

LIVE WIRE

Choptank Electric Cooperative, Inc. Vol. 11, NO. 5

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MAY 2006

Live Wire is a monthly newsletter published for members of Choptank Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 430, Denton, MD 21629

**Toll Free:
1-877-892-0001**

**Outage Reporting:
1-800-410-4790,
toll free,
24 hours/ day,
7 days/week.**

**Automated Customer
Service Line:
1-800-311-8556, toll free
410-479-4206
(Caroline Co.)**

**Internet site:
www.choptankelectric.coop**

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Review electrical safety practices

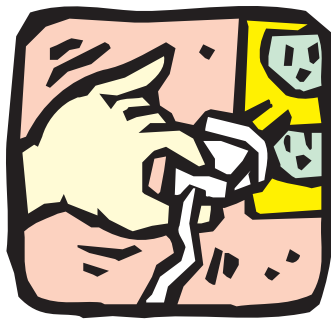
May is observed as National Electrical Safety Month, with the theme "Inspect and Protect — Safety Equals Awareness."

Choptank Electric Cooperative encourages homeowners to 1) inspect wiring systems in homes 40 years and older, 10 years and older with major renovations or new appliances added, or that have been newly purchased; 2) learn the potential hazards posed by aluminum wiring systems; and 3) consider installing arc fault circuit interrupter (AFCI) technology.

According to the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI), as electrical systems age, they can deteriorate and become overloaded. It is important that consumers have their electrical systems inspected by a licensed electrical inspector or electrician to identify and correct hidden hazards before they become tragedies.

To minimize the risk of electrical hazards in your home, ESFI strongly recommends that any electrical inspection include:

- Checking the capacity of the electrical service to ensure it is able to meet the demands placed upon it
- Checking the quality of exposed wiring
- Inspecting the panel box and checking that all connections are safe
- Checking the wiring of receptacles, switches and light fixtures, and checking for proper lamp wattage
- Measuring for voltage drop
- Checking for proper polarity and grounding at receptacles
- Checking for required ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) and testing each
- Identifying the type of wiring (aluminum or copper) and checking conductors and presence of overcurrent



May is National Electrical Safety Month

protection

- Checking the type, temperature rating and condition of the wire insulation
- Checking the age and type of various electrical system components
- Checking for placement of smoke alarms and test each
- Checking for appropriate surge protection.

In addition to having your home electrically inspected, homeowners can:

- Create a detailed circuit map—A detailed circuit map will note which outlets and fixtures are controlled by each circuit, and reflect the total

amount of power being demanded by appliances and fixtures.

- Remove electrical cords from behind baseboards and under carpets—a major fire hazard.
- Unplug electrical items not in use.

The following electrical safety tips may help avoid tragic and costly injuries:

- Make certain that all appliances and equipment are approved by an independent testing laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL).
- Use appliances and equipment according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Replace damaged electrical equipment or have it repaired at an authorized repair center. Replace frayed cords, broken plugs or cracks that could cause hazards; cut and throw out damaged cords.
- Use ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protection when working where water is near electricity, in areas such your kitchen, laundry room, bathroom or outdoors, to protect against electric shock.
- When using a generator, plug appliances directly into the generator or use a heavy duty outdoor-rated

Continued on page 3

Berlin office open house to be held in June



An open house for Choptank Electric members will be held on June 21 from 1 to 3 p.m. at the newly remodeled district office on Rt. 113 near Berlin.

Renovations and remodeling have been completed at the co-op office. A major addition is the drive-up window (shown at left), located at the front of the building, facing Rt. 113.

Much of the office space, customer service area and lobby were remodeled and enlarged, and a new meeting room with a kitchen was added. The meeting room is available for use by non-profit community groups. To reserve the room, call 1-877-892-0001 and ask to speak to a Berlin regional customer service representative or stop by the office.

'05 Capital Credits Allocation to be sent

Choptank is a non-profit member-owned organization. Any margins (profits) above the cost of service are allocated back to the member-owners of the cooperative based on how much electricity each member purchased during the year.

This allocation is done soon after the final financial statements have been reviewed and audited, typically in May or June. This year the 2005 Capital Credit Allocation will be made the end of May 2006. This year, as it was last year, the 2005 capital credit allocation notice for active customers will be shown on your June 2006 electric bill in the left message area above the bill stub. Inactive customers with 2005 electricity billings will receive their allocation notice by postcard.

The Choptank Electric Board of Directors reviews capital credits each year and makes the decision as to how and when to pay capital credits that have been allocated. Their decision is based on a variety of factors including the financial condition of the cooperative.

The total amount of capital credits (mar-

gins) allocated to members' accounts for 2005 totals \$4,289,231. The allocation is divided between allocations for Choptank Electric (Co-op) which totaled \$3,229,626 and for Old Dominion Electric Cooperative (ODEC), Choptank's energy supplier, which totaled \$1,059,605. In order to determine the allocation amount for each member, the cooperative calculates an allocation factor. Your 2005 capital credit allocation factors for Coop were 10.2752% and for ODEC were 1.9854%.

Example:

If your total 2005 billings were \$1,200, your approximate Choptank (Co-op) distribution billings would be \$500 and Old Dominion (ODEC) energy supplier billings would be \$700:

Co-op: $\$500 \times 10.2752\% = \51.38 allocated 2005 margins

ODEC: $\$700 \times 1.9854\% = \13.90 allocated 2005 margins.

If you have questions about your capital credits, please contact our customer service center at (877) 892-0001. Please have your account number available when you call.

'Power plants' given to members for Arbor Day at Choptank

Solar heat absorbed through windows and roofs can increase your air conditioner use. Incorporating shading concepts into your landscape design can help reduce this solar heat gain, reducing your cooling costs.

Choptank Electric gave away 1,000 Siberian crabapple trees to members who visited its offices on Arbor Day in April in an effort to encourage tree planting for energy conservation purposes.

Shading and evapotranspiration (the process by which a plant actively moves and releases water vapor) from trees can reduce surrounding air temperatures as much as 9° F. Because cool air settles near the ground, air temperatures directly under trees can be as much as 25°F cooler than air temperatures above nearby blacktop.

Trees can be selected with appropriate sizes, densities, and shapes for almost any shading application. To block solar heat in the summer but let much of it in during the winter, use deciduous trees.

Deciduous trees with high, spreading crowns (i.e., leaves and branches) can be planted to the south of your home to provide maximum summertime roof shading. Trees with crowns lower to the ground are more appropriate to the west, where shade is needed from lower afternoon sun angles.

Although a slow-growing tree may require many years of growth before it shades your roof, it will generally live longer than a fast-growing tree. Also, because slow-growing trees often have deeper roots and stronger branches, they are less prone to

breakage by windstorms or heavy snow loads. Slow-growing trees can also be more drought resistant than fast-growing trees.

When planning what type of tree to plant, remember to look up and look down to determine where the tree will be located in relation to overhead and underground utility lines.



Bob Collier, supervisor of right of way management, and Darlene Drummond, regional customer service representative, prepare to plant a Siberian crabapple tree at the Denton office.

\$1.2 million in capital credits returned

Choptank Electric is returning \$1.2 million in capital credits to its members, President and CEO Fred Hubbard announced at the 68th annual meeting held at Sailwinds Park in Cambridge.

As a cooperative, Choptank Electric is here to provide a service, not to make a profit or margin. One of the cooperative principles is the allocation of any margins earned by the co-op to its member-owners. Any revenue collected by the co-op that is not needed to cover the cost of providing service is accounted for and allocated back to the members based on the amount of electricity they paid for during the year.

