative and over 13,000 for electric co-op members across the Buckeye state.

Wind gusts exceeding 67 mph made restoration efforts difficult, and Firelands' line crews worked throughout the night to assess damage and make repairs. Many of the power outages involved downed trees and impacted just one or two members, creating additional challenges for the co-op's linemen and tree crews.

As of 7:15 a.m. on Monday, Feb. 25, Firelands Electric's crews were able to restore power to most of the cooperative's service territory, with just 110 outages remaining in Ashland and Richland counties. The Yacht Point and Shore Drive areas at Charles Mill suffered heavy line damage due to several broken utility poles, so these areas involved a lengthier repair process.

Several cooperatives in Ohio sought assistance from other co-ops or electric contractors to complete their restoration efforts on Monday. Firelands Electric enlisted a contractor, LineTec Services, to assist the cooperative with repairing the remaining damage. By the end of the day, only one outage remained. This particular situation, in a difficult-to-access area near Mifflin, required a tracked machine and several Firelands linemen to complete a tricky pole replacement.

"Our operations employees greatly appreciate our members' support during this storm. They had a long day in some very trying weather conditions, but still gave 110 percent to restore power as safely and quickly as possible," says Firelands General Manager Dan McNaul.



As a reminder, always use extreme caution while traveling during and after storms. Outage updates are available at Firelands Electric's website, www.firelandsec.com.

Always notify Firelands Electric Cooperative of any outages or downed power lines within the cooperative's service territory by calling 1-800-533-8658.

integrity
accountability

community commitment
innovation

We want
to HEAR
FROM

YOU!

Your thoughts and opinions
about Firelands Electric
Cooperative help us
serve you better.

In April, Firelands Electric Cooperative
will be working with NRECA Market
Research Services to complete a member
satisfaction survey.

The surveys will be both by phone and
email, but not everyone will be contacted.
If you are contacted, we would greatly
appreciate a few minutes of your time to
share your opinions of the cooperative.

We strive to provide all members with
safe, affordable, reliable, and clean electric
service. By participating in the survey,
you will help us make decisions that
benefit you, your family, and your neighbors.

Thank you!

Firelands
Electric
COOPERATIVE

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

All information is confidential.



COOPERATIVE UPDATE

BOARD MEETING *highlights*

Firelands Electric Cooperative's board of trustees met Jan. 29 and covered the following items:

- Board President Dan Schloemer reported the cooperative received 36 membership applications for approval by the board.
- Director of Finance and Accounting Tabi Shepherd reviewed the December financials and reported on recent accounting and billing department activities.
- The board reviewed a report for a safety and training meeting held on Jan. 16.
- General Manager Dan McNaull presented plans for an open house at the cooperative's new facility. Following discussion, the board voted to proceed with an event for members on Saturday, April 27.
- The board moved to have Andy Suvar Auctions handle the sale of surplus equipment and supplies from the former office and warehouse facilities.
- McNaull reviewed the cooperative's strategic planning report with the board.
- The board discussed several possible changes to the cooperative's code of regulations. Potential changes

will be presented and voted upon by the cooperative's membership at the annual meeting on June 22.

- Director of Electric Operations Don Englet reviewed recent projects and crew activities in the operations department.
- Director of Member Services and Communications Andrea Gravenhorst reported on recent activities involving the member services department.
- The board voted to contribute to the Samaritan Hospital Foundation. The donation, which supports the new urgent care facility being constructed in New London, will be at the rate \$1,000 per year for five years. A room at the facility will be designated as sponsored by the cooperative.

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, April 23, at Firelands Electric's new 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. 8 a.m.-5 p.m.
www.firelandsec.com



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GENERAL MANAGER

Dan McNaull

HAVE A STORY SUGGESTION?

Email your ideas to:
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