



GM'S REPORT

THE REASON WHY

The dedication of a lineman

Depending upon what study you read, electric utility lineman ranks between the tenth and twenty-fifth most dangerous job in the U.S. Working 40 feet or more above the ground, they are responsible for building, maintaining, and repairing high-voltage power lines in every conceivable type of weather. Often faced with wind, rain, ice, and snow, linemen must be ready to roll at any time, day or night.

Why they do it

Being a lineman is not easy or glamorous. Physically strenuous, loaded with hazards, and often requiring long hours, the job also takes years of specialized training and ongoing education. With all these challenges, why would anyone choose this demanding career path?

Firelands Electric Cooperative's linemen do it for a variety of reasons. Some enjoy the challenge of solving problems with the distribution system, while others like the wide array of tasks required of them each and every day. Many linemen do it for the sheer satisfaction of serving those living in their own communities — people who are also their neighbors and friends. As a matter of fact, all of Firelands' linemen possess a deep commitment to the cooperative's members.

The other why

There is one other significant “why” behind a Firelands Electric lineman's commitment to a job well done — his family. Like with any job, these men work to support their families financially. But, more importantly, their families are the reason behind how they perform their work.

Safety is at the forefront. Using personal protective gear such as harnesses, flame-retardant clothing, and insulated rubber gloves is just the beginning. The correct setup and grounding of a bucket truck, routine testing of equipment for proper performance, and frequent participation in safety training exercises also play a vital role in the safety of Firelands' linemen.

Employing the most up-to-date safety precautions and best practices ensures not only the safety of the linemen and their co-workers, but also the community. And it allows our linemen to return safe and sound to their families at the end of each day.

Their dedication and service to the community — despite the dangers — truly sets linemen apart. That's why Firelands Electric is recognizing April 12–16 as Lineman Appreciation Week. If you see one of the cooperative's linemen out and about that week, be sure to thank him for working around the clock and in all types of weather to keep the lights on.



Dan McNaull
GENERAL MANAGER

**FIRELANDS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE'S
LINEMAN APPRECIATION WEEK IS APRIL 12–16**



THE REASON WE WORK *safe*

APPRENTICE LINEMAN



ROBERT SHEPHERD
AND FAMILY

PHOTO BY NATALIE BOWERS

LEAD LINEMAN



FRED HARTMAN AND FAMILY

PHOTO BY NATALIE BOWERS

LEAD LINEMAN



PHIL PICKERING
AND FAMILY

PHOTO BY LITTLE BUTTON PHOTOGRAPHY

PHOTO BY NATALIE BOWERS

APPRENTICE LINEMAN



CHRIS KENT AND FAMILY

PHOTO BY NATALIE BOWERS

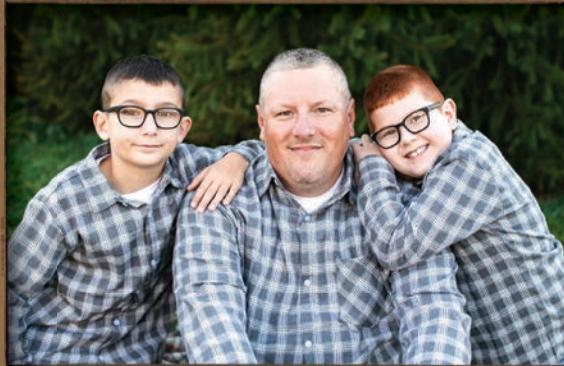


JOURNEYMAN LINEMAN



EVAN CLEMONS AND FAMILY

JOURNEYMAN LINEMAN



DAVE SUMPTER AND FAMILY

PHOTO BY NATALIE BOWERS



JOURNEYMAN LINEMAN



CHRIS ROWLAND AND FAMILY

LINE SUPERINTENDENT



ZACH COLLINS AND FAMILY

PHOTO BY NATALIE BOWERS





YOUTH PROGRAMS

CO-OP AWARDS **COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS**

Firelands Electric is pleased to announce the winners of our 2021 scholarship contest.

Zeb Schafer of Monroeville High School was selected as the first-place winner of an \$1,800 scholarship. The son of Donald and the late Annette Schafer of Willard, he plans to study psychology in the fall. He is currently undecided which college he will attend.

Schafer is also now eligible to participate in a statewide contest on April 13 at Ohio's Electric Cooperatives in Columbus. At this event, representatives from Ohio's 24 electric co-ops have a chance to compete for additional scholarships worth up to \$3,800.

The second-place winner of \$1,600 is Mason Kiesel of South Central High School. Kiesel is the son of Brian and Laura Kiesel of New London. He plans to study exercise science and is currently undecided which college he will attend next fall.

Sarah Yeater of Hillsdale High School is the winner of the third-place \$1,400 scholarship. Daughter of Keith and Heidi Yeater of Ashland, she plans to study diagnostic medical sonography at the University of Findlay.

Fourth-place winner of a \$1,200 scholarship is Drew Hall of Ashland High School. Hall is the son of Michael and Tamara Hall of Ashland. He plans to major in cybersecurity and is currently undecided which college he will attend.

The fifth-place winner of \$1,000 is Levi Robinson of Plymouth High School. The son of Jason and Rachel Robinson of Willard, he will attend Cedarville University in the fall with a major in middle childhood education.

Austin Adelman of Willard High School is the winner of the sixth-place \$750 scholarship. The son of Robert and Geri Adelman of Willard, he plans to attend the University of Findlay with a major in mathematics.

The winners of Honorable Mention scholarships, worth \$500 each, are Alexis Hicks of Seneca East High School and Maggie Vesper of Hillsdale High School. Hicks is the daughter of Rodney and Kathleen Hicks of Willard. She will major in international studies at Bowling Green State University next fall. Vesper, the daughter of Dave and Jessie Vesper of Ashland, plans to major in biology at Lipscomb University next fall.

Jaret Fowler and Madison Rodriguez, both of New London High School, are the winners of Judges' Choice awards of \$500 each. Fowler is the son of Christina Fowler of New London. He plans to study marketing next fall but is currently undecided which college he will attend. Rodriguez, daughter of Tritain and Kim Biddinger of New London, plans to major in pharmacy at Ohio Northern University.

Firelands Electric offers its scholarship contest annually to graduating high school seniors who reside in a home served by the cooperative. Firelands was pleased to have received applications this year from students attending Ashland, Hillsdale, Lucas, Monroeville, New London, Plymouth, Seneca East, South Central, Western Reserve, and Willard high schools.

For more information on Firelands' scholarships and youth programs, visit our website, www.firelandsec.com.



Zeb Schafer
FIRST PLACE
MONROEVILLE HIGH SCHOOL



Mason Kiesel
SECOND PLACE
SOUTH CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL



Sarah Yeater
THIRD PLACE
HILLSDALE HIGH SCHOOL



Drew Hall
FOURTH PLACE
ASHLAND HIGH SCHOOL



Levi Robinson
FIFTH PLACE
PLYMOUTH HIGH SCHOOL



Austin Adelman
SIXTH PLACE
WILLARD HIGH SCHOOL



Alexis Hicks
HONORABLE MENTION
SENECA EAST HIGH SCHOOL



Maggie Vesper
HONORABLE MENTION
HILLSDALE HIGH SCHOOL



Madison Rodriguez
JUDGES' CHOICE
NEW LONDON HIGH SCHOOL



Jaret Fowler
JUDGES' CHOICE
NEW LONDON HIGH SCHOOL



Class of
2021



IN THE COMMUNITY



CREATURES *large and small*

Spring Meadow Veterinary Clinic has been helping manage the health of pets and livestock in Ashland County and the surrounding area for nearly 50 years. Dr. Marnie Lahmon, who purchased the business from founding vets Dr. Roger McInturf and Dr. Gerald Mast, has owned the clinic since 2006. Having outgrown its

original building, the practice moved into a new facility last fall. The larger space, combined with state-of-the-art equipment and a dedicated team of 36 employees, will allow the clinic to continue doing what it does best — providing top-notch veterinary care to animals of every shape and size.

