

Your Source For News & Information



Local News and Information for Members of Choptank Electric on Maryland's Eastern Shore



October is Co-op Month: Powering Your Life!

When you think of October, pumpkins, Halloween, and beautiful fall foliage naturally come to mind. But October is notable for another reason – it's National Co-op Month!

This is the time of year when cooperatives across the country, including Choptank Electric Cooperative, celebrate who we are and more importantly, the members we serve. Our close connection to the community ensures we get a first-hand perspective on local priorities, thereby enabling us to make more informed decisions on long-term investments, such as high-speed broadband, green energy, equipment and technology upgrades, and alternative rates.

We hope you will think of us as not just your energy provider, but instead as a local business that supports your community and powers economic development and prosperity, because your electric co-op was built by the community, for the community.

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NRECA Youth Tour The Rising Tide That Stormed D.C.

School may have ended in mid-June, but for the star students who represented Choptank Electric during the 2019 Youth Tour, learning and experiencing new things did not! Emily Thompson of North Carolina County High School and Hannah Eastman of Queen Anne's County High School had the privilege to experience the Youth Tour leadership program, sponsored by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) and the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives (VMDAEC), that took place in Washington, D.C., June 16-20.

Both rising seniors, they got to experience everything from typical

D.C. tourist sites to the tunnels below the Capitol. The VMDAEC assembled 54 students from 12 cooperatives across the region to visit awe-inspiring sites such as Arlington National Cemetery, the national monuments, and the African American History Museum, just to name a few. A baseball game between the Washington Nationals and the Philadelphia Phillies was rained

out, but everyone got a chance to eat at the Nationals ballpark before returning to their hotel.

"We had an exceptional group of young people on this year's tour," says Andrew Vehorn, Vice President of Governmental Affairs at the VMDAEC and Youth Tour Director. "They were enthusiastic and

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The Maryland, Virginia and Delaware assembly poses together in front of the Washington Monument.

Broadband: Our Next Challenge

Choptank Electric Cooperative wants to play a bigger role in solving the rural broadband crisis. We want to use our proven delivery model to bring reliable internet service to every member — the same way we brought electricity to every rural household in our territory 80 years ago.

New CEO Mike Malandro has concrete experience in this area having launched Ruralband, a successful broadband affiliate of Prince George Electric Cooperative near Richmond, Virginia. “We can use the same formula here on the Eastern Shore to install fiber,” he says.

Ruralband used a combination of federal and local grants to jump-start the effort. “The FCC (Federal Communications Commission) is expected to auction off over \$20 billion for broadband delivery to rural communities next year,” Malandro explains. “I’d like to position Choptank to bid on those funds to provide broadband to members faster and more comprehensively than other start-ups.”

In Maryland, 36% of residents lack internet service that meets FCC standards — most are in rural areas, like the Eastern Shore.

“We are ready to take on the challenge,” says Jeff Rathell, Chairman of the Board of Directors. “If we can get some leeway in state regulations, this not-for-profit can deliver a whole lot more to our members. Our history says we can do it.”



Co-op members want to bring high-speed internet service to their homes, farms, and rural businesses to enjoy the same connectivity to the world as residents in urban areas. They want access to telemedicine, educational opportunities for their kids, economic development for good jobs, and the means for civic engagement.

Many government leaders have studied the lack of rural broadband and the challenges to universal service. One of the biggest hurdles has been accurate maps. “One customer with service in a census block has checked off the map to ‘served’ for that block,” explains Malandro. “The remaining ‘unserved’ residents have been left behind.”

The second hurdle has been funding. “The cost of running wire to homes that are miles apart is substantial and the return on investment for the ‘for-profit’ companies is impossible,” says Rathell. “But this type of service is exactly what the electric cooperatives were created to deliver.”

In 2019, the Eastern Shore Delegation effectively maneuvered a bill through the Maryland General Assembly to allow electric cooperatives to use their existing easements for broadband equipment and services.

In January of 2020, Choptank will ask the General Assembly to pass legislation to provide additional regulatory flexibility. “In order to deliver last-mile service, we will seek permission to use our economies-of-scale and top-notch staff — with a process called ‘Member Regulation,’” explains Malandro. “This will make our Board more nimble in the effort to expand service options.”

“Member Regulation will allow those of us who have been elected to serve our members to set the policy terms and rates that work for our local community. Unlike investor-owned utilities that try to make a profit for shareholders, Choptank is owned by its members,” says Rathell. “Our Member Regulation plan is *locally* written, *locally* targeted and designed to meet our *local* broadband challenge.”

Sign up to receive updates about Choptank Electric’s broadband efforts on the Eastern Shore.

Visit www.choptankelectric.coop/e-news-form and select ‘Broadband Information.’

Technology Expert Joins the Ranks at Choptank Electric

Choptank Electric recently hired Tim McGaha as the new Vice President of Technical Services. He began his duties on Tuesday, July 30, 2019.

McGaha brings more than 20 years of experience in information technology, cybersecurity, and systems management to Choptank Electric including protecting company assets and implementing enterprise-wide solutions. McGaha was previously the Vice President of Information Technology for Prince George Electric Cooperative (PGE), a distribution electric cooperative where he was responsible for the technical leadership of the award-winning and nationally recognized fiber-to-the-home subsidiary Ruralband.

Prior to PGE, McGaha was the Director of Information Technology for Wabash Valley Power Alliance, a generation and transmission cooperative, where he served as the primary technical architect and manager of technical operations including all information and operational technologies at the organization. McGaha also spent over 15 years as President and CEO of a technical consulting firm working with a diverse group of clients in industries including radio, television, publishing, health care, electric utilities, utility construction, logistics and property management with a focus on large-scale, cross-functional enterprise-level projects. McGaha was awarded the status of “Fellow” at Indiana University’s Randall L. Tobias Center for Leadership Excellence, for successful completion of the leadership program and has a degree in Accounting and Computer Science from ITT.

“Mr. McGaha is an excellent addition to Choptank Electric,” says Mike Malandro, President and CEO of Choptank Electric Cooperative. “With his extensive experience, he is helping us explore system enhancements that better align with our members in the digital age.”

McGaha has been married to his wife, Bee, for the past 15 years and they enjoy spending their time with their rescue dog, Sky.



*Timothy W. McGaha,
Vice President of Technical Services*



Another Fair & Festival Season comes to a successful close!

**Want to see Choptank Electric at your community event?
Send your request to communications@choptankelectric.coop.**



NRECA Youth Tour

energetic, and even though we did our best to tire them out, they enjoyed experiences that will serve them and their cooperative communities well into the future,” Ve-horn says.

In all, about 1,800 students from 43 states converged on Washington for Youth Tour, which officially started in 1958 at the suggestion of then-Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson. The NRECA oversees the tour in the belief that co-op youths should experience the nation’s capital up close and learn about the political process.

“During its time, Youth Tour has brought 50,000 students from rural America to Washington. It has proven to be a tremendous way of exposing our youngest members to the foundations that our countries,

and our cooperative family, were built upon,” says Richard G. Johnstone Jr., president and CEO of the VMDAEC.

The VMDAEC delegation covered a lot of ground between its arrival on Sