



GM'S REPORT

PATRIOTISM IN ACTION

Patriotism, according to Merriam-Webster's dictionary, is "love for or devotion to one's country." Perhaps no other day of the year evokes such a sense of patriotism as Independence Day. With flags rippling in the wind; red, white, and blue bunting adorning porches and storefronts; and local parades with marching bands on display, it's easy to feel a swell of pride for our country. Arguably, another — perhaps deeper — form of patriotism is active engagement in public and civic life.

Involvement in your community promotes a richer life and ensures that institutions thrive and communities remain vibrant, inviting places to live, work, and play. Besides being enjoyable, your participation in community events and activities along with your friends, neighbors, and co-workers makes a difference. Simple things like supporting a bake sale or attending a local high school event signals to the young people in your community that you care and support them, and that the community itself is worth sustaining.

In fact, there are civic engagement opportunities through Firelands Electric. You may recall that one of our most important cooperative principles is that of democratic participation. If you pay your bill, you are a member of the co-op with an opportunity to provide input through voting during our annual meeting.

While providing safe, reliable, and affordable electricity is our top priority, we are exploring other needs that might not be met otherwise — renewable energy options such as community solar, for instance, and access to high-speed broadband. We make decisions based on long-term thinking: What can we do to benefit the larger community in which we operate? One of the best ways is by casting your vote when it's time to elect board members and local, state, and national representatives. Many of these folks seeking office are just like you,

from our community, who provide guidance on a myriad of issues and decisions both short- and long-term.

Perhaps you haven't voted in the past because you didn't think you were qualified to weigh in on a particular topic, or maybe you simply didn't have time to vote. But you do have an opinion on the issues that affect our community, state, and country, and your contribution in the form of a vote or communication with elected representatives is important.

Everyone has valuable experience that informs their decision-making process. Diverse perspectives benefit the whole community. You may have a different view than your neighbor, but together, those perspectives provide a more balanced view and consensus of the direction of the community.

I would argue that voting, whether in the cooperative or in local and national elections, is a form of patriotism — it reflects a devotion to one's community and commitment to ensure that the community thrives.

Democracy is not a spectator sport; it takes active civic engagement by citizens to thrive. This Independence Day, I hope you will embrace the local celebrations and actively participate in your community — and vote at every opportunity!



Dan McNaull
GENERAL MANAGER



IN THE COMMUNITY

GROWING GREEN

BY TRACY GIBB

During a trip to Disney's EPCOT in 1983, Doug and Katy Kern got their first glimpse of hydroponics, a method of growing plants using a nutrient and water solution instead of soil. The couple remained intrigued by this "garden of the future" over the next three decades and, in 2013, built their own hydroponics greenhouse, known as Bradwood Farm.

The Kerns' 5,000-square-foot facility houses over 9,000 plants, which are raised entirely in a perfectly balanced mixture of water, minerals, and nutrients. Twelve hundred gallons of solution continuously circulate through a series of tubes to supply lettuce, greens, herbs, tomatoes, and cucumbers with the exact nutrients they need. A sophisticated computer system monitors the solution, making sure the nutrient blend and pH levels stay consistent. "This process also allows us to use 80 percent less water than that needed for field-grown plants," Katy says.

A second computer system regulates the environmental conditions of the greenhouse, keeping an eye on the temperature and humidity levels. If needed, the system can open or close vents, turn on fans, or adjust the furnace. This state-of-the-art setup allows the Kerns to offer fresh, pesticide-free produce year-round. In addition, greens are harvested with their roots intact, helping maintain freshness for up to two weeks in the refrigerator — much longer than traditional cut greens.

A large portion of Bradwood Farm's produce is sold through a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program in Columbus. Those who subscribe, or join, the CSA can purchase local, fresh, seasonal food directly from farmers. The farm's products are also available at

several local markets, including Wayne's Market in Mansfield, Village Point Market in Haysville, Miller's-Hawkins Market in Ashland, and Miller's Market in Norwalk. Every summer, you can find the Kerns at the Hudson Farmers Market, where they are known for their romaine lettuce and leafy green baby mix. "When you pick the mix, it's like picking a complete salad," Doug says.

The couple is always looking for ways to diversify by trying new types of produce and offering additional goods and services. Two years ago the Kerns started raising hops for microbreweries. They're also putting the finishing touches on a commercial kitchen in order to offer classes or tasting parties in the future.

