



GM'S REPORT

# *Celebrating* the cooperative community

There's nothing like walking into your favorite locally owned business around the holidays. Those behind the counter greet you by name. Fellow shoppers are your neighbors and friends.

There's also a sense of pride in knowing that the profit, product, and labor of these small-town businesses have a positive impact on your neighborhood. There is a deep-seated spirit of community in local businesses — and Firelands Electric Cooperative is no exception.

As a co-op, Firelands Electric is a member-owned, not-for-profit business. Our owners include you, your friends, your neighbors, and even the cooperative's board of trustees. Many of the co-op's employees are also members. They are raising their families in the very area where they work. This unique relationship gives the co-op a special role in the community we serve.

Our employees work 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to make sure that our members are well taken care of when it comes to their electricity needs. We strive to maintain the most reliable and affordable power possible. But living and working on co-op lines is more than just poles, wires, and kilowatt-hours. It is an investment in our community and its members.

Founded as a way to bring electricity to areas that didn't interest investor-owned utilities, electric co-ops have been a cornerstone of community and economic development in rural America and beyond for decades. As a locally based cooperative, this special bond is an integral part of who we are.

Firelands Electric Cooperative has a vested interest in making sure our community is prosperous. We do so by investing in scholarships, 4-H programs, school event sponsorships, and first responder training. We work with local farms and businesses looking to expand or improve their operations. We even help members make their homes more energy efficient and provide the information and tools to make it easier to do so.

We hope that you consider Firelands Electric Cooperative as more than just your electric provider. We want you to view us as a valuable part of the community. As you celebrate with family and friends this holiday season, we hope you will also celebrate the positive impact that you and your electric cooperative have on our community. Together, we can do great things.

We love being a part of this community, and we hope you feel the same way, too!



Dan McNaull  
GENERAL MANAGER





CO-OP NEWS

# NEW COOPERATIVE FACILITY TO BE COMPLETED BY END OF YEAR

Firelands Electric Cooperative's board and management have been planning and working over the past two years to build a new all-in-one facility that will incorporate its office and warehouse operations all under one roof.

This new facility is located at 103 Industrial Drive in New London. Firelands Electric Cooperative plans to begin conducting business at this location on Jan. 17.

The cooperative's new facility consists of a 12,180-square-foot office and 22,800-square-foot warehouse, which is replacing their three inefficient buildings that are currently being marketed through a realtor. Firelands Electric has taken advantage of lower interest rates and other financial opportunities available from USDA Rural Utilities Service (RUS) to finance the project.

Located on 15 acres of property within the Village of New London, the new facility also includes a 50-kilowatt community solar array. Firelands Electric's OurSolar program consists of 152 (335-watt) panels that were energized in late September and are a generation resource currently being offered to the cooperative's membership.

Janotta & Herner, based in Monroeville, has served as general contractor of the project. Environmental studies, soil testing, and some groundwork was completed before last winter. Janotta & Herner has been working diligently at constructing the new building

since April and expect to have Firelands Electric Co-op's new facility completed later this month.

The cooperative's board and management have overseen and managed the entire project to ensure a long-lasting structure that will serve Firelands Electric Co-op and its members for many years in the future. Firelands Electric's new facility incorporates LED lighting, energy-efficient heat pumps in the office, warehouse radiant floor heating, foam insulation, and other innovative technologies.

"We are very excited about the enhancements this new building will bring to Firelands Electric Cooperative members and employees," says General Manager Dan McNaull. "The pre-engineered metal building was selected for its value in terms of cost and durability and was designed with the goal of delivering improved functionality, efficiency, and longevity."

"Co-op members will be able to take advantage of features like the convenient drive-up window, while employees will benefit from improved security, better accessibility, and sufficient storage areas for materials and equipment," adds McNaull. "We are eagerly awaiting its completion and our move into this new facility."

Photos of the buildings progress are available on the cooperative's Flickr page at [www.flickr.com/photos/firelandsec/albums](http://www.flickr.com/photos/firelandsec/albums).



CO-OP NEWS

# OURSOLAR

## COMMUNITY SOLAR PROGRAM LAUNCHED



A new community solar program from Firelands Electric Cooperative is making renewable energy easy and affordable.