Of the \$1.2 million, 50 percent will be paid to long-time members – those who had capital credits owed to them from 1984 and 1985. The other 50 percent will be paid to members who have been allocated capital credits from 1986 through 2004. This will be split according to the member's percentage of the total remaining allocation.

Members who received \$30 or more were mailed checks in late April; those to receive less than \$30 will have the amount credited to the bills they receive in May.

Choptank Electric Trust

The following Choptank Electric Trust grants were awarded in February by the Trust board of directors: Holly Community Inc. for Special Olympics, \$5,000; Easton Day Care, \$4,507, computer equipment and software; Salute to Cecil County Veterans, \$2,500; Kennedyville Volunteer Fire Co., \$5,400 for self-contained breathing apparatus units; Colonel Richardson High School After Prom Party, \$300.

For more information or an application, call 1-877-892-0001 or go to the website at www.choptankelectric.coop and go to Operation Round Up.

Recent outages on the co-op system

Princess Anne, 3/16, 40 min., 105 members, right of way problem
 Talbot, 3/20, 45 min., 69 members, cause unknown
 Barclay, 3/26, 2 hr. 20 min., 51 members, electric overload
 Mount Olive, 3/26, 2 hr. 20 min., 77 members, cause unknown
 Princess Anne, 3/30, 1 hr. 15 min., 105 members, cause unknown
 Airey, 4/3, 1 hr. 40 min., 132 members, small animals/birds
 Ironshire, 4/12, 50 min., 192 members, tree dropped on line by contractor
 Golden Hill, 4/17, 1 hr. 15 min., 793 members, lightning
 Princess Anne, 4/17, 7 hr. 10 min., 24 members, contractor dig in

Co-op to sponsor NRP vessel safety check in Denton

A complimentary vessel safety check will be held on May 20 from 8 a.m. to noon at Daniel Crouse Memorial Park in Denton, sponsored by the Maryland Natural Resources Police Reserve Officers -Eastern Region and Choptank Electric Cooperative.

Recreational boaters may bring their vessels by trailer to the parking area or by water to the boat ramp for this courtesy check. The examination will verify the presence and condition of certain safety equipment required by state and federal regulations.

The safety check is being held to kick off National Safe Boating Week. This year, the national observance emphasizes the importance of personal flotation devices (PFD) for children.

A new life jacket law for children became effective in Maryland on April 1. The law specifies that if a child is less than 4 years of age or weighs under 50 pounds the child must wear a PFD with specific additional safety features including: a strap that is secured between the child's legs to fasten together the front and back of the PFD; an



An example of the life jacket required for children under age 4 in Maryland.

inflatable headrest or high collar to keep the child's head above water; and a web handle to ensure the ready accessibility of the child from the vessel.

Under the Maryland law that was effective June 1, 2001, all children under the age of 7 must wear a U. S. Coast Guard approved Personal Flotation Device (Type I, II, III or V) while underway on a recreational vessel under 21 feet in length on Maryland waters. Recreational vessel includes motorboats, sailboats, canoes, kayaks, rowboats, and any other device capable of being used for transportation on the water, when the vessel is being used for other than commercial purposes.

The life jacket must be the proper size for the child and must be in good and serviceable condition.

This requirement does not apply when a vessel is moored or anchored or a child is below deck or in an enclosed cabin.

For more information go to www.dnr-web.dnr.state.md.us and for kids go to www.boatingsidekicks.com.

Safety (cont. from p1)

extension cord that is free of cuts and tears and has a 3-prong plug. Never try to power the house wiring by plugging the generator into a wall outlet, a dangerous practice known as backfeeding. If you must connect the generator to the house wiring to power appliances, have a qualified electrician install a power transfer switch in accordance with local electrical codes.

- Add protection by installing a new electrical safety device—an arc fault circuit interrupter (AFCI)—to detect and stop electrical arcs that can cause fires. Arcs are not detected by most breakers and fuses.
- Make sure power strips and surge suppressors are designed to handle the loads for their intended use. Avoid overloading circuits by plugging too many items into the same outlet.

