



The Firelands Express



Volume 13, Issue 106

September 2022

Serving the communities of Amherst, Amherst Twp., Birmingham, Brownhelm Twp., Camden Twp., Florence Twp., Henrietta Twp., Kipton Village, New Russia Twp., South Amherst Village, Vermilion and Vermilion Twp.

Community Gathers for New High School Opening



The Firelands community gathered together on August 31st to celebrate the opening of the new Firelands High School! Students and alumni joined staff and local residents outside of the building for the official ceremony.

The occasion and the beautiful weather made for a memorable event on Vermilion Road. The ribbon cutting kicked off with the Mighty Falcon Marching Band and FHS cheerleading squads performing to the Firelands Fight Song. The Firelands High School Honors Choir led the community in singing the national anthem and later our alma mater.

Opening remarks were given by Firelands graduate and Superintendent Mike Von Gunten. Von Gunten said, "Although the path to a new building has been filled with its share of challenges, the resolve of our community and staff to see a state of the art building in Firelands never wavered. On behalf of our staff and over 1700 students, thank you for making a vision created 25 years ago become a reality."

Principal Cathy Keener followed along with special guests Pastor Chuck Livermore and Ms. Cheryl Lyman, Executive Director of the Ohio Facility Construction Commission. Representative Joe Miller, former FHS teacher, also shared his thoughts. Mike O'Keefe, President of the Board of Education, shared words of thanks and praise for all involved in the project, from the bond issue to the ribbon cutting and everything in between.



After the formal ceremony, the ribbon was cut by Cheryl Lyman, Ben Gibson, Tom Myers, Mike O'Keefe, Cathy Keener, Dan Pycraft, Mike Von Gunten, Keri Angney, and Ellen Gundersen. The community was then invited into the 106,000 square foot building for tours.

Our community was able to walk through the grand two story building and see the academic wing, office area, performing and visual art areas, extended learning spaces, agricultural education space, gymnasiums, alumni area and cafeteria.

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You may view this issue online at:
www.firelandsschools.org

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THE FIRELANDS EXPRESS

Kicking off the New School Year at Firelands Elementary



First Day in 2nd Grade

September 6 was a good day for Mrs. Dolnosich's and Mrs. Treadway's class. After reading the book, First Day Jitters, the second graders used playdough to get the, "first day jitters" out of their bodies!

They also completed an activity with Oreos. The first time students ate their Oreo, they just ate it, without really experiencing it. The second time they ate the Oreo, they focused more on the experience, what it tasted like, the texture of the Oreo, etc. They really got to know the Oreo! We discussed how this is what Close Reading is; getting to know all aspects of the text and paying attention to the details when we are reading. They were excited to gain an understanding of Close Reading while enjoying Oreos.

Welcome Back!

The FES staff welcomed our 1st-5th graders back to FES on Tuesday, September 6. It was a great first day. Many smiles were seen around the building. Kindergarten students attended appointments with their teachers

September 6th through 8th and had their first full day as a Falcon on September 9th. The staff is excited to be with the students and help them all reach their



Future high school students visited the new building after the ribbon cutting. They stand here in front of the sandstone memorial to all of the districts that formed to make the Firelands school district.

potential. We can't wait to see the progress that is made.

FES Parent Teacher Group

Firelands Elementary is very lucky to have an active PTG (Parent Teacher Group). Parents of FES students are encouraged to become involved with this group. They meet monthly and find ways to further enrich the FES environment for all of our students. They are actively planning events for the students. Feel free to reach out to them to see how you can assist. You can find them on Facebook (Firelands Elementary School PTG). Their first scheduled meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 21 at 6:30 p.m. in the FES Library.

Dates to Remember

September 21: PTG Meeting
October 5: PTG Meeting
October 6: Parent/Teacher Conferences.
October 7: Picture Day
October 12: Parent/Teacher Conferences
October 14: No School

*submitted by Mrs. Laura Groboske,
FES Assistant Principal*



The Friends of Firelands welcomed the newest Falcons with their Class of 2035 tee-shirt the week of KRA testing. Kenleigh Hartman and Brooklyn Deichler are pictured above.

