

LIVE WIRE

Celebrating
1938 80 2018
Years of Service

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MAY 2018

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

Toll Free:
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Outage Reporting:
1-800-410-4790,
toll free,
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7 days/week.

Automated Member Service Line:
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Plug into Safety



In May, electric cooperatives across the country emphasize safety awareness because it's National Electrical Safety Month. Every year, thousands of accidents occur due to shock hazards, and Choptank Electric Cooperative is committed to educating our members and the public about potential electrical dangers in the home.

In 2016, 475,500 structure fires (including residential fires) were reported in the U.S., causing 2,950 deaths, 12,775 injuries and \$7.9 billion in property damage. According to the National Fire Protection Association, a residential fire was reported every 90 seconds. Many home fires occur when electrical equipment is outdated or improperly used.

"It is critical that the public understands their home's electrical system and the safety concerns associated with the latest residential technologies before bringing them into their homes," explains Mike Woodward, Administrator Of Safety, Compliance & Safety Culture at Choptank Electric. "With newer technologies, such as solar panels, electric vehicles and more electrical gadgets in the home, people need to ensure they have an electrical system that's compatible with the increased load."

Through electrical safety awareness and education, we can all play a part in preventing electrical hazards and injuries in the future. Together, let's plug into safety this May.



Straight Talk
with your
CEO
by Mike Wheatley

Safety Above All Else

"Safety" is a universal word that is mentioned often and used loosely. Communities large and small, as well as companies across all industries, are committed to safety. Sports leagues, at every level, take safety seriously. Unfortunately, when it really counts, steps to keep the public, workers, athletes, and loved ones safe are often ignored in the interest of expediency or convenience.

However, safety is a serious issue, especially when it comes to electrical safety. For, Choptank Electric Cooperative, it's the number one priority. This is not empty talk. Over time, Choptank Electric has created a culture of safety by putting our employees' safety, and that of the community, above all else. At its essence, our mission is to provide safe, affordable and reliable electricity to its member-owners.

See Straight Talk
Continued on Page 3

Connecting with You: Scheduling a Payment in SmartHub!

We understand that remembering to pay your bill on time can be challenging – between the baseball and softball practices, band competitions, school work, and family activities, life can get busy. When you get the electric bill in the mail, or in your inbox, you can now set it, and forget it! SmartHub now offers a scheduled payment feature for members who have SmartHub accounts. To schedule a payment, it just takes a few easy steps.

Once you log into your SmartHub account, select "Make Payment." Then select your account(s), the amount, and then "Continue." You can either select a stored payment option or submit a new payment option and then select "Payment Date."

Payment Summary
Select Payment Date & Method
● Pay with a new Card
○ Pay with a new Bank Account
Payment Date:
● Today: 04/11/2018
○ Due Date: 04/30/2018
○ Other: Select a Date

Members have several options for payment dates (see left graphic). The default selection is "Today," but you can

also select the "Due Date," or "Other," which is the schedule payment option. Once you have selected "Other," click the "Select a Date" box and a calendar will pop up which will allow you to select any day you would like. If you try to select a day past your due date, it will warn you that you have selected a date



Connecting with you

past your due date (see graphic below).

Once the date has been selected, click "Continue," which will take you to the payment option screen. Once you have imputed all of the appropriate information for either check or credit card, it will ask

Payment Summary
Select Payment Date & Method
● Pay with a new Card
○ Pay with a new Bank Account
Payment Date:
● Today: 04/11/2018
○ Due Date: 04/30/2018
○ Other: 05/01/2018
The payment date selected is past the current due date. Services may be subject to late fees or a disconnect of service if the payment is received after the due date. This does not serve as a Payment Arrangement. Thank You

members to confirm the inputted information. To finish the transaction,

select "Submit." A Payment confirmation will appear with the date for your scheduled payment and then you are done!

If, for any reason, you would like to cancel your scheduled payment, all you need to do is go back into "Make Payment," and then simply click on "Cancel Payment" in the summary section.

With this new feature, members can schedule payments to go out according to their schedule, or set a schedule monthly so that you don't forget. If you have additional questions about SmartHub or the new Schedule a Payment feature, call our Member Service Center at 1-877-892-0001.

Board Approves \$2 Million in ODEC Capital Credits

The Choptank Electric Cooperative Board of Directors recently voted to return \$2 million to its members during the month of May. The \$2 million represents capital credits received from the Co-op's wholesale power supplier, Old Dominion Electric Cooperative (ODEC).

The \$2 million will be paid to long-time members who were part of the Co-op from 1988 through 1991. Any active member who has accrued capital credits less than \$30 will receive the amount credited directly to their May bill and active members who have accrued more than \$30 in capital credits will receive a check in the mail. For any member who is inactive, you must accrue \$30 before a check is sent. Inactive members must have a good address listed at the Co-op to receive their

check. The checks are scheduled to be mailed mid-May.

