

# LIVE WIRE

Choptank Electric Cooperative, Inc. Vol. 13, NO. 4

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APRIL 2008

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7 days/week.

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## Let's talk: Our energy — Our future

A message from Choptank Electric's President and CEO Fred Hubbard:

Pressure is mounting in Congress to do something about climate change. And while political debates in Washington, D.C., may seem far away, the outcome will have a direct impact on our cooperative — and on you, the cooperative member and other electric consumers.

Climate change is but one aspect of a looming energy crisis created by increasing demand and decreasing capacity to meet that demand. Experts now say some areas of the country will be short of power within one or two years.

And yet energy supply isn't an issue our elected representatives are spending a lot of time on. These forces, the desire by government to reduce greenhouse gas emissions quickly and the growing demand for power by consumers, are about to collide.

Some people say we can meet demand through efficiency and renewable energy. The reality is we need all the efficiency and renewable energy we can get, but that will not be enough.

To avert an energy crisis, the federal government must exercise true leadership, the same leadership that got Americans to the moon in the 1960s. Without that leadership — without a sound, responsible plan — government risks not only the reliability of our electric system, but literally the ability of many Americans to be able to afford to pay their electric bill.

We, as electric co-op members and constituents, must call on elected officials to provide this leader-

ship. That's why I want to encourage you to contact your elected officials.

Now.

You don't need to be an energy expert to ask questions. Asking questions helps find the answers to solve the problem of balancing climate change goals with keeping your lights on and your electric bills affordable.



Hubbard

Right now, members of Congress as well as state elected officials are hearing from lots of different interest groups who have ideas about how to address climate change. No one is talking to consumers, however. We need a plan people can live with today while we deal with the climate change problem of tomorrow.

To make things easy, there is a website that will send an email for you. Go to [www.ourenergy.coop](http://www.ourenergy.coop) and plug in your address. There you'll be able to ask a series of questions to your representatives in Washington. We're kicking this effort off with a basic but critical question: What are they doing to make sure we'll have the power we need in the future?

Far too often questions don't get asked by policy makers until plans go wrong. We believe it makes sense to know the answers before the laws are passed. You can help your elected officials and yourself by having this conversation. The electric bill you save will be your own. — Frederick L. Hubbard

## Co-op scores high in safety inspection

Choptank Electric Cooperative's recent system review by the Rural Electric Safety Accreditation Program (RESAP) was close to perfect with a final score of 98 percent, according to Kenneth J. Brubaker, manager of safety programs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

The Denton-based cooperative is reviewed every three years for the RESAP program, which is administered by NRECA. It is a peer review program consisting of job training 391118102 and safety professionals and affiliates that promote and encourage employee and public safety throughout the rural electric community. Choptank has received safety accreditations every three years since 1996.

Tom Mills, supervisor of safety, training and compliance at the co-op, said RESAP is a voluntary program in which the utility is judged by a team of evaluators through an on-site inspection, and an extensive review of written safety policies and procedures.

The evaluations include reviews of employee education and training, public education, plant and facilities, all substations and offices, tools, operating equipment, lines and structures.

"This is not something you do once, pass and forget about. RESAP requires you to have an on-going safety program. This means we have a safer workplace for our employees, our members and the general pub-



Tom Mills and Fred Hubbard display the co-op's recent safety accreditation.

lic," Mr. Mills said. Accreditation is also important for compliance with OSHA guidelines.

Fred Hubbard, president and CEO at Choptank commended Mr. Mills and co-op employees for the high score. "Our safety accreditation is certainly a team effort from our board, management and employees. We are proud of everyone who makes safety an integral part of our daily operations.

"By participating in RESAP, we can assure our members that Choptank recognizes the critical impor-

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## Employees take on new positions

Two long-time employees of Choptank Electric Cooperative have been appointed to new positions on co-op staff.

Thomas Tyndall III of Berlin was named Energy Program Coordinator, and Harold J. "Joe" Sise Jr. of Bishopville was named Senior Regional Customer Service Manager.



Sise



Tyndall

Administrator of Customer Service.

"We are excited to have Tom in a position where his skills and knowledge of HVAC systems, insulation installation and construction techniques can better serve our membership," Mr. Hubbard said.

Mr. Sise has been a Choptank employee for 23 years. He completed the linemen's program and became a Journeyman Lineman in 1987. He has been Supervisor of District Operations and Supervisor of Construction in the Berlin office and became the Regional Customer Service Manager for the co-op's southern region in 2004.