One Team, One Dream

What is the One Team, One Dream Campaign?

The ONE TEAM, ONE DREAM campaign is one in which Firelands Local Schools seeks generate privately raised funds to turf the existing high school football field through selling naming rights to our current and future athletic facilities and through rolling out TEAM 333. By placing artificial turf on the existing football field, we will be able to move both boys' and girls' soccer from the SAMS campus to the Firelands campus. We will be able to have a state-of-the-art practice and playing facility for the marching band, football, baseball, softball, and soccer teams as well as all the youth sports.

Join Team 333

The Firelands Local Schools Athletic Department seeks to raise \$333,000.00 in private funds to bring this much needed

improvement to the district without additional tax dollars. With the support of families in the community and local businesses Firelands Local Schools looks towards providing a facility that the community can be proud of. To match these efforts, we have created the "TEAM 333" campaign, which was designed to attract 333 people to donate with options as low as \$30 a month between now and fall 2023. In what equates to less than \$2.00 a day, the money raised from the "TEAM 333" would bring the Falcons one step closer to making this dream a reality for the Firelands community.

For more on how to donate:

visit www.firelandsturf.org or call Ty Stillman, Athletic Director, 440-965-4255 x 411120 or email tstillman@firelandsschools.org

*submitted by Mr. Ty Stillman
Athletic Director*

Grayson Szivan's Hole in One!

On August 25th sophomore golfer, Grayson Szivan, was able to accomplish something that most golfers will never come close to accomplishing. During a home match at Whiskeyville Golf Club vs Wellington, Grayson was standing 125 yards away on the tee box on hole #8.

After choosing his gap wedge and lining up the shot, he hit it straight enough to give himself a good chance at a Birdie. As the ball hit the green it found its way into the cup for a hole in one!

If you see Grayson in the hall or on the course, make sure you congratulate him for this great feat.

Well done Grayson!

*submitted by Mr. Ty Stillman
Athletic Director*



Ribbon Cutting continued from p. 1

Special thanks to FHS alum Adam McCann, Class of 2003, for helping us introduce the alumni area and to Nina Fisher for playing our beautiful new Yamaha piano. The piano was purchased with the help of a generous donation from the Bettcher family.

This outstanding project began in 1997 when the FLSD BOE purchased 105 acres surrounding the original high school. Their vision of one campus for our students laid the foundation for this success. 25 years later, and through the work

of countless volunteers, we have now opened a beautiful new building!

We sincerely thank the Firelands community for supporting this beautiful project. Our 9th grade students started school on September 6th in this outstanding facility. We look forward to watching the project reach its conclusion with the completion of the alumni area, graphics and final touches.

It is a great time to be a Falcon!

*submitted by Mrs. Jennifer Butchko
Public Relations*



Pictured above is Adam McCann in front of the Military Honor Display at FHS. Pictured below are members of the FHS cheerleading team at the ribbon cutting.



THE FIRELANDS EXPRESS

Firelands High School News & Updates

Freshman students enjoyed their first day of school on Tuesday, September 6th. They were able to learn the new building, navigate the lunch lines in the cafeteria, find their lockers, get their Chromebooks, and learn about the new school. The first day for grades ten through twelve was Wednesday, September 7th. It is wonderful to see the looks of excitement on student faces as they walk through the beautiful new building. Much thanks to the community of Firelands for making this dream possible for our students.

We are excited to announce a new opportunity for students to make use of the extended learning areas in the building. Teachers are able to bring classes out so that students can work on projects and collaborate. Students are able to use the space to study and collaborate during a time when they would normally be assigned to a study

hall. Students and teachers are already making use of the space!