Install GFCI protection for pools, spas, hot tubs

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) recommends the installation of ground-fault circuit-interrupter (GFCI) protection for consumers against electrical shock hazards in pool underwater lighting circuits and in electric circuits of spas and hot tubs.

A GFCI constantly monitors current flowing in a circuit to sense any loss of current. If the current flowing through two circuit conductors differs by a very small amount, the GFCI instantly interrupts the current flow to prevent a lethal amount of electricity from reaching the consumer. The consumer may feel a painful shock but will not be electrocuted.

The National Electrical Code provides for GFCI protection for cord-and-plug connected spas and hot tubs, and for lighting fixtures and receptacle outlets in the vicinity of pools, spas and hot tubs. However, the code does not require GFCI protection for all electrical equipment.

Older pools, spas and hot tubs may not have adequate GFCI protection. In particular, pools older than 10-15 years may not have GFCI protection on underwater lighting circuits. Underwater swimming pool lighting fixtures and spa/hot tub heaters are a potential source of electrocution. Both 120 volt and 240 volt circuits should be protected by GFCIs.

Although grounding may provide some protection for pool, spa, and hot tub equipment, GFCIs are the most effective means for protecting consumers against electric shock hazards.

CPS urges consumers to have an electrician install adequate GFCI protection for all spa and hot tub electrical equipment and for underwater swimming pool lighting fixtures. Install a GFCI on underwater light circuits operating at more than 15 volts. GFCIs should be installed in accordance with the National Electrical Code.

Watt's the Answer?

Win \$10 credit on your bill in our monthly trivia contest. Readers who send in the correct answer are entered in a drawing. Entries must be postmarked/dated by June 5.

Watt's the Answer for May: It's baseball season again, so tell us what pitcher is the all-time strikeout king? His blazing fastball was routinely clocked at over 100 mph!

Send to: Watt's the Answer? Choptank Electric, P.O. Box 430, Denton MD 21629 or anew@choptankelectric.coop. Please provide account or phone number.

The winner of the March contest is Deborah Shives of Vienna, who knew Francis Scott Key was an attorney by profession.

All Choptank offices will be closed on May 29 to observe Memorial Day.

CHOPTANK SECURITY

Choptank Security offers the very best in wireless, supervised security technology, plus LifeGard, the personal home emergency system.

Yes, I am interested in a no cost home security/life safety analysis at my home. Please call me to set up an appointment:

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Best time to call _____

Send me information about Choptank Security's maintenance program.

Send to: Choptank Security Systems, Attn: June Lederer
P.O. Box 310, Denton MD 21629



Pine Steppers Square Dance Club workshop every Wed., 7 p.m., Ocean Pines Community Hall. 410-835-3534 or 208-6777.

Vietnam Vets of America, 1st Thurs., 7 p.m., Easton VFW. 410-943-1374. Lower Shore, 3rd Thurs., VFW 194, Salisbury. 410-651-0904.

Bay Country Chorus (barbershop), every Mon., 7 p.m., Miller Hall, behind Trinity Cathedral, Goldsborough St., Easton. 410-770-8262.

Bingo: Willards VFC, Thurs., 7 p.m., Lions Club Bldg., 410-835-8678; Pittsville VFC, Fri., 7 p.m. 410-835-2323; Federalsburg VFW, Thurs., open 5:30 p.m., games 7:20 p.m. 410-754-5020. Hurlock Legion, Fri., 7:30 p.m., 410-943-8205; Denton Legion, Tues., 6 p.m., 410-479-2708; Redmen Lodge, Fruitland, Mon., 6:30 p.m. 410-742-6859; Willards Lions, Tues., 5 p.m., games 7 p.m. 410-835-2328;

Peninsulaires barbershop chorus, every Tues. 7:30 p.m., Wicomico Civic Ctr., Flanders Rm., Salisbury. 410-641-8927 or 410-543-8628.