“At Firelands Electric Cooperative, we believe in strength in numbers,” says General Manager Dan McNaull. “Installing a renewable energy project on your own is often just too expensive and too difficult for most people, but by working together as a co-op, we can offer a cost-effective alternative for our members.”

OurSolar gives Firelands Electric residential members the option to purchase renewable energy produced by the co-op’s new 50-kilowatt, 152-panel solar array located at 103 Industrial Drive, New London. There is no equipment for members to install, and all maintenance costs are included in the subscription rate.

Firelands Electric Cooperative members can subscribe to the output of a maximum of 10 panels. Members who wish to take part will be required to sign an agreement for a period of five years, and the OurSolar rate will remain fixed for the duration of the agreement. Energy produced through OurSolar will cost participating members just 1.5 cents more per kWh than the standard residential rate. The average monthly price works out to be less than \$2 per panel.

Even though OurSolar costs slightly more compared to the cooperative’s standard rate, it is a great way to go green. “Members can spend a few additional dollars each month versus the thousands of dollars often required to install a system at their home or business,” says McNaull.

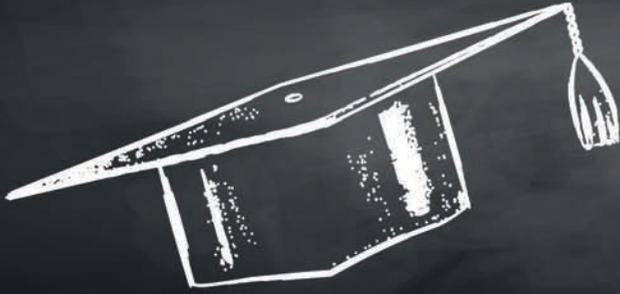
The panels at Firelands Electric’s solar field were energized on Sept. 27. At the beginning of November, the co-op’s 152 panels had produced over 4,700 kilowatt-hours of electricity, and members had requested agreements for nearly 50 percent of the available panels.

“The cooperative’s goal is to give our members the option of adding renewables to their energy mix in the easiest and least-expensive way possible,” says McNaull.

Members interested in signing up for OurSolar may request an agreement by contacting Firelands Electric’s Member Services Department at 1-800-533-8658. Additional information about the cooperative’s community solar program can also be viewed by visiting [www.firelandsec.com](http://www.firelandsec.com) and clicking on the OurSolar icon.



YOUTH PROGRAMS



CLASS OF 2019  
**College  
scholarships**

**Are your parents Firelands Electric Co-op members?**

You could win up to \$5,150 in scholarships

- Scholarships available in both boys' and girls' divisions.
- Applicants must have a cumulative grade-point average of 3.5 or above on a 4.0 scale.
- Finalists in the Firelands Electric scholarship competition will be interviewed at the cooperative office on Feb. 18, 2019.
- Applicants will be judged on scholastic record, school and community activities, cooperative knowledge, and personal interview.
- The first-place Firelands Electric Cooperative scholarship in each division is \$1,500.
- Four runners-up will also receive scholarships in each division.
- **NEW in 2019!** One student in each division will be chosen to receive a \$300 Judges' Choice Scholarship.
- The top overall winner will be eligible to compete at the statewide competition in April, where he or she can win up to \$3,650 in additional scholarship awards from Ohio's Electric Cooperatives.

Complete rules and applications are available at [www.firelandsec.com/content/scholarship-opportunities](http://www.firelandsec.com/content/scholarship-opportunities), by contacting Firelands Electric's member services department at 1-800-533-8658, or by visiting your high school guidance department.

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**Applications due  
Feb. 1, 2019**

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Firelands  
**Electric**  
COOPERATIVE  
Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

YOUTH PROGRAMS

 **YOUTH  
TOUR 2019**  
June 14–20

America’s electric co-ops believe in educating tomorrow’s leaders. Since the late 1950s, the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour has brought high school students to Washington, D.C., to experience our nation’s capital up close. Through educational and sightseeing activities, students gain a personal understanding of American history and their role as a citizen.

About 40 students from electric cooperatives throughout Ohio participate in this COMPLETELY FREE program each year. Students meet at Ohio’s Electric Cooperatives in Columbus and travel by chartered bus to Washington, D.C. Chaperones from the community, including parents, teachers, and electric co-op employees, accompany students on this weeklong trip.