The 2022 Homecoming game was September 16th. The king and queen were announced prior to the football game on Friday, after this issue went to press. Student council held a dance on Saturday, September 17th. The theme was Through the Decades. Students planned a fun Spirit Week. Pictures and more will be shared in the next issue of the Express!

The theme is Through the Decades. Students planned a fun Spirit Week including these themes: Strictly Business (Monday), Soccer Mom vs BBQ Dads (Tuesday), and Wild West Wednesday. Thursday is Decades Day with the Senior class representing the 60s; Juniors, 80s; Sophomores, 90s; and Freshmen, 50s. Finally, on Friday students had Class Color Day as follows: Seniors (red), Juniors (white), Sophomores

(black), and Freshmen (gray). We held our annual Homecoming Pep Rally at the end of the day on Friday.

On September 2nd, seniors came in to paint their parking spaces. They did a beautiful job and were so happy to have this opportunity!

We are already gearing up for the PSAT test on October 12th. This test is given annually to all freshmen, sophomores, as well as some juniors. Sophomores and juniors will take the PSAT/NMSQT, which gives them the opportunity to qualify for National Merit Scholarship. The PSAT test is designed to help students prepare for the SAT, college, and careers. Studies show that students that take the PSAT do better on the SAT. Data from the PSAT can be used to help students prepare for the SAT test (taken in the spring of junior year) by giving students and families specific information

about individual student strengths and weaknesses. All students that are testing are required to be at school at 7:30 on this date. For students that are not testing (most juniors and all seniors), there is no school. Seniors and juniors that are not testing are encouraged to do either a college visit or a career shadow. In addition, we are planning a Day of Caring for any junior or senior that is interested. Students that participate in the Day of Caring may be able to earn the Community Service Diploma Seal. Contact Mrs. Wolanin or Mrs. Horton if you are interested in participating.

On October 12th, we are also offering the SAT test to any senior that would like to retake the SAT to improve their score. Any senior that is interested should see Mrs. Wolanin to register.

*submitted by Ms. Cathy Keener
FHS Principal*



Top left: Mr. Wiley and class in collaborative "Falcon's Nest" space. Top right: FHS students in new cafeteria. Bottom: Senior parking space art.



THE FIRELANDS EXPRESS

Firelands Middle School News & Updates

Welcome to the 2022-2023 Year! We had a wonderful opening and first few days!

We had a huge turnout on September 1st for our Open House. Families were excited to see our new building and the new shared facilities in the high school. It was nice to see multiple generations of families out together that evening to share in the excitement of this monumental occasion. Nervous faces made way for happy smiles as students figured out that the building was a big square.

Our 6th grade students were welcomed by our entire staff on September 6th. We were able to spend the day with just our newest middle school students, showing them the ropes, working

on lockers and they became the very first group to eat in our brand new cafeteria!

On September 7th, our 7th and 8th graders arrived to teachers anxiously awaiting their return. All students did a fantastic job navigating the new building and very quickly became experts.

Our students participated in some of the Homecoming fun by dressing up each day for spirit week. The dress-up themes for each day were as follows: Monday, College Gear Day; Tuesday, Twin Day; Wednesday, Pro Sports Day; Thursday, Pajama Day; and Friday, Falcon Day.

Athletes are busy each day after school and the school is buzzing with activity and

