



# LIVE WIRE

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

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**DECEMBER 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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## Merry and Bright (and efficient too)!

Holiday lighting can add up to \$50 to your December household power bill. But you can have a festive display for much less. Here are some things to think about as you plan your holiday decorations:

**Energy Efficiency** - Using the right fixtures and limiting the time the lights are on can save you big this holiday season. The following list is designed to help:

- **Bulb Wattage:** The large, traditional bulbs (may be labeled C-7 or C-9) use 4-10 watts per bulb. Mini-lights use about four tenths of a watt (0.4 Watt) per bulb, and the new LED lights use only four one-hundredths of a watt (0.04 Watt).
- **Bulbs per String:** The larger bulbs are usually sold 25 to a string, while the smaller bulb sets may have 35 to 200 bulbs per string. Icicle lights have 100 lights per 10-foot string. LED lights have 35-100 bulbs per string.

• **Strings per House:** The more lights you use, the more power you'll use. Whether you use one string or many, you'll be rewarded with a lower power bill with energy-efficient lights.

• **Timing:** Reduce your energy use by running your outdoor lights on a timer pre-set for three to five hours and by using mirrors and tinsel around indoor lights to increase the lighting effects.

To ensure a safe and happy holiday season, be sure to follow these guidelines:

- **Make sure any light set you purchase has been approved by Underwriters Laboratories.** The UL mark on a product label guarantees that representative samples of the product have been tested and comply with applicable UL safety requirements. Make sure you get the right set — for indoor use, outdoor use or both.
- **Do not overload electrical circuits.** Circuits in older homes carry a maximum of 15 amps or 1,800 watts each. Circuits in most new homes can carry 20 amps or 2,400 watts each. To figure out your holiday lighting load, multiply the number of bulbs by the number of watts per bulb (if you're not sure about the wattage, play it safe and use 10 watts per bulb in your calculations). Be sure to include house lamps, appliances and other electrical equipment on the same circuit.
- **Before you decorate, check light sets for frayed wires, damaged sockets or cracked insulation.** If you find defects, replace the entire set.
- **Hot bulbs can ignite dry branches and other flammable decorations.** Avoid fire by keeping your natural tree well watered and keeping extension cords and light sets away from water. Light the tree only when you are home and awake. Keep a fire extinguisher handy and your smoke detectors in working order.



**St. Michaels District Serviceman Tom Simpson installs banners with childrens' drawings as part of the town's Christmas displays.**

- **Unplug indoor tree lights before watering the tree, and turn off all electrical decorations before leaving home or going to bed.**
- **For outdoor lighting, use a ground fault circuit interrupter on each circuit.** If current leaks through frayed or damaged wires, the interrupter shuts it off.
- **Be careful with ladders!** Don't stand higher than the top two steps, and keep them at least ten feet away from overhead power lines.

**Efficiency:** While light-emitting diodes (LEDs) may still have a way to go before capturing a large chunk of the overall lighting market, they're gaining ground this winter in a smaller application: holiday lighting displays.

A report commissioned by the U.S. Department of Energy estimated that in 2002, holiday lighting accounted for 2.2 billion kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity use. Because LEDs boast energy-efficiency advantages of 80 to 90 percent

over traditional incandescent holiday lights, the report estimates a complete market shift to LEDs could reduce electricity demand by 2 billion kWh each year.

In 2004, national retailers began carrying LED strands, and U.S. manufacturers have begun to produce a variety of styles to match consumer preferences. From twinkle lights to globe lights, icicle lights to beaded strands, LEDs are beginning to compete with incandescent bulbs in most applications.

In many respects, LED holiday lights make a perfect case for efficiency — they take advantage of the unique properties of LED lights to benefit users in a number of ways. Unlike incandescent light, which is filtered through colored glass to create specific colors, solid state lighting is produced in an array of colors — red, green, yellow, and amber, to name a few — which makes it ideal for the multi-colored strands that decorate Christmas trees, mantels and household eaves.