When you signed up to receive electric service from Choptank Electric, you became a member of Choptank Electric, not a customer. "As electric co-ops, both ODEC and Choptank operate on an at-cost basis," said Choptank Electric Chairman of the Board Olin Davis, "I am pleased that we are able to return this money to our members." Choptank Electric allocates and periodically retires capital credits to its members. The amount received is based on how much electricity the member purchased during a year.

That's the cooperative difference, where members are first, every day.

Straight Talk

Continued from page 1



At the end of the day, we strive to deliver affordable and reliable electricity to our member-owners, but equally important, we want to return our

workers home safely to their loved ones. To do this requires ongoing focus, dedication, and vigilance.

Following leading national safety standards

Working with electricity is an inherently dangerous job, especially for lineworkers. Choptank Electric Cooperative's focus is keeping employees and the community safe around electricity. We established and follow safety protocols based on leading national safety practices for the utility industry. We require our lineworkers to wear specialized equipment when working next to or with power lines. There are specific protocols that our lineworkers follow when dealing with electricity. Our safety team has meetings where they discuss upcoming projects from a safety perspective. They monitor and track near-misses of accidents in order to understand them, share "lessons learned" and improve in the future.

We encourage all of our crews to speak up and hold each other accountable for safety. By cultivating a culture of openness and transparency, we promote problem-solving with regard to safety, rather than defaulting to a blame game. We examine the in-

formation and data gleaned from near-misses and accident reports to discern patterns and use safety metrics to improve in those areas where we have fallen short. As appropriate, we brief contractors on our safety protocols and set expectations for their engagement.

Keeping the community safe

Because we live and work in the community we serve, we care about our neighbors. Choptank Electric Cooperative conducts electrical safety demonstrations in schools and for community events. It's National Electrical Safety Month and according to the Electrical Safety Foundation, each year thousands of people in the United States are critically injured and electrocuted as a result of electrical fires, accidents and electrocution in their own homes. Many of these accidents are preventable.

Don't attempt electrical DIY projects or overload your outlets. Report downed power lines, unlocked substations, or padmount transformers that look amiss to your Co-op.

For more safety information or if you would like us to provide a safety demonstration at your school or community event, please contact our Member Service Center at 1-877-892-0001.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

When streaming online content, use the smallest device that makes sense for the number of people watching. Avoid streaming on game consoles, which use 10 times more power than streaming through a tablet or laptop.

Source: energy.gov



**"All that I am, or
hope to be, I owe
to my mother."**

-Abraham Lincoln

**Happy
Mother's Day!**



HOW TO PREVENT ELECTRIC SHOCK DROWNING



AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

Each year, 3,800 people die from drowning. Electric shock drowning occurs when an electric current escapes boats, docks and lights near marinas, shocking nearby swimmers. There are no visible signs of current seeping into water, which makes this a hidden danger. The electric shock paralyzes swimmers, making them unable to swim to safety.



ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIPS FOR:

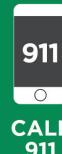
Swimmers

- Never swim near a boat or launching ramp. Residual current could flow into the water from the boat or the marina's wiring, potentially putting anyone in the water at risk of electric shock.
- If you feel any tingling sensations while in the water, tell someone and swim back in the direction from which you came. Immediately report it to the dock or marina owner.

Boat Owners

- Ensure your boat is properly maintained and consider having it inspected annually. GFCIs and ELCIs should be tested monthly. Conduct leakage testing to determine if electrical current is escaping the vessel.
- Use portable GFCIs or shore power cords (including "Y" adapters) that are "UL- Marine Listed" when using electricity near water.
- Regularly have your boat's electrical system inspected by a certified marine electrician. Ensure it meets your local and state NEC, NFPA and ABYC safety codes.

IF YOU SEE ELECTRIC SHOCK DROWNING TAKING PLACE:



DO NOT enter the water. You could become a victim, too.

Sources: Electrical Safety Foundation International, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Take a vacation from worry and hassle by keeping in touch with your Co-op! Update your information today, including phone numbers and email addresses. By Updating your contact information, you will ensure that you receive notifications about planned outages and callbacks for when power has been restored during power outages. Call the Member Service Center 1.877.892.0001 to update your information today.

March 2018 Trust Awards

- Somerset Committee for the Homeless - \$3,000 for security cameras
- Kent Co. 4-H extension advisory council - \$825 vote by email - toward shipping costs
- Suddlersville Middle School - \$2,000 field trip transportation
- Maryland Forestry Board - \$1,000 program fees
- Chesapeake Group Homes- \$1,500 renovations
- St. Michaels Community Center- \$1,500 refrigerator
- Mid Atlantic Symphony Orchestra - \$1,000 piano

rental

- Tim Kennard River Run - \$500 shirts
- Salvation Army - \$250 food drop

The total of approved applications for March was \$27,204.76 which included \$16,454.76 for individual home and medical expenses.

Electric Trust is a 501-c-3 charitable foundation funded by Operation Round-Up donations from members of Choptank Electric. Funds from the Trust are distributed in all nine counties of Maryland's Eastern Shore.