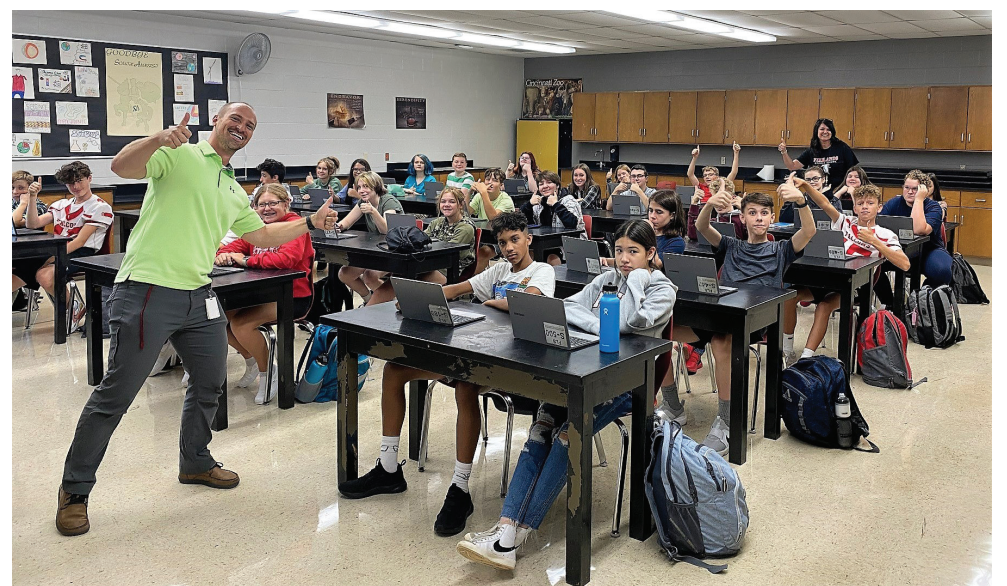
excitement for the fall season.

After school clubs and activities will be starting up after a hiatus during COVID. Students will be sent sign-ups through Mrs. Hutchinson's Google Classroom and information will also be shared over the morning announcements. If students have an idea or suggestion for a club, they should let Mrs. Hutchinson know. We want to increase our student involvement in clubs and the best way is for students to design these activities.

If you are interested in purchasing the first "Firelands Middle School" shirts/ hoodies, please stop into the office or use the QR code in the ad below to order online. If you purchase at the school, t-shirts are \$15.00

and hoodies are \$30.00. There are additional options online.

*submitted by Mrs. Cara Hutchinson
FMS Principal*



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Orders will be printed together in bulk and distributed through the school approx. 2-3 weeks later.

Order at:

<https://stores.inksoft.com/FirelandsMS>



THE FIRELANDS EXPRESS

Food Service Reminders

FREE MEALS: USDA did not renew the waiver for students to receive free meals. It is very important that you complete a meal application if you feel your children will qualify. The end of the free meals was not a decision that Firelands made, this comes from USDA.

MEAL APPLICATIONS: Now is the time to get your meal application submitted so your child can get uninterrupted meals. Go to www.payschoolscentral.com If you don't have an account, you will need to register first, then follow the directions.

DIRECT CERTIFICATION: If you received a letter stating your children qualified for free meals, the letter must be signed and returned in order to have the fees waived.

NEGATIVE MEAL ACCOUNTS: Due to the end of the free meals, we have many accounts that have gone into the negative. Please act ASAP and complete an application. All negative accounts must be paid in full.

FES STUDENTS: Please help your children to learn their 6 digit pin # (same as PowerSchool number) this will help to get students through the

breakfast and lunch lines faster.

FHS/FMS : All students regardless of need are eligible to go to any station. Students can take a main dish, 2 fruits, 2 vegetables and a milk. They only need to take 3 of the 5 components offered.

BREAKFAST: We serve breakfast at all schools. Students at FES come to the kitchen directly off the bus. FHS/FMS serve breakfast from 7-9 allowing late arrivals a second chance at getting breakfast.

Contact Judy Baumann with questions:

jbaumann@firelandsschools.org
440-965-4255 ext 3097

Please see page 10 for more information about benefits you may qualify for.