Because only one color of light is produced by the LED, there's little to no extra energy heating up the bulb. Traditional bulbs are known to get hot and incite fears of fire when hung on indoor trees; LEDs barely even get warm. For much the same reason, LEDs last much longer than incandescent bulbs — most LED lifetime estimates are well over 100,000 hours. As a result, they can be sealed into durable plastic, which protects the lighting from the moisture damage and breakage that hamper incandescent lighting.

LEDs can be costly, however. A 100-light strand, retails at about \$30 compared with as little as \$4 to \$10 for incandescents.

*Season's Greetings to all our members!*



**THE EAGLE HAS LANDED** — Choptank Electric showed its support for the National Bird recently by setting cut trees or “snags” at Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge near Cambridge for use as eagle perches. Pictured are Cambridge district chief lineman Dennis Grafton, Joe Krish from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and apprentice lineman Alan Eigenbrode. Sightings of eagles are fairly common at the refuge, as Blackwater is the center of the greatest nesting density of bald eagles in the eastern United States north of Florida. The golden eagle is also frequently sighted. Over 85 species of birds breed in the refuge woodlands and surrounding habitat.

## Copper thieves could pay with their lives for crime

With the price for salvage copper soaring, electrical wire has become what some thieves perceive as easy pickings. But if they pick the wrong wire, it could cost them their life.

There have been several recent instances of wire theft from Choptank Electric’s offices, substations and equipment, according to Tom Mills, supervisor of training, safety and compliance.

Copper wire is used because it effectively conducts a current at a cost that has been historically less than other metals.

Mr. Mills said fences have been cut at district office facilities and substations, and pole ground wires have been ripped off in attempts to steal copper wire. “In the most recent incident someone broke open an energized electrical cabinet near Earleville,” Mr. Mills said. The vandalism caused a substation to lose power and over 2,800 members were without power for about an hour. “It could have cost the perpetrator his life,” Mr. Mills added.

Copper thefts are a growing problem across the country, as several substation intruders in Virginia, Kentucky, Florida and Texas have been electrocuted while attempting to steal copper.

“Choptank Electric takes the theft of materials such as copper wiring very seriously,” said Mr. Mills. “Theft of utility equipment can leave an area unsafe, where cooperative employees and the public may be exposed to ungrounded equipment. Grounds are installed on substation equipment so it can be worked on safely, and the copper wire

conducts an electrical current,” he said. “It’s only a matter of time before someone’s luck runs out and they’re killed by 7,200 volts while they try to take something that doesn’t belong to them.

“If a copper thief chooses an energized wire, the results could be deadly. Anyone who cuts into an energized power line has a good chance of being electrocuted,” Mr. Mills said.

Utility cable theft is not a victimless crime. Ratepayers end up footing the bill for replacing and repairing the damage left by a wire thief, which could total in the thousands of dollars. Also adding to the cost are stepped-up security measures.

“Much more important than the cost for repair is that this type of theft could result in serious injury or loss of life,” Mr. Mills said. “If a fence is cut or a cabinet left open, this endangers the public — especially children who may be unaware of the danger.

“This is an on-going public safety problem and we ask the public’s assistance with it,” Mr. Mills stated. “The only people working on our transformers and other equipment should be our crews or those of our contractors.

“If anyone notices a fence around a co-op substation has been cut or sees an electrical cabinet left open, please call our toll free line at 877-892-0001 to report it. Our facilities and substations are fenced and locked for a reason, and that is to keep the public safe. By reporting suspicious activity near substations and electrical lines, you could be saving someone’s life.”

## Statewide assn. offers scholarships to co-op students

High school seniors whose parents or legal guardians are members Choptank Electric are eligible to apply for college scholarships awarded by the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives (VMDAEC) Education Foundation.

Scholarships of \$500 and \$1,000 each will be awarded in 2007 to deserving young men and women based on a competitive screening process. Applicants must provide evidence of acceptance in a post-high school educational institution or program. The scholarship funds awarded are sent directly to the educational institution the student will attend, placed in the student’s account and can be used to pay for tuition, fees and books.