An American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) accredited practice, Spring Meadow is committed to meeting the highest standards of veterinary care. Held by only 12% of veterinary practices in the U.S. and Canada, this accreditation means that the clinic meets 900 standards above and beyond those needed to maintain state licensure. In addition, being AAHA accredited involves annual continuing education and a renewal evaluation every three years.

AAHA standards was one of several factors taken into consideration when designing Spring Meadow's new facility, along with accommodating the numerous services the clinic offers and improved efficiency. The previous building was extremely overcrowded.



Practice manager Alisha Huffman (left), practice supervisor Tara Perry (center), and owner Dr. Marnie Lahmon (right), in the reception area of Spring Meadow Veterinary Clinic's new facility.

With three vets and seven vet techs, areas were often used for multiple tasks at the same time. In the past, staff often got in each other's way or had to dodge equipment being used by a coworker to access another area of the building. "The setup of the new building is much more efficient," says Dr. Lahmon. "It allows us to conduct several tasks at once and see more patients in a shorter amount of time."

Having a specific area designated for each service they offer has been one of the biggest benefits of the new facility. In addition to traditional exam spaces, Spring Meadow now has separate rooms for surgery, dental care, X-ray, large animal treatment, ICU, isolation, and more.

Combined with state-of-the-art equipment, the new facility allows Spring Meadow to provide the best possible care for its four-legged patients. An onsite laboratory, ultrasound, and digital X-ray allow for immediate diagnostic results, while the use of lasers speed up treatment and recovery times. A surgical laser is often used in place of a traditional scalpel. "The tool cauterizes blood vessels and seals nerve endings as it cuts, resulting in less inflammation," explains Lahmon.

The staff also makes use of laser therapy. Emitting focused light beams, the laser is a pain-free, noninvasive way to help the clinic's animal patients with arthritis, wound healing, or recovery from surgery.

Spring Meadow's new facility is situated right next to its previous building, which has been repurposed to house the practice's additional services, including boarding, grooming, and doggie daycare. Interestingly, the new building's location is on the border of Firelands Electric Cooperative's service territory and that of an investor-owned utility, giving the clinic an unusual opportunity to choose its electric provider. While Spring Meadow's new facility is served by Firelands Electric Co-op, the old facility receives its power from the investor-owned utility. Served by three-phase lines that were completely rebuilt by the co-op in 2018, the building's electrical needs can be supplied by multiple substations, providing an added layer of reliability.

While the majority of Spring Meadow's patients are cats and dogs, the clinic treats animals of all sizes, from pocket pets to cattle and horses and everything in between. They provide their furry patients with everything from



Spring Meadow's new facility features a surgery suite and dental room with the latest technology.

routine wellness checks and vaccinations to surgery and boarding. Round-the-clock emergency service is available for established clients, and the practice is currently accepting new patients. The staff hopes to hold an open house at the new facility in the fall.

Spring Meadow Veterinary Clinic is located at 1746 State Route 60, Ashland, just a half mile north of the Ashland County-West Holmes Career Center. To learn more about their services for your furry family members, visit www.springmeadowvetclinic.com or call their office at 419-289-2466.





RENEWABLE ENERGY

LEARNING FROM OURSOLAR

What the co-op's community solar array can teach us about residential solar systems

OurSolar is the community solar project from Ohio's Electric Cooperatives (OEC). It consists of 6,200 solar photovoltaic (PV) panels located at electric cooperatives across the state, including 152 panels at Firelands Electric Cooperative.

Ohio's OurSolar consists of 2.1 megawatts (mW) of solar energy production. Cardinal Power Plant, the primary source of electricity for the state's electric cooperatives, produces 1,230 mW of electricity. To put that number into perspective, OurSolar would need more than four million solar panels to equal the generating capacity of Cardinal.

The 152 OurSolar panels at Firelands are rated at 50 kilowatts (kW). This means the panels' total peak power generation capacity is 50 kW of direct current (DC) electricity. This electricity must be inverted to alternating current (AC) before it can be used by co-op members. Energy is lost during the inversion process, creating a maximum generation capacity of 40 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of consumable AC electricity.