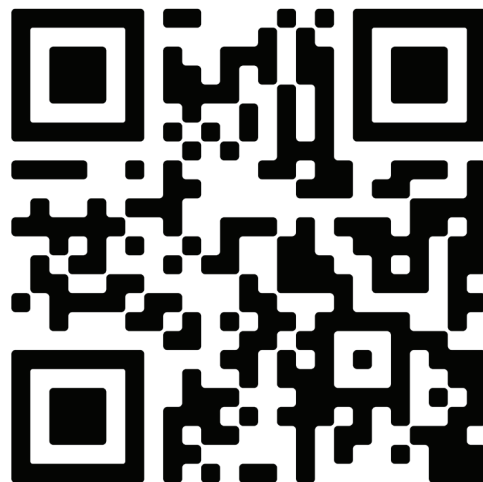
New Cafeteria Scenes



Are Your Final Forms Final?

All students need to have updated forms prior to starting the 2022-2023 school year. To complete the required forms please visit the Final Forms website firelands-oh.finalforms.com located on the district website or scan the QR code at right.

If you have any questions regarding registration, please contact Lisa Maver at 440-965-5821 x.1025 or lmaver@firelandsschools.org.



THE FIRELANDS EXPRESS

John's Safe Place Opens for Students

Firelands Local Schools has partnered with the John C. Haney Foundation to create a special designated room to be used by students at Firelands High School and Firelands Middle School.

This area, "John's Safe Space" (JSP) was created for students who are struggling. We understand that our students balance a tremendous workload, coupled with pandemic fallout. At any given time they manage academics, athletics, mental health issues, work responsibilities and sometimes a difficult social and home life. We are proud to add this opportunity as another available resource for our students.

The JSP room is a safe environment where students can calmly decompress and regain focus. The room features

a couch, low lighting, calming colors, a fish tank, sensory activities and an overall positive atmosphere.

This area is named after John C. Haney, a graduate of Fairview Park High School. Haney went on to Baldwin Wallace University, where he was a defensive lineman on the Yellow Jackets football team. Unknown to family and friends, Haney suffered from an undiagnosed mental illness. Sadly, after graduating from college in 2017, Haney's untreated mental health illness led to his eventual suicide.

John's parents, Beth and Rick Haney started the John Charles Haney Memorial Foundation in 2018 to bring awareness to mental health issues and to support individuals

continued on page 9



You are cordially invited

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PLEASE RSVP

Deanna Watts by September, 20
Firelands District School Social Worker
(text) 440-334-8801
dwatts@firelandsschools.org

Instagram ANNIEROSEEVENTS facebook

Firelands Band Boosters General Membership Meetings

The Firelands Band Boosters' mission is to provide support for the Firelands Instrumental Music Programs in grades 5-12. We meet on the third Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m in the high school band room. We also have a Facebook page under "Firelands Band Fans."

This fall we are organizing a sale of band apparel. Families can purchase buttons, jackets, sweatshirts and band t-shirts. We are also having our 2nd ATV raffle (see below).

Business meetings are not scheduled during the months of December and July. We look

forward to seeing you in the 2022-2023 school year!

September 20th	February 14th
October 18th	March 14th
November 15th	April 18th
January 17th	May 16th
June 20th	

*submitted by Shannon Smith
firelandsbandboosters@gmail.com*



THE FIRELANDS EXPRESS

Annual Friends of Firelands Tailgate for the Win!



The Friends of Firelands held another successful tail gate on September 9th prior to the Falcon vs Duke victory! We are so thankful for our volunteers and the Firelands community! Thanks to everyone for showing up in a BIG WAY!



See the "Friends of Firelands" Facebook page for more pictures and information about how you can help support our schools!

THE FIRELANDS EXPRESS

John's Safe Place, continued from page 7



who are struggling. They want students to understand that, "It's ok to not be ok." Since the inception of this foundation, they have installed 15 JSP rooms. Firelands High School and Firelands Middle School will house their 16th install.

John's parents, Beth and Rick Haney started the John Charles Haney Memorial Foundation in 2018 to bring awareness to mental health issues and to support individuals who are struggling. They want students to understand that, "It's ok to not be ok." Since the inception of this foundation, they have installed 15 JSP rooms. Firelands High School and Firelands Middle School will house their 16th install.