Mr. Hubbard said, "We are also pleased that Joe will assume the position of Senior Regional Customer Service Manager. This is a new position for Joe and fits the cooperative's needs at this time."

Mr. Sise will synchronize the regional customer service manager duties of the southern region, which include the Berlin and Pocomoke offices, and give guidance and assistance to the co-op's central and northern regions as needed.

Fred Hubbard, president and CEO at the co-op, said, "We recognized the growing need for Choptank to have someone in place to coordinate our efforts to comply with Governor O'Malley's recent 15 by 15 energy initiative, and the additional mandates and directions that will surely come from this year's legislative session.

In addition to duties involving the 15 by 15 initiative and Choptank's own "Watts in the Future" program, Mr. Tyndall will coordinate residential and commercial energy audits, and continue to work with members who have billing concerns.

Mr. Tyndall is a 22-year employee of the co-op. During that tenure he has been Member Service Advisor, Regional Customer Service Manager, and most recently

## Transmission line to be rebuilt in Wor.

Choptank Electric is planning to re-build the existing transmission line that extends from the St. Martin's Substation on Carey Road to the substation on Cathell Road in Worcester County.

The purpose of this construction is to replace the original line, which was built over 35 years ago, according to Robert Jump, coordinator of engineering field services. "This construction is critical to maintaining reliability to Choptank members in this section of Worcester County including Ocean Pines," Mr. Jump said.

Work has been contracted to Rock Creek Construction Company and was expected to begin in early April, with completion by mid-June. All construction will take place within the existing rights of way.

There will be a transition period when both the new and old lines will be in place, which is a construction necessity. The old poles and wire will be removed as soon as possible and the end result will be no additional burden on the affected properties, according to Mr. Jump.

## Let us hear from you about the REA!

In 2008, it's difficult to even imagine a time when electricity wasn't available to everyone, but prior to 1935 and the passage of the Rural Electrification Act, that was the case in rural America. It wasn't until 1938 that people in rural areas of the Eastern Shore of Maryland were able to "hook up to the REA."

This year, Choptank Electric Cooperative is celebrating its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary, having grown from less than 500 members in Caroline County in 1938 to over 52,000 in all nine counties of the Shore.

We know a number of our current members still remember when they could "hook up to the REA" for the first time and we'd like to hear about it. If you or a family member can recall life "before electricity" and how it changed when Choptank Electric built its poles and lines in your area, please tell us about it!

Write a letter or a short note, send an email or fax, if you've got photos, we'd like to have those as well. We'll feature the stories throughout the year on our website and in the Live Wire. Send your memories to: Anne Whaples, Choptank Electric Cooperative, PO Box 430, Denton MD 21629; email [annew@choptankelectric.coop](mailto:annew@choptankelectric.coop); fax to 410-479-1014; or call 877-892-0001, ext. 8640. We'd love to hear from you!

So far we've received a number of phone calls, letters, emails and have had personal visits with members who "remember when..." Thanks to all who have contacted us so far -- your memories are great and we'll share them at the 70th annual meeting.

## "Straight Talk" for our members



By Bob Behlke  
Vice President of  
Consumer Affairs

I mentioned last month that Choptank, along with the other electric utilities in the state had to submit a plan that would achieve a 15 percent energy reduction by 2015 (15 x 15). Our plan has been submitted and we are waiting for the Public Service Commission's approval.

As you might imagine, Annapolis has been abuzz with legislative proposals that will help "right" the electric industry in Maryland. In case you didn't know, there are over 2,600 bills up for legislative action this year. We are working 78 energy-related bills that would have an effect on our members if enacted.

Some of the bills, like Governor O'Malley's 15 x 15 are ones we can live with, even though there will be a cost to comply. There are others over which we have a great concern, House Bill 1389, for example. This bill encourages electric utilities to employ pilot programs for "Smart Grid" technology. Smart Grid means the electric company would be able to monitor real time activity on the grid, such as how many watts are being used, and to have the ability to turn off water heaters, air conditioners, and heat pumps through the meter. Choptank has been using similar technology for many years. The problem with this bill is it only allows for cost recovery from the meters in the program. That

translates into it would be far too expensive for the members in the pilot to even consider this new type of communication. The solution would be to spread the cost over the entire membership because everyone would benefit from reduced demand. 9912533300

I don't want to bore our members with legislative details of bills that may not come to pass, but I wanted you to know we are putting forth our best efforts to keep unnecessary costs from being added to your electric bill.