Ocean Bay Chorus, Sweet Adelines, every Mon., 7 p.m., Wicomico Civic Center, Flanders Room, Salisbury. 410-749-0991.

Ocean Waves Square Dance Club workshop, every Tues., 7 p.m., Wicomico Civic Ctr., Salisbury. 410-742-2398 or 883-3723.

Delmarva Chorus, Sweet Adelines, every Mon., 7 p.m., Ocean Pines Community Center. 410-641-8088.

Disabled American Veterans Chap. 34, 4th Thurs., 1 p.m., Meuse VFW Post 194, Salisbury. 410-749-4518.

Chesapeake Christian Riders Chap. of CMA, 4th Sat., Golden Corral, Easton, 9-11. All welcome. 410-943-8325.

Pinochle Group, every Wed., 9:45 a.m., 410-641-8836, Bridge Club, every Wed., 10 a.m., 410-641-7667, Ocean Pines Yacht Club.

Pepper Steppers Square Dance, 2nd Sat., 8 p.m., First UM Church Hall, Chestertown. 410-758-1454 or 778-4578.

Wellness Community-Delmarva, weekly support groups for cancer patients/families, Talbot, Worcester, Wicomico. 888-806-0756.

Heartland Quilt Guild, 1st Thur., 7 p.m., Denton Library, 410-482-8131.

Women Supporting Women (breast cancer group), 3rd Wed., 7 p.m., Atlantic Business Ctr., Ste. 213, Berlin, 410-641-2849.

US Submarine Vets, 3rd Sat., Dover DE. 410-482-6994 or 302-945-2448.

Eastern Shore Bluegrass Assn., show & jam, 2nd Sun., 1 p.m., Marydel Fire Co. 302-674-3149 or 492-1048.

TOPS weight loss: Tues., 6:30 p.m., 1st Baptist, Marydel, 410-482-2658; Christ UMC, Salisbury, Thurs., 7 p.m. 410-749-9335/543-9039; Church of God, Washington St., Easton, Thurs., 6 p.m. 410-822-2630/673-2248.

Pine'er Craft Shop, Ocean Pines Community Center, 239 Ocean Parkway, open every Sat. & Sun., 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Line dance, Eastside Men's Club, Alexander Ave., Salisbury, every Fri. Beginner's lessons at 6 p.m. 410-749-1981.

National Assn. of Retired Federal Employees, 3rd Thurs., English's South, Rt. 13, Salisbury. 410-749-6635 or 742-8073.

Activity Singles Klub, Easton, 2nd Wed., 410-822-7468.

South Dorchester Folk Museum, 1st Wed., 7 p.m., Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge Visitors' Center, near Cambridge.

First Saturday Writers Group, Ocean Pines Branch, Worcester Public Library, all welcome. 410-641-5515.

Children's Health Program, for pregnant women & children to age 19. Kent, 410-778-7035, QA, 410-758-0720, Talbot, 410-819-5670.

Eastern Shore Stamp Club, 1st Tues., Wicomico Library, Salisbury, 6:30 p.m. 410-208-2929; Tidewater Stamp Club, 2nd & 4th Tue., 7 p.m., 14 S. Harrison St., 2nd fl., Easton. 410-822-6471.

First Monday, HIV/Aids support group in Salisbury, 1st & 3rd Mon. 5:30 p.m. 410-219-9000 ext. 101, 443-523-1745 or 443-523-1744.

Duplicate bridge: Riverside Homes, Salisbury, Mon., 7p.m. 410-835-8343; Tred Avon Club, Wed., noon, Chesapeake by Del Webb clubhouse, Dutchman's La., Easton. 410-226-5126.

Living with Cancer, 2nd, 3rd, 4th Thurs., 4-5:30 p.m., Kent & Queen Anne's Hospital, cafeteria meeting room. 410-778-5550.