Bradwood Farm is located at 1306 Township Road 608 outside of Savannah and can be reached at 419-962-9210 or info@bradwoodfarm.com. They can also be found at www.bradwoodfarm.com and by searching for Bradwood Farm LTD on Facebook.

Places & Faces is a monthly feature showcasing people, businesses, and organizations located throughout the Firelands Electric Cooperative service territory.



Katy and Doug Kern grow more than 20 varieties of lettuce and leafy greens, as well as tomatoes and cucumbers, in their greenhouse.



**Places
& Faces**
of Firelands Electric

Katy holds a lettuce seedling, which will later be planted in one of the hydroponics trays seen in the background.

REBATE PROGRAMS

MEMBER SAVINGS!

Firelands Electric is offering NEW member programs and rebates

To encourage members in making energy-smart purchases, your cooperative offers a variety of energy efficiency and load management programs. Some of Firelands Electric Cooperative's member programs date back over 35 years, and the cooperative constantly updates them to reflect advances in energy efficiency and power delivery.

In addition to offering incentives for appliances, geothermal and heat pump systems, lighting, and weatherization upgrades, the cooperative is further expanding its programs this month to offer even more savings for its members.

Several additions include communicating and ductless HVAC systems, dehumidifiers, heat pump water heaters, and commercial/industrial equipment rebates.

Complete details are available at www.firelandsec.com/content/member-programs and will be included in the August issue of *Ohio Cooperative Living* magazine. Be sure to check them out next month!



Have a wonderful and safe holiday!

The Firelands Electric Co-op office will be closed on

Wednesday, July 4

in observance of Independence Day. As always, emergency service is available 24/7 by calling 1-800-533-8658.

DANGER!

OUTLET OVERLOAD

Every year, U.S. fire departments respond to an estimated 25,900 home electrical fires. These fires cause an estimated 280 deaths, 1,125 injuries, and \$1.1 billion in property loss. Thirty-nine percent of home electrical fires involve outlets, receptacles, and other electrical wiring.

To ensure your safety, you should only use about 80 percent of the available current for each electrical outlet in your home. Are you overloading outlets?

Use this formula to find out: $WATTAGE/VOLTS = AMPS$.





COOPERATIVE UPDATE

BOARD MEETING *highlights*

Firelands Electric Cooperative's board of trustees met on April 24 and covered the following items:

- Board President Dan Schloemer reported the cooperative received 29 membership applications for approval by the board.
- The board reviewed safety and training reports for meetings held April 3 and April 5.
- Journeyman Lineman Chris Rowland thanked the board and management for allowing him to participate in the Project Ohio Guatemala mission. He reported on his trip, which was part of the Ohio's Electric Cooperative's statewide effort to electrify the villages of Las Tortugas and San Jorge. Chris expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to make such a significant contribution to the welfare of the village residents, who benefited from the electrification.
- Director of Finance and Accounting Tabi Shepherd reviewed March financials and reported on accounting and billing department activities.
- General Manager Dan McNaull further discussed options for the 2018 capital credits retirements with the board. Following review and discussion, the

board decided that Firelands Electric Cooperative will retire \$600,000 in general retirement, on a first-in, first-out basis.

- The board approved the credentials committee for the 2018 annual meeting election.
- Dan McNaull provided an update on construction of the new facility to the board.
- The board reviewed reports prepared by Director of Electric Operations Don Englet on recent projects and crew activities in the operations department and by Director of Member Services and Communications Andrea Gravenhorst on recent projects and activities involving the member services department.

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, July 24, at Firelands Electric's office, located at One Energy Place, New London.

FIRELANDS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

OUTAGE HOTLINE

1-800-533-8658

OFFICE

One Energy Place
P.O. Box 32
New London, OH 44851
419-929-1571

OFFICE HOURS

Mon. - Fri. 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
www.firelandsec.com



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Dan Schloemer
President, District 1

Bruce Leimbach
Vice President, District 4

Carl Ayers
Secretary/Treasurer, District 5

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District 8

Steve Gray
District 3

Gene Lamoreaux
District 2

Kevin Reidy
District 6

Rob Turk
District 7

GENERAL MANAGER

Dan McNaull

HAVE A STORY SUGGESTION?

E-mail your ideas to:
members@firelandsec.com

Firelands
Electric
COOPERATIVE
Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 