Our struggle is greater than simply finding solutions to legislation. We are charged with delivering the least expensive electric possible, insuring a reliable delivery system, and making sure we don't cause any unintended harm to the environment. Easy to say, difficult to accomplish, but what I can tell you is we work hard every day to achieve these goals.

We communicate consistently with Old Dominion Electric Cooperative, our power supplier, to know we are getting the best price available. As you know the price of oil seems to rise daily, which has a dramatic effect on all types of energy. We have made major improvements to our delivery system to insure reliability. Again, rising construction prices from both materials and labor make this an expensive endeavor.

I probably haven't told you anything of which you weren't already aware, but sometimes it is reassuring to know we are working for you, our owners. We want to make sure Choptank's voice is heard locally, and on both state and federal levels. If we don't do it, no one will.

# When to turn off your PC

If you're wondering when to turn off personal computers for energy savings, here are some general guidelines.

While a small surge in energy consumption occurs when a computer starts up, this hardly compares to the amount used when a computer runs for a long time. For energy savings and convenience, consider turning off the monitor if you aren't going to use your PC for more than 20 minutes, and switch off both the CPU and monitor if you're not going to use your PC for more than two hours.

Make sure monitors, printers, and other accessories are plugged in to a power strip/surge protector. When not using equipment for extended periods, turn off the switch on the power strip to prevent any power drain. If you don't use a power strip, unplug extra equipment when it's not in use.

Most PCs today reach the end of their useful life due to advances in technology long before any negative effects of being switched on and off multiple times can be seen. But as a general rule of thumb, the less

time a PC is on, the longer it will "last." PCs also produce heat, so turning them off reduces the need for air conditioning.

Many PCs come with a power-down or sleep mode feature for the CPU and monitor. ENERGY STAR® computers consume 15 watts or less in this mode—around 70 percent less electricity than a computer without power management features. ENERGY STAR monitors also have the capability to power down into two successive sleep modes, first to 15 watts and then to 8 watts—less than 10 percent of its operating power consumption.

Keep in mind that screen savers are not energy savers. Using a screen saver may in fact require more energy than not using one, and your power-down feature may not work if you have a screen saver activated. In fact, modern LCD color monitors do not need screen savers.

*Source: U.S. Department of Energy Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy*

# Choptank Trust February Awards

- Salisbury Urban Ministries – \$5,150 for computer equipment
- Talbot Teen Court – \$500 for materials and supplies
- Character Counts! Queen Anne's County – \$2,000 for resource materials
- Kent County Fire Police Association — \$3,800 for 12 sets of safety outerwear
- Diamond Dreams 12u Youth Baseball Team – \$750 for items for players
- Literacy League of Dorchester County, Inc. – \$1,000 towards hall rental for event
- Hospice of Queen Anne's, Inc. – \$10,000 towards three patient beds
- Soroptimists of Pocomoke City – \$2,500 towards lumber for shelter addition for women and children
- Easton High School Class of 2008 After Graduation Party – \$300 gift card
- Lower Shore Chapter of the American Red Cross – \$5,000 towards purchase of new general purpose vehicle
- Samaritan Group, Inc. – \$3,000 towards
- Emergency Winter Homeless Shelter Life Crisis Center, Inc.— \$1,000 for two commercial mattresses
- Assateague Coastal Trust – \$1,700 towards fund raising event
- Assistance for needy individuals - \$11,312

## Safety

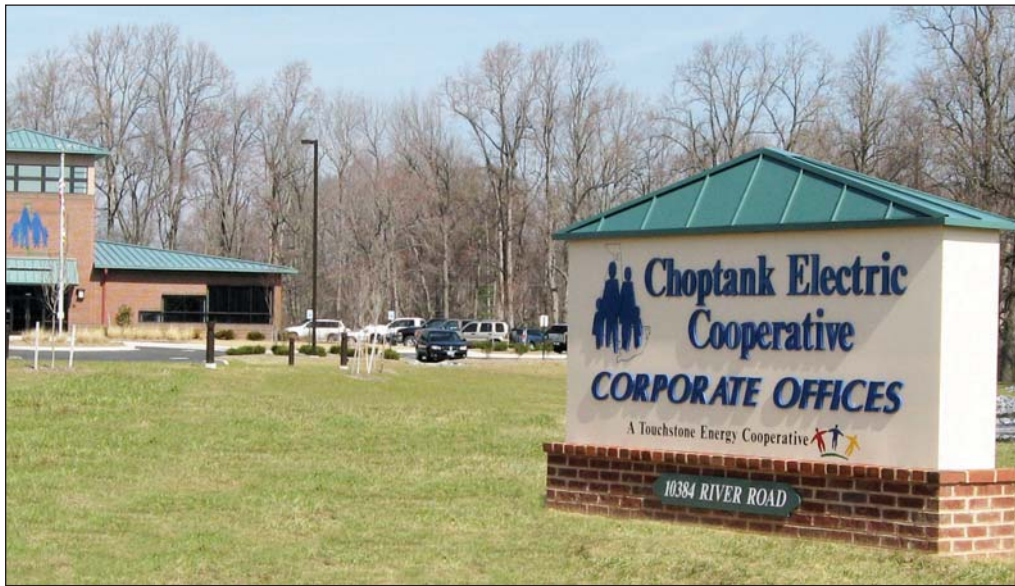
(Continued from p.1)