Groups are organized at the state level, but over 1,600 students from across the country come together for Youth Day. Students have the chance to meet their U.S. representatives and senators, as well as to hear featured speakers who provide insight into the important roles electric cooperatives play in their local communities.

Students attending Youth Tour also have the opportunity to be selected as their state’s representative on the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association’s



(NRECA) Youth Leadership Council (YLC). One student from each state is selected to return to Washington, D.C., in July for a leadership workshop that focuses on the electric cooperative industry. YLC members are also invited to attend NRECA’s annual meeting the following spring.



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Firelands Electric will select up to two high school sophomores and juniors to represent the co-op on the 2019 Youth Tour, scheduled for June 14–20.

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Students must reside in a home served by the co-op and submit a completed application, including an essay, by Feb. 1. Full details and application materials are available at [www.firelandsec.com/content/youth-tour-experience](http://www.firelandsec.com/content/youth-tour-experience).

**Applications due  
Feb. 1, 2019**



## ENERGY EFFICIENCY

# SPACE HEATERS: FRIEND OR FOE?

During the cold winter months, many of us seek out the comfort and warmth of home. While a good central heating system is designed to meet whole-house needs, members sometimes turn to space heaters for additional warmth. Using one can help boost the temperature and comfort level in a single room, but consistent use over an extended period can increase winter heating bills considerably.

### Space heater basics

Two types of space heaters are available for the residential market. Convective models circulate air within an enclosed space, while radiant heaters transfer warming energy directly to objects or people within close proximity to the unit.

If central heating is unavailable or inadequate, a convective heating unit can distribute heat relatively evenly throughout an enclosed space.

For garages, workshops, workout rooms, or laundry areas, a convective heater used for a few hours a day or each week could be a good fit.

Radiant electric heaters typically include infrared heating elements. Nearby surfaces, including people, absorb the heat. Air in immediate proximity to the unit's enclosure or cabinetry also aids in the transfer of warmth.

While they can be effective for temporarily adding warmth to a single room, using space heaters for prolonged intervals or on a daily basis is

usually a poor choice when it comes to energy efficiency. Central heating systems are specifically designed to handle the needs of your entire home, while space heaters are not.

"Space heaters are not an ideal solution for long-term home heating," says Scott Carbary, energy advisor for Firelands Electric Cooperative. "For every unit of electricity that is consumed by these devices, they produce only one unit of heat. A whole-house heat pump system, on the other hand, produces two or more units of heat for each unit of electricity used," says Carbary.

This is why adding several space heaters to supplement your central heating system is likely to drive up your energy costs. And when it comes to efficiency, there are currently no space heaters among the Environmental Protection Agency's list of ENERGY STAR®-rated products. The group has evaluated several models but have no plans to include such products in the labeling program in the near future. The EPA also cautions that space heaters are most efficient when used in small spaces for limited periods and can actually waste energy if consumers try to heat too large of an area with the devices.

### Safe not sorry

When using a space heater to warm a chilly room, it's also important to make sure to do so safely. Space heaters are a seasonal appliance, but according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, they are responsible for 25,000 residential fires and 300 deaths a year. In addition, burn injuries associated with surface contacts send about 6,000 people to emergency rooms every year.

Always set space heaters in locations clear of all flammable materials and out of reach of small children, pets, or anyone with impaired mobility. Consider investing in a model that has tip-over safety features, which automatically shuts off the power source in the event that the unit tilts beyond its upright position.



Also, be sure to plug heaters directly into a wall rather than using an extension cord or power strip. Most light-duty extension cords and surge strips are not designed to handle the amount of energy that a space heater requires and can overheat, causing a fire hazard. And never leave a heater unattended when you are not home or are asleep.

Given a choice between high, medium, and low or an adjustable thermostat, choose the latter. A unit that heats your space to the desired temperature will cycle less, saving you energy and never overheating the room.

If a particular room in your home is constantly chilly, using a space heater when the area is occupied could be the answer. However, if you are looking to warm larger

areas of your home or a single area for a prolonged period, there may be other alternatives. "Sealing air leaks, adding insulation, or tuning up your heating system so it operates more efficiently are all more economical solutions. These options will save you more energy — and money — in the long run," says Carbary.

Firelands Electric Cooperative offers FREE home energy consultations to its members. If you would like help determining which energy efficiency improvements your home would benefit from the most, contact the cooperative's Member Services Department at 1-800-533-8658 and schedule your appointment today.

## Carbary's CORNER

As Firelands Electric Cooperative's Energy Advisor, one of my primary duties is helping members find ways to reduce energy use in their homes or businesses. This sometimes includes an on-site energy consultation. This free service can help pinpoint the appliance or device that may be causing excessive energy consumption — and additional cost.

A few months ago, a Firelands Electric member called the co-op office with concerns over his monthly bill, which had increased drastically. These particular bills covered his electric use during the summer months, including several 90-degree days.

Even with central air taken into consideration, the member services department, with the help of the co-op's state-of-the-art metering system, discovered that the recent kilowatt-hour (kWh) use was nearly one-and-a-half times the home's average summer use! Something out of the ordinary was definitely going on.

During my free scheduled energy consult, I checked for the usual culprits of high electric use — malfunctioning pumps, inaccurate thermostats, and HVAC and water heater issues. Everything seemed normal. The heat pump tested within normal ranges when the air conditioner was running. I even had the member shut the system down to take additional readings.

That's when I found the guilty party.

While waiting for the heat pump system to restart, I noticed a sudden and unusual power draw from the electric furnace portion of the system. There was a malfunction that caused the member's heating and air conditioning to run at the same time!

With the mystery solved, I helped the member turn his HVAC system off at the breaker until it could be repaired.

A couple of weeks later, the member called the co-op to check on his usage. Before my appointment, during the extreme heat of August, it wasn't uncommon for his home to use 160 to 180 kWh each day. Since shutting off his HVAC system, the member's daily use had dropped to 50 kWh or less.

The member may have had to repair his HVAC system, but the savings on his electric bill will definitely be worth it!



Scott Carbary  
ENERGY ADVISOR



LOAD MANAGEMENT

# A LESSON IN PEAK DEMAND

On a blustery, below-freezing day in January, your home uses more energy than on a mild winter day. And the colder the outside temperatures, the higher the energy use. Multiply that by the 65 million people served by PJM Interconnection (the 13-state electric transmission territory that serves Ohio) and this increase becomes substantial. If these numbers rise too much, it creates a new record in the demand for electricity.

## The effect on co-op members

During periods of peak electric demand, Firelands Electric Cooperative's power supplier, Buckeye Power, Inc., runs its large baseload power plants at full capacity. If the need arises, Buckeye Power can fire up its supplemental gas-fired peaking plants, or even purchase power from additional sources.

When these measures become necessary, it increases the cost to generate or buy the large amounts of electricity being consumed. To offset these costs, Buckeye Power will assign Firelands Electric a new demand charge — which directly affects members' electric rates.

## Beating the peak

To avoid reaching a new demand level, Firelands Electric Co-op will issue peak alerts during times of high usage, encouraging members to curb their electric consumption. Minor changes can go a long way in reducing electric use — without affecting members' comfort levels. Big energy savings is possible if everyone makes small adjustments, such as lowering the thermostat a few degrees or postponing laundry until after the peak ends.

Members who participate in Firelands Electric's voluntary load management program also help the co-op lower peak demand and reduce the risk of setting a new peak — saving money for both the co-op and its members. Rebates and incentives are available to members who choose to participate in these programs.

Load management ONLY occurs during extreme weather conditions and temperatures — typically less than a dozen times per year — on the coldest days during the winter and the hottest days in the summer. During a peak alert, PeakBuster load management devices

installed on electric water heaters and HVAC systems in participating members' homes may be activated, temporarily disconnecting the appliance from the power supply.

Winter load control occurs on bitter cold days between 6 and 10 a.m. or from 5 to 9 p.m. Depending on weather conditions and power loads, the time and duration of load management efforts may be adjusted. Co-op members can even sign up on SmartHub to receive text or email notifications, so they will know when a peak alert is possible.