Data on the electricity produced by Firelands' solar panels can be found on the co-op's OurSolar website, www.oursolar.coop/firelands. The information on this site not only gives insight into the co-op's community solar program, but is also helpful for members considering installing solar panels on their own property.

Although Firelands' community solar has the capacity to produce 40 kWh, it's important to remember that solar panels do not continuously generate electricity. Plus, when they are producing, they do not always produce the maximum 40 kWh. Firelands Electric's panels, for example, produced

electricity for 3,926 out of the 8,784 hours in 2020 — roughly 45% of the hours in the year. The average amount of electricity produced by the co-op's OurSolar during this time was 13.68 kWh per hour, with the system only producing the maximum 40 kWh for 60 hours in 2020. In total, the panels worked 3,926 hours to produce 53,698 kWh of electricity for the year.

There are also a couple of other stats to keep in mind. The solar array at Firelands Electric Cooperative is five to six times larger than the typical system installed on a member's home. In addition, this array produced no electricity from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m., and the greatest generation of electricity occurred between noon until 3 p.m.

The data contained in this article is intended to present detailed information based on firsthand experiences with solar energy production in north-central Ohio. It is not intended to be a negative statement about solar. In the right situation, solar can be a good fit — however, it is simply a reality that solar production in Ohio is limited. The numbers provided are an important tool to help members make the best decision when they are considering installing solar panels on their property and reviewing proposals from solar companies.

A list of resources about solar energy is available on Firelands Electric Cooperative's website at www.firelandsec.com/renewable-energy-resources. In addition, our member services department is always happy to help with your questions regarding solar installation and production. They can be contacted by calling our office at 1-800-533-8658 or emailing members@firelandsec.com.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

FIVE HOME ENERGY HOGS

Most of us are familiar with the energy efficiency advice to turn our thermostats up a few degrees in summer, switch off lights we aren't using, and unplug electronics that draw energy even when they aren't in use. But while you're taking these steps, other energy hogs may still be eating away at your budget.

Old fridge or freezer in the garage

That second fridge or freezer may be costing you more than you think. If the model was produced prior to 1990, it's likely using twice as much energy (or more) than a newer ENERGY STAR-certified model. If it's located in the garage, summer heat can make it run constantly, which leads to higher electric bills.

Heating or cooling an uninsulated area

Heating or cooling an uninsulated shed, workshop, or garage can be expensive. Pet owners sometimes opt to heat or cool an uninsulated garage to keep pets comfortable, not realizing that this might be costing more than heating their actual home. If you need to heat or cool these types of spaces, they must be well insulated and heated/cooled efficiently, perhaps with a ductless mini-split system. Avoid using portable space heaters or heat lamps whenever possible, since these devices can add between \$50 and \$140 to your monthly electric bill.

Hot tub

The average operating cost of a hot tub is \$250 per year. But that amount can run much higher if your hot tub is an older, less efficient model or if you live in a colder climate. A smaller hot tub with better insulation, a cover, and a pump that runs on a lower voltage will use less energy than other models. In the end, getting a good deal on a used hot tub may cost more in energy bills in the long run.

Swimming pool

If you have a swimming pool, consider installing a smaller, more efficient pump and reducing how often it runs. You can also install a larger filter and maximize the flow of water through the pipes by making them larger and reducing how sharply the corners turn. These measures could cut your electric use for the pool pump by as much as 75%. Consult with a pool installation

specialist to find the most efficient setup that will still keep your pool clean.

Pumps

If you live on acreage or on a farm, you probably have several pumps, including well, septic, and sump. If you're like most of us, you use those pumps until they break down. Consider replacing the oldest and most-used pumps over time with new, more efficient ones that are sized correctly for their task. Occasionally take note of how often your pumps run. Malfunctioning pumps can run constantly, greatly increasing your electric use. Also, make sure you eliminate leaks in the water lines, which make pumps work harder and longer.