Eastern Shore Writers' Assn., 2nd Sat., place TBA. 410-482-6736.

Queen Anne's Chapter, Barbershop Harmony Society, Wed., 7:30 p.m., Centreville UM Church, Rt. 213. 410-827-7993.

All you can eat breakfast, Eldorado-Brookview Firehouse, 3rd Sun., 7:30-10:30 a.m. \$6. 410-943-0216.

Overeaters Anonymous, every Sat., 10 a.m., Christ UM Church, Ed. Bldg., Salisbury. 410-376-0164.

Friends of the Ocean Pines Library, 2nd Mon., 10 a.m., main mtg. room of library. 410-208-2760.

Merry Widows & Widowers Social Club, 3rd Tues., 2:30 p.m., Ocean Pines Country Club. 410-208-6207.

Beach Singles social club for age 45+, last Tues, 6 p.m. For info./mtg. place, 410-208-3974.

M.O.P.S. (Mothers of Preschoolers), 1st Tues., 9 a.m., Greensboro Baptist Church, 401 Sunset Ave., through May. Free. 410-482-8601.

Delmarva Singles, ages 50+, 1st Wed., 6 p.m. Info 410-742-8310 or jasuth@intercom.net.

Bluegrass & country music night, Ruthsburg Community Club, May 12, 7:30 p.m. \$8 adults, 12 & under \$4. 410-758-0405.

Spring Festival, Auction & Car Show, Holly Center Campus, 926 Snow Hill Rd., Salisbury, May 13, 10-3. 443-260-0822.

Special Olympics, May 18, swim event, Holly Ctr., Salisbury, May 20, main events, Wicomico Stadium. 443-260-0822.

Senior Citizens Celebration, Sailwinds Park, Cambridge, May 18, 9-3. Music, health screenings, food, prizes. 410-228-0190.

Strawberry Festival, Neck Dist. Fire Co., Rt. 343, Cambridge, May 27. Flea mkt., crafts, strawberries, BBQ. 410-228-7807.

Oxford Fine Arts Fair, May 27-28, 10-5, community ctr., 37 artists featured. \$3 admission. 410-226-5904.

BBQ chicken, Linkwood-Salem Fire Co., Rt. 50, near Cambridge, May 26-27, June 30-July 1, July 21-22, 10 a.m.

Gospel Concert, Holiday Park, Greensboro, June 10, 6 p.m., food sales 5:30 p.m. Featured: Naomi & the Segos, Bates Family, Yoder Family, Just Forgivin', Bill & Karen Itzel.

Mid-Atlantic Classic Chevy Festival, July 10-11, Francis Scott Key Motel, Rt. 50, Ocean City. 302-732-3241.

Tuckahoe Triathlon, Tuckahoe State Park, Ridgely, June 10, 8 a.m., run, bike, canoe. 410-820-1668.

Chestertown 300th Celebration Colonial Ball, June 10, 8-12, downtown Chestertown. \$40. 410-810-1356.

Village Fair, Berlin, June 10, crafts, annual idol contest, bathtub races & more. www.berlinmcc.org

Cypress Festival, Pocomoke City, June 15, 6-10, June 16, 6-11, June 17, 2-11. Music, rides, fireworks. www.pocomoke.com

Preston Lions & Fire Co. Carnival, June 19-24, rides, games, food, parade 6/20, 7 p.m. 410-673-7793.

Delmarva Chicken Festival, June 23-24, Byrd Park, Snow Hill, giant fry pan, car show, carnival, music. 800-878-2449.

Md. State Firemen's Assn. Conference parade, June 21, 1 p.m., Ocean City. www.msfa.org

SEND EVENTS TO: Shore Good to Know, Choptank Electric, P.O. Box 430, Denton, MD 21629; or annew@choptankelectric.coop two months prior to event if possible. Include phone number.