The deadline to apply for VMDAEC Education Foundation Scholarship is April 2, 2007. Applications are available online at [www.co-opliving.com/community](http://www.co-opliving.com/community) or by mail by writing to: VMDAEC Scholarships, P.O. Box 2340, Glen Allen, Va. 23058-2340.

In 2006, the VMDAEC Education Foundation awarded 38 scholarships to students living in Virginia, Maryland and Delaware. Since its inception in 2000, 134 students have received VMDAEC scholarships. The total number of scholarships awarded each year depends on the amount of funds available.

The Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives was founded in 1944 and provides training, communications, governmental relations and other services to Choptank Electric and the 15 other electric cooperatives that serve the three-state Mid-Atlantic region. For more information, visit [www.vmdaec.com](http://www.vmdaec.com).

The Choptank Electric Trust will be presenting scholarships to high school seniors whose parents or legal guardians are members of the cooperative. Applications for these scholarships will be mailed to high school guidance offices in January and will also be available at [www.choptankelectric.coop](http://www.choptankelectric.coop) in January.

Deadline for the local co-op scholarships is March 31, 2007. For information, call 1-877-892-0001, ext. 3074.

**Have a safe and happy holiday. All co-op offices will be closed Dec. 22 and 25 and Jan. 1.**



## Recent system outages

10/13, Hillsboro, 69 members, 1 hr. 15 min., small animal/birds  
 10/15, Millington, 79 members, 1 hr. 15 min., equipment fault  
 10/18, Costen, 63 members, 6 hr. 35 min., planned maintenance  
 10/20, Earleville, 53 members, 4 hr. 25 min., right of way trouble  
 10/20, Hillsboro, 119 members, 50 min., right of way trouble  
 10/20, Millington, 626 members, 3 hr. 35 min., right of way trouble  
 10/23, Longwoods, 48 members, 40 min., equipment fault  
 10/25, Pocomoke, 161 members, 2 hr., fire  
 10/27, Earleville, 2,852 members, 1 hr. 15 min., vandalism  
 10/28, Delmar, 41 members, 1 hr. 45 min.,

right of way trouble  
 10/28, Greensboro, 45 members, 4 hr. 25 min., right of way trouble  
 10/29, Kingston, 65 members, 2 hr., equipment fault  
 10/31, West Denton, 52 members, 40 min., unknown  
 11/4, Grace St., 50 members, 1 hr. 45 min., right of way trouble  
 11/7, Millington, 457 members, 1 hr. 5 min., fire  
 11/7, Millington, 48 members, 1 hr. 50 min., fire  
 11/8, Millington, 79 members, 6 hr. 55 min., right of way trouble  
 11/10, Earleville, 492 members, 30 min., planned maintenance

## Choptank Trust awards granted in October

St. Luke United Methodist Church - \$2,000 for computer and keyboard.  
 James B. Richardson Foundation, Inc. - \$5,400 for renovation materials  
 Mt. Olivet United Methodist Church - \$800 for building materials.  
 Preston Volunteer Fire Company - \$2,526 for Stair Pro 6252 chair  
 Humane Society of Dorchester County - \$5,481.70 cabinet/countertop for animal prep, 3-tier modular cages, heating pad; anesthesia machine.  
 Horizons at The Salisbury School - \$1,000 for event.

Queen Anne's County FFA - \$1,000 registration fees for National FFA Convention.  
 Camp Charity Foundation - \$3,000 for art materials.  
 Taylor's Island Volunteer Fire Company, Inc. - \$6,995 ISG Thermal Camera  
 Easton High School After Graduation Party, Class of 2007 - \$300 gift card towards supplies.  
 Norman Cathell - \$500 towards Eagle Scout Project with American Red Cross- Lower Shore  
 Disabled individual- \$126 for repairs to wheelchair lift on van.

## Nominations by petition now open

The Choptank Electric Board of Directors is required by corporate bylaws to appoint a nominating committee from the membership in order to present a slate of candidates for the positions on the board of directors up for election in a particular year.