Turning a critical eye to some of the unexpected energy users in your home can help you identify energy hogs that could be gobbling up electricity. An energy consultation is a valuable tool for assistance in identifying ways to save money on your electric bills. Firelands Electric Cooperative members can schedule a consult for FREE by contacting the member services department at 1-800-533-8658.





YOUTH PROGRAMS



Education helps shape the leaders of tomorrow. That's why Firelands Electric includes it as one of our seven core principles. The A Team is a cooperative program designed to encourage students in their pursuit of academic excellence. Students in grades 6–8 are invited to participate and be recognized for their hard work and dedication to education.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Winners of February drawing receive Amazon gift cards



Gwyneth Voltz
New London Middle School
Daughter of Bill and Ashley Shreve



Rogan Price
Hillsdale Middle School
Son of Jeremiah and Jordan Price

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 Cooperative 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, parents' name(s), and email address on your entry.

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



Garrett Weisman
New London Middle School
Son of Stephanie Roberts

SAFETY



4 Common Culprits of ELECTRICAL FIRES

Outdated wiring and overloaded circuits are the most common causes of electrical fires.

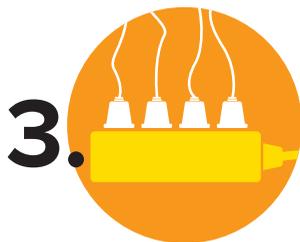
Check the following areas of your home to ensure your home's electrical safety is up to par.



Electrical outlets: Faulty electrical outlets are a leading cause of home fires. As outlets age, so do the wires behind them that you can't see. Any loose, damaged or warm-to-the-touch outlets should be repaired or replaced.



Electrical wiring: Outdated wiring is another common cause of electrical fires. Frequently tripped breakers, flickering lights, and burning smells are clear warning signs. If your home is more than 20 years old, it may not be able to handle today's increased power load. If you suspect your home's wiring is outdated, leave this one to the pros and contact a qualified electrician.



Overloaded cords and outlets: Extension cords are not permanent solutions. If your big-screen TV, home theater system, and other electronics are plugged into one extension cord, it's time to call an electrician and install additional outlets.



Old appliances: Older appliances are more likely to have loose or damaged wiring, which means they're more likely to catch fire. Check older appliances for damage and determine if it's time to upgrade or replace. Also check to ensure you're using appliance-grade outlets. A qualified electrician can help with installation.



COOPERATIVE UPDATE

BOARD MEETING *highlights*

Firelands Electric Cooperative's board of trustees met Jan. 26 in person and virtually to cover the following items:

- Board President Dan Schloemer reported that the cooperative received 38 membership applications for approval by the board.
- Director of Operations Don Englet reviewed recent activities and projects in the operations department. He also presented an overview of the cooperative's substations.
- The board approved the 2021 Depreciation Rate Schedule.
- General Manager Dan McNaull reviewed the OEC Statistical Report.
- Director of Finance and Accounting Tabi Shepherd reviewed the December financials and reported on recent accounting and billing department activities.
- The board reviewed the most recent information on the co-op's broadband feasibility study.
- McNaull advised that the OREC Winter Conference would be virtual, rather than held in Columbus.
- Attorney Dave Harwood reported on the Ohio Cooperative Attorney Association meeting he attended virtually.
- McNaull reviewed the outage report for December and the status of the current tree trimming program.
- Director of Communications and Technology Andrea Gravenhorst reviewed a report on recent activities involving the member services and IT department.
- McNaull announced that the NRECA and NRTC annual meetings would be virtual this year.
- District 6 Trustee Kevin Reidy reported on an ACRE Committee meeting he attended virtually.
- McNaull reminded the board that petitions to become a candidate for districts 2, 7, and 9 would be available to members starting Feb. 5.

The cooperative's next board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 27. If you would like to attend the next scheduled meeting, please contact the Firelands Electric office at 1-800-533-8658.

FIRELANDS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

OUTAGE HOTLINE

1-800-533-8658

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419-929-1571

OFFICE HOURS

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



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District 7

GENERAL MANAGER

Dan McNaull

HAVE A STORY SUGGESTION?

Email your ideas to:
members@firelandsec.com