Firelands Superintendent Mr. Mike Von Gunten was first made aware of this important

mission at a meeting that was focused on teen depression and suicide. From there, he worked with Mr. Rick Haney to bring this opportunity to Firelands. "We are fortunate to have this partnership with the John C. Haney Foundation. Our students will be able to utilize this relaxation room if they experience situations that can be better serviced in a calming environment."

Students are able to use the space by checking in with Mrs. Pierson in the student services office.

The John C. Haney foundation aims to bring awareness to mental health illness. They provided funding for the space. Additional information about the foundation [can be found here](#) or by visiting www.thejchfoundation.com.

*Submitted by Mrs. Jennifer Butchko
Public Relations*



FES Teachers Receive Ohio Department of Education Award

Each year the Ohio Department of Education and the Positive Behavioral Interventions & Support (PBIS) teams gather to recognize districts that are doing outstanding work.

Together they look for districts that create a supportive system for teaching that encourages positive student behavior, as well as ones that address social-emotional skills. The team at Firelands Elementary School has once again been recognized as a caring unit that uses data to drive decisions as they develop and reinforce a system that provides effective academic and behavioral systems of support for all of their students.

This is the second year in a row that the team at Firelands Elementary School has received the Bronze Award!

Team members include Sun Choe, Laura Groboske, Christian Conner, Valerie Schuster, Kayla Cantu, Julie Wymer, Carrie Jaskiewicz, Sandy Fee, Susanne Scalli, Samantha Menzing, Julene Woods, Nicole Rogers, and Lori Christofferson.

Firelands Elementary School will be recognized at the Annual Ohio PBIS Showcase in December. Congratulations!

*Submitted by Mrs. Jennifer Butchko
Public Relations*

Arts in Education Week Kicked Off at Board Meeting

The Firelands Honor Choir open the September Board of Education meeting with The Star Spangled Banner.



Firelands Falcons Athletic Schedules and Information www.firelandsathletics.org

SCHEDULES ~ DIRECTIONS ~ SCORES ~ RECAPS ~ PHOTOS ~ PURCHASE TICKETS
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AND BE SURE TO FOLLOW ATHLETIC DIRECTOR TY STILLMAN [@FIRELANDSFALCON](https://twitter.com/FIRELANDSFALCON) ON TWITTER



Public Release: Benefits Available to Eligible Families

Firelands Local Schools

announced its 2022-2023 program year policy for meal assistance for students unable to pay the full price of meals or milk served under the National School Lunch and School Breakfast, After School Care Snack or Special Milk Programs. Each school office and the central office has a copy of the policy, which may be reviewed by any interested party.

The Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines will be used to determine eligibility. Children from families whose annual income is at or below the federal guidelines are eligible for free and reduced-price meals or free milk if the school participates in the Special Milk Program.

Application forms are distributed to all homes in a letter to parents or guardians. To apply for free and reduced-price benefits, households should complete an application and return it to the school. Additional copies are available at the principal's office in each school. A complete application is required. Households which currently receive Special Nutrition Assistance Program Benefits (SNAP, formally known as food stamps) or Ohio Works First (OWF) funds for a child must provide the child's name, the SNAP or OWF case number and signature of an adult household member on the application.

Households that do not receive SNAP or OWF funds must provide the names of all household members, the last four digits of the Social Security Number of the adult signing the application or state "none" if the adult does not have a Social Security Number, the amount and source of income received by each household member (state the monthly income) and the signature of an adult household member. If any of this information is missing, the school cannot process the application.

FREE HEALTH CARE

Families with children eligible for school meals may be eligible for free health care coverage through Medicaid and/or Ohio's Healthy Start & Healthy Families programs. These programs include coverage for doctor visits, immunizations, physicals, prescriptions, dental, vision, mental health, substance abuse and more. Please call 1-800-324-8680 for more information or to request an application. Information can also be found on the web at <http://jfs.ohio.gov/ohp/consumers/familychild.stm>. Anyone who has an Ohio Medicaid card is already receiving these services.