This group of members must be appointed and meet no less than 60 days nor more than 120 days prior to the annual meeting. The slate chosen must be posted in accordance with the bylaws in a prominent place in the Denton headquarters office lobby.

There is also a provision in the bylaws for nominations by petition. Any 15 members may submit a nominee to represent a given county. The 15 signatures must be those of current members of Choptank Electric, one signature per membership (two signatures from a joint membership count as one). The person nominated must be a cooperative member and meet the requirements of a director as outlined.

Petitions must be received at the cooperative 60 days prior to the annual meeting. This means the petitions must be at Choptank's headquarters office no later than January 9, 2007. Any nominations received after this deadline will be treated as a nomination from the floor. The annual meeting for 2007 will be held March 10 at Sailwinds Park in Cambridge.

Requirements of a candidate:

- Must be a current member of Choptank Electric Cooperative;
- Must live within the county they would represent and be a registered voter in that county (the counties will be Caroline, Wicomico and Worcester);
- May not serve if there is a conflict of interest arising out of their livelihood;
- May not hold a public office for which they receive in excess of \$100 per year remuneration;
- May not have a delinquent bill owed the cooperative which they refuse to pay.

## Warming the Hearts of Delmarva again

Choptank Electric is proud to be in its 7th year of the Warming the Hearts of Delmarva winter coat collection along with WRXS 106.9 radio in Bishopville.

Good used winter coats will be collected at co-op offices in Denton, Salisbury and Berlin through January 4, 2007 and donated to local agencies for families in need. Coats

may also be dropped off at Pohanka Automotive, Salisbury, WMDT-TV, Salisbury, Vernon Powell Shoes, Salisbury, The Blue Ox Restaurant, Ocean City, Harley Davidson of Ocean City, and The Greene Turtle Apparel Shop, Ocean City.

We thank our members and employees for their generosity with this project through the years.

## 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



## 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 Jan. 5.

### Watt's the Answer for December:

Which U.S. president started the annual tradition of the National Christmas Tree lighting ceremony on the White House lawn?

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

September winner Clifton Turner of Denton knew the pesky pieces of paper on Florida ballots were "chads" or "hanging chads." August winner Martha Allen of Church Creek knew Vatican City at 108.7 acres is the world's smallest independent nation.

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 Bldg., 410-835-8678; Pittsville VFC, Fri., 7 p.m. 410-835-2323; Federalsburg VFW, Thurs., 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, Fruitland, Mon., 6:30 p.m. 410-742-6859; Willards Lions, Tues., 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. 410-641-6876.

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

Chesapeake Christian Riders CMA #453, 1st Thurs, Bob Evans Restaurant, Easton, 6 p.m. 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.

Heartland Quilt Guild, 1st Thur., 7-9, Choptank Electric mtg. rm., Denton, 410-482-8131.

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

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, 410-482-6694; Thurs. 7 p.m., Christ UMC, Salisbury, 410-546-4197/543-9039; Church of God, Easton, Thurs. 6 p.m. 410-822-2630/673-2248; Tues. 6 p.m., 418 Dutchman's La., Greensboro; Tues. 6 p.m., Caroline Nsg. Home sun room, 410-482-2658.

National Assn. of Retired Federal Employees, 3rd Thurs., call for mtg. places, 410-749-6635/742-8073; Chap. 2274, 4th Thurs., Hall's Restaurant, Ocean City, 11:30 a.m., 410-641-2755.

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

Children's Health Prog., pregnant women & children to age 19. Kent, 410-778-7035, QA, 410-758-0720, Talbot, 410-819-5690, Caroline, 410-479-8004.

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.

Duplicate bridge: Riverside Homes, Salisbury, Mon., 7p.m. 410-835-8343; Tred Avon Club, Wed., noon, Talbot Community Ctr., Rt. 50, Easton. 410-226-5126.

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., Sept.-May, 7:30-10:30 a.m. \$6. 410-883-2520.

Overeaters Anonymous, every Sat., 10 a.m., Christ UM Church, Ed. Blg., Salisbury. 410-376-0164; every Fri., noon, Family Connection Ctr., 29 Broad St., Ste. 209, Berlin. 410-629-0679.