-tance of safety in the electric utility business. We stress safety in all we do."

"Thank you for this involvement in the Rural Electric Safety Accreditation Program... your commitment to these safety efforts sends a clear and consistent message for your employees and your members," said Mr. Brubaker.

The goal of RESAP is to preserve life and prevent injuries; establish electric utility safety and loss control standards; recognize those who work every day to maintain a safe work environment; and compliment the cooperative's mission of reliable electrical service for its members.

Choptank's 98 percent rating is well above the national average of 84 percent.



**FINAL TOUCH** — A new sign now marks the entrance to the Choptank Electric corporate headquarters along River Road in Denton. The sign was designed to reflect the overall design of the building, complete with green channeled roof.

## Watt's Your Number?

There are 2 hidden co-op account numbers in this month's issue.

**If one of the numbers is your Choptank Electric account number, let us know by the fifth of the following month, and you'll win a \$10 credit on your bill!**

If you find your account number in this issue, send your name, address, account and phone numbers to: Anne Whaples, Watt's Your Number?, Choptank Electric, P.O. Box 430, Denton MD 21629 or [annew@choptankelectric.coop](mailto:annew@choptankelectric.coop).

**Choptank Electric board members, employees and staff say "Thank You" to all veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces and to those now on active duty here and overseas. All Choptank Electric offices will be closed on May 26 in observance of the Memorial Day holiday. Please drive with care.**

Pine Steppers Square Dance Club workshop Wed., 7 p.m., Ocean Pines Community Hall. 410-208-6331 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.

Bingo: Willards VFC, Thurs., 7 p.m., Lions Bldg., 410-835-8678; Pittsville VFC, Fri., 7 p.m. 410-835-2323; Fedsbg. 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; Denton VFC, Fri., 7:30 p.m.

Peninsulaire chorus, Tues. 7:30 p.m., Wic. Civic Ctr., Flanders Rm., Salisbury. 410-641-8927 or 543-8628. Ocean Bay Sweet Adelines, Mon., 7 p.m., same location, 410-749-1194. Delmarva Sweet Adelines, Mon., 7 p.m., Ocean Pines Comm. Ctr. 410-641-6876. QA Barbershop Chorus, Wed., 6:30 p.m., Centreville UM Church, Rt. 213. 410-827-7993. Bay Country Chorus, Mon., 7 p.m., Miller Hall, behind Trinity Cathedral, Easton. 410-770-8262.

Ocean Waves Square Dance, 2nd Sat., 8-10:30 p.m., Mid-Shore YMCA, 715 S. Shumaker Dr., Salisbury. 410-873-2027 or 822-7387.

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. 410-943-8325.

Pinochle, Wed., 9:45 a.m., 410-208-0562, Ocean Pines Country Club; Bridge Club, 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. 410-810-0926 or 410-778-4578.

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., Maryland Fire Co. 302-674-3149 or 492-1048.

TOPS weight loss: Tues., 6:30 p.m., 1st Baptist, Marydel, 410-482-6694; 6 p.m., 418 Dutchman's La., Greensboro; 6 p.m., Caroline Nsg. Home sun room, 410-482-2658; 6 p.m., Worcester Co. Health Dept. Thurs., 7 p.m., Christ UMC, Salisbury, 410-546-4197/543-9039; Church of God, Easton; 6 p.m. 410-822-2630/673-2248.

Nat'l Assn. Active & Retired Fed. Employees, Chap. 1261, Salisbury area, 3rd Thurs., 410-896-2671; Chap. 2274, Wor. Co., 4th Thurs., Jordan's Rooftop, Ocean City, 11:30 a.m., 410-641-5570.

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

Medical coverage for pregnant women & children to age 19. Kent, 410-778-7035, QA, 410-758-0720, Tal., 410-819-5690.