Further information on peak demand and load management is available at [www.firelandsec.com/content/load-management](http://www.firelandsec.com/content/load-management). For additional ways that you can help reduce electric demand during peak times, follow the tips in the box at the bottom or contact the Firelands Electric office at 1-800-533-8658 to enroll in one of the cooperative's load management programs.

## You CAN make a difference

Help reduce your electric use during winter peak alerts with these easy tips:

- Avoid using multiple large electrical appliances, such as clothes washers, dryers, and dishwashers, at the same time.
- Postpone laundry, dishwashing, and bathing until after the peak alert has ended.
- Close all draperies and window blinds to reduce energy loss.
- Temporarily adjust your thermostat four degrees lower during a peak alert.
- Turn off unnecessary lights and appliances.
- Join the nearly 4,500 Firelands Electric members who participate in the co-op's PeakBuster load management program.

IN THE COMMUNITY



## Step Up for Soldiers annual drive

Northern Ohio



When you are far from home, you often miss it even more during the holiday season. This can be especially true for members of the military. United Service Organizations (USO) centers around the world work to make the holiday season bright for American service members and their families — both soldiers stationed abroad and those returning home from deployment.

Firelands Electric Cooperative is proud to once again join forces with local radio stations WLKR-FM and K96-FM to support the USO of Northern Ohio Step Up for Soldiers annual drive. Beginning on Veterans Day, Nov. 11, the cooperative will serve as a donation location for the USO.

Items such as toys, games, household items, canned goods, health and wellness items, and many others will be accepted. All donations will be packaged by volunteers and distributed to soldiers and their families from throughout northern Ohio.

Volunteers sort and package donations made to the USO of Northern Ohio's Step Up for Soldiers annual drive, which are then distributed to military families in 29 counties across the state.

A complete list of suggested donation items is available on Firelands Electric's website, [www.firelandsec.com/content/uso-northern-ohio](http://www.firelandsec.com/content/uso-northern-ohio), and on the cooperative's Facebook page. If you know a local military family who could benefit from a care package, request forms are also available for download on the co-op's website.

"This year marks our eleventh collecting for the USO, and Firelands Electric is honored to once again support the brave men and women serving our country," says Andrea Gravenhorst, director of member services and communications.

Care package items for the 2018 USO of Northern Ohio Step Up for Soldiers annual drive can be dropped off at the Firelands Electric Cooperative office at One Energy Place, New London until Wednesday, Dec. 12, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The USO of Northern Ohio serves military families throughout 29 counties and touches the lives of nearly 45,000 active duty, guard, and reserve members.





# 6 WAYS TO PAY YOUR BILL

To ensure that your Firelands Electric Cooperative payment is properly credited to your account, use one of our six convenient payment methods:



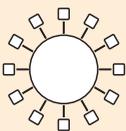
Drop your payment in the mail. Use the envelope included with your bill or send to P.O. Box 32, New London, OH 44851. Allow a minimum of five to seven business days for the post office to deliver any payments mailed to the co-op office.



Make in-person payments by stopping by the co-op office at 1 Energy Place, New London, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Avoid making your payment at locations such as grocery stores, drug stores, etc. These ARE NOT authorized payment locations, and bills processed through them cannot be guaranteed by the co-op.



Over-the-phone payments can be made 24/7 by calling 1-800-533-8658. There are no fees for payments made after hours.



To pay online, use Firelands Electric Co-op's SmartHub, not a third-party website. Payments through third-party services can take seven to ten business days to arrive at the co-op and often charge a fee.



Place your payment in our convenient drive-up drop box.



Consider signing up for Auto Pay and have your payment automatically taken from your checking, savings, or credit card. No checks, no stamps, no worries!

## Academic Excellence

The A Team recognizes students in grades 6–8 for their hard work and dedication to education. Students whose parents or guardians 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.