The information provided on the application is confidential and will only be used for the purpose to determine eligibility and may be verified at any time during the school year by school or other program official. To discourage the possibility of misrepresentation, the application forms contain a statement above the space for signature certifying that all information furnished is true and correct. Applications are being made in connection with the receipt of federal funds. Schools or other officials may check the information on the application at any time during the school year. Deliberate misrepresentation of information may subject the applicant to prosecution under applicable state and federal laws.

Households will be notified of the approval or denial of benefits.

Foster children are categorically eligible for free meal benefits regardless of the household's income. If a family has foster children living with them and wishes to apply for such meals or milk for them, contact the school for more information.

Under the provision of the policy, Judy Baumann, Food Service Director will review applications and determine eligibility. If a parent or guardian

disagrees with the decision on the application or the result of verification, the decision may be discussed with the determining official on an informal basis. If a formal appeal is desired, the household has the right to a fair hearing. A fair hearing can be requested either orally or in writing from:

Keri Angney
112 North Lake St.
South Amherst, Ohio 44001

The policy contains an outline of the hearing procedure.

Households may apply for benefits any time during the school year. If a household is not currently eligible and if the household size increases or income decreases because of unemployment or other reasons, the family should contact the school to file a new application. Such changes may make the children of the family eligible for free or reduced-price benefits if the family income falls at or below the levels shown above.

Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice

and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

Mail:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary
for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

Fax:

(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442;

Email:

program.intake@usda.gov

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Mrs. Ellen Gundersen
Mr. Dan Pycraft

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Policy Development: Ben Gibson
Transportation: Mike O'Keefe and Dan Pycraft
Finance & Audit Committee: Tom Myers and Ellen Gundersen
Foundation Trustee: Dan Pycraft
Future Planning: Ben Gibson & Dan Pycraft
OSBA/Legislative Liaison: Tom Myers
OSBA Student Achievement Liaison: Ellen Gundersen
Representative on LCJVS Board of Education: Dwayne Becker

Board of Education Purpose

The Board of Education is composed of five members, each elected to four years terms by the registered voters in the district. The primary responsibility of the Board is to establish purposes, programs and procedures which produce the educational achievement needed by District students. The Board must accomplish this while also being responsible for wise management of resources available to the District. The Board must fulfill these responsibilities by functioning primarily as a legislative body to formulate and adopt policy, by selecting an executive officer to implement policy and by evaluating the results.

The Board of Education Office is located at:
112 N. Lake St. South Amherst, Ohio 44001
Phone: 440-965-5821 Fax: 440-986-5702

**Firelands Band Boosters
2nd Annual**

ATV Raffle



raffle ticket price
\$50

Buy tickets at the home varsity football games next to the ticket booth.

Proceeds benefit the Firelands local schools instrumental music department.

Drawing will take place no later than the last home varsity game during halftime. Presence not required to win.

**1 in 400
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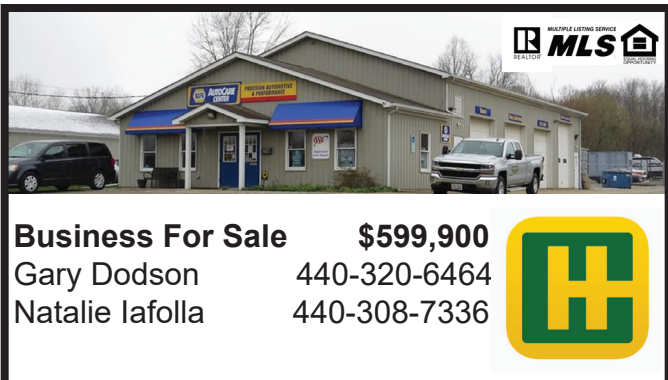
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