E. Shore Stamp Club, 1st Tues., Wic. 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., 7 p.m., 410-835-8343; Tred Avon, Wed., noon, Talbot Community Ctr., Rt. 50, Easton. 410-226-5126. 1933211

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

Friends of Ocean Pines Library, 2nd Mon., 10 a.m., 410-208-2760.

Merry Widows & Widowers Social Club, 3rd Tues., 2:30 p.m., Ocean Pines Country Club. 410-208-6207; Beach Singles 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 AA, 105 Gay St., Thurs., 8 p.m.; Co-Dependents Anon., Sun., 6:30 p.m., Christ UMC, Salisbury. 410-376-0164; Dual Recovery Anon., Wor. Library, Pocomoke, Mon., 7 p.m.

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

Wellness Community-Delmarva cancer support programs, Salisbury, Berlin, Easton. 888-806-0756.

Dorchester Swingers Square Dance, 1st Fri., 8 p.m., Maple Elem. Cambridge, Sept. - June '08. 410-822-7535.

Sons of Confederate Vets Maj. Gen. Arnold Elzey Camp 1940 & friends, 1st Wed., 7 p.m., Wic. Library, Salisbury 410-641-9305.

Pine'er Craft & Gift Shop, Ocean Pines Community Ctr., 239 Ocean Pkwy., every Sat. & Sun., 10-4.

Federalburg VFC, breakfast 4th Sun., 7-10. \$6, Children \$3; under 3 free.

Md. Children's Health, medical coverage, pregnant women & children to age 19. Kent 410-778-7035, QA 410-758-0720, Talbot, 410-819-5690.

Line dance, every Fri., Frat. Order of Eagles, 107 Alexander Ave., Salisbury, beginners 6 p.m., dance follows. 410-749-1981.

Free meditation group, Tues., 7 p.m., Sweetspot Arts, Ocean Pines, 410-641-6845 or susanbeverly2003@yahoo.com.

Preston Vol. Fire Co., AUCE breakfast, 1st Sun., 7-10, \$6.

Tri-County Bird Club (Wic., Som., Wor.) 4th Mon. (except Dec. & June-Aug.), Fox Rm., south entrance, Asbury UM Church, Salisbury. 410-742-5497.

Writers Bloc writers group meeting 3rd Sat., Wicomico Library, Salisbury, 1 p.m. 443-260-0790.

Missy's Quilting Bee, 1st Tues., 7-9, Choptank Electric mtg. rm., Denton. All welcome. 410-634-1163.

Dorchester Swingers Square Dance, Maple Elem. School, Egypt Rd., Cambridge, 1st Fri., 8-10. Refreshments. 410-822-7535.

Mid-Shore A.B.A.T.E., 2nd Tues., 7:30 p.m., Easton VFW. www.midshoreabate.com

Great Pocomoke Fair ATV Jamboree, fairgrounds, Pocomoke City, April 19, registration 8 a.m., events 10 a.m. 410-783-5345.

Queen Anne's Chorale Gala, April 26, 7:30 p.m., Todd Performing Arts Ctr., Chesapeake College, Wye Mills. Free concert "Made in America." 410-827-8168.

Mid-Atlantic Symphony Season Finale, Comm. Church, Ocean Pines, April 26, 7:30 p.m. 888-846-8600.

Charity Antiques Show & Sale, Waterfowl Bldg., Easton, April 26, 10-6, April 27, 11-4. Benefits Talbot Co. Mental Health Assn. 410-822-0444.

May 1-Oct. 31, antique quilts on display, Julia A. Purnell Museum, Snow Hill. Tues.-Sat., 10-4, Sun., 1-4. 410-632-0515.

Springfest, Ocean City Inlet, May 1-3, 10-10, May 4, 10-6. Three Dog Night, Sat. 8 p.m. 800-626-2326.

White Marlin Festival & Crab Soup Cookoff, Somerset St. Plaza, Ocean City, May 10, 12-4, activities, live music, cookoff. 410-289-1413.

Worcester Co. Garden Club Plant Auction, Taylor Museum, Berlin, May 12, 10 a.m. - all day. 410-289-8251.

Cruisin' Ocean City, hot rods, custom classics, entertainment, more. May 15-17, 9-5, May 18, 9-4. 410-798-6304.

Soft Shell Festival, Crisfield City Dock, May 25, 12-5. Vendors, music, food. Crisfield Lions and Chamber of Commerce. 410-968-2500.

Noontunes on the Denton Courthouse Green, May 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, 12 noon, free. 410-479-8120.

**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.