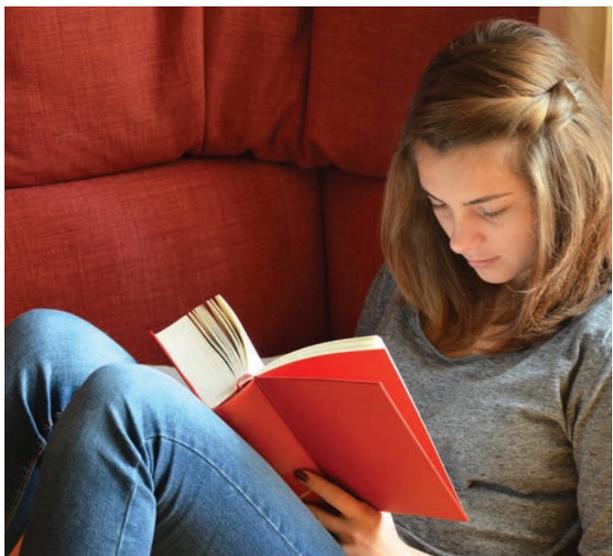
A drawing will take place at the end of each grading period, and three students will be chosen to receive an iTunes gift card. Winners will also have their photo published in an upcoming issue of *Ohio Cooperative Living* magazine and will be featured on the co-op's website and social media outlets.

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The next drawing is Dec. 10.

For complete details on how to enter, visit  
[www.firelandsec.com/content/team](http://www.firelandsec.com/content/team).

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## Stealing electricity and meter tampering are crimes!

Stealing electricity or tampering with a meter is serious business. And it's against the law! Theft of utility electricity is a first-degree misdemeanor if the value of the stolen electricity plus any utility equipment repairs is less than \$150. It's a fourth-degree felony if more than \$150.

Tampering crimes carry similar penalties. Tampering is defined as "to interfere with, damage, or bypass a utility meter, conduit, or attachment with intent to impede the correct registration of a meter or the proper function of a conduit or attachment."

Conviction of tampering can mean from six months in jail and a \$1,000 fine to up to five years and a \$2,500 fine.



Meter tampering costs all of us. And it's downright dangerous. If you

witness someone tampering with an electric meter, please contact Firelands Electric Cooperative at 1-800-533-8658.

Merry  
Christmas  
and  
Happy  
New Year!

As a reminder, our office will be closed Dec. 24–25 and Jan. 1 so our employees may enjoy the holidays with their families. Emergency service is available 24/7 by calling 1-800-533-8658.

## STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

Firelands Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), at any USDA office, or call 1-866-632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter by mail to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; by fax to 202-690-7442; or e-mail to [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).



COOPERATIVE UPDATE

BOARD MEETING

highlights

Firelands Electric Cooperative's board of trustees met Sept. 25 and covered the following items:

- In the absence of the board president, Vice President Bruce Leimbach reported the cooperative received 49 membership applications for approval by the board.
- Frank Van Dresser Jr., with Remax Quality Realty, discussed his strategy and plans to market Firelands Electric's buildings. The board reviewed his qualifications as well as market conditions and various strategies that would be utilized in the sale of the existing facilities. Following discussion, the board entered into an agreement with Frank Van Dresser Jr. for marketing the cooperative's facilities.
- Director of Finance and Accounting Tabi Shepherd reviewed the August financials and reported on recent accounting and billing department activities.
- The board reviewed a workplace safety observation report that was held Aug. 28.
- General Manager Dan McNaull reviewed the 2018 Power Requirement Study for Firelands Electric Cooperative with the board. The study was prepared by Buckeye Power for USDA's Rural Utilities Service (RUS) and following discussion, was approved by the board.

- Dan McNaull asked the board if they wish to continue matching employees' contributions to United Fund for the current year. Following discussion, the board decided to continue the practice of matching employees' contributions.
- McNaull reviewed the cooperative's Right of Way Maintenance and Tree Trimming Report.
- Management reviewed a listing of renewable energy projects installed on the cooperative's distribution system. The board was advised that the community solar field will be energized and put into service on Sept. 27.
- Director of Electric Operations Don Englet reported on recent projects and crew activities in his department, including the upcoming NASA Mansfield Transport Corridor Relocation project that is affecting the cooperative's distribution system.
- Director of Member Services and Communications Andrea Gravenhorst updated the board on recent activities involving the member services department and upcoming information technology projects.

The cooperative's next board meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 27, 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



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**GENERAL MANAGER**

Dan McNaull

**HAVE A STORY SUGGESTION?**

Email your ideas to:  
members@firelandsec.com