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 age 45+, last Tues, 6 p.m. 410-208-3974; Delmarva Singles, 50+, 1st Wed., 6 p.m. 410-742-8310 or jasuth@intercom.net.

Denton Alcoholics Anonymous, 105 Gay St., Thurs., 8 p.m.

Worcester Chorale, Wed., 7 p.m., Community Church, Rt. 589, Ocean Pines. 410-208-1999.

Dorchester Swingers, square dance, 1st Fri., 8 p.m., Maple Elem. School, Egypt Rd., Cambridge. 410-822-7535.

Co-Dependents Anonymous, every Sun., 6:30 p.m., Christ UMC, Ed. Bldg., Salisbury. 410-376-0164.

Line Dance, 2nd Fri., 7:30 p.m., Fraternal Order of Police Lodge, Kitt's Hummock Rd., Dover DE. 410-699-1074.

Beginners line dance lessons, 6 p.m., Harrington, DE area. 410-699-1074 for more info.

Talbot Humane Society, Easton, low cost spay/neuter clinic, every Thurs. for cats. Call for appt., 410-822-0107.

Dorchester Swingers Square Dance, 1st Fri. 8 p.m., Maple Elementary School, Cambridge. 410-822-7535 or 410-228-8294.

Victorian Christmas, thru Dec., downtown Berlin. 410-641-4775.

Winterfest of Lights, thru Jan. 1, Ocean City, inlet lot & Northside Park, Sun.-Thurs. 5:30-9:30, Fri.-Sat. 5:30-10:30.

Denton Holiday Parade, Dec. 7, 6 p.m., followed by Lighting of the Green.

Ocean Bay Chap. Sweet Adelines, Christmas concert, Dec. 9, 2 p.m. & 7:30 p.m., Wicomico HS, Salisbury. 410-749-1194.

Federalsburg Christmas Parade, Dec. 11, 7 p.m. 410-754-8157.

Luminaria in Vienna, Dec. 23, 5-9, open houses, hay ride, Santa.

Let It Snow Holiday Time Craft & Story Program, Dorchester Co. Library, Hurlock, Dec. 6, 4-5 p.m., register 410-943-4331; Dec. 9, 10:30-11:30 a.m., Cambridge, register 410-228-7331.

"Christkindlmarkt" Holiday Jumble Sale, local craft vendors, Dec. 9, 9 a.m.-noon; Second Saturday Book Sale, Dorchester Co. Library, Cambridge, lower level, Dec. 9, 9-3, 410-228-7331.

Holiday House Tour of Chestertown & Kent Co. Historic Homes, Dec. 9, 1-5 p.m. 410-810-1356.

Cambridge Women's Club's Annual Holiday Candlelight Tour, Dec. 10, 4-7, \$10 donation, tickets at Dorchester Arts Council or 410-901-2274.

Passage to India by E.M. Forster, discussion leader Trippe Callahan, Dec. 11, 7-9, Caroline Co. Library, Denton, 410-479-1343.

Open House & tour, The Old Trinity Church, Jan. 6, 2-4 p.m., 8 mi. S. of the Hyatt, Cambridge, turn on Rt. 16. 410-228-2940.

Jane Smiley's short biography of Charles Dickens, discussion leader Pat Bradley, Caroline Co. Library, Denton, Jan. 8, 7 p.m., 410-479-1343.

Nautical & Wildlife Art Festival, Jan. 13, 10-5, Jan. 14, 10-4, Ocean City Convention Center. 410-524-9177.

North American Craft Show, Jan. 13, 10-5, Jan. 14, 10-4, Ocean City Convention Center. 410-524-9177.

Run Of The Mill, History & Archaeology of Maryland Mills, James Gibbs, Caroline Co. Library, Greensboro, Jan. 19, 7 p.m.

Big Joe's New Orleans Jazz Party, Caroline Co. Library, Denton, Jan. 26, 7 p.m., 410-479-1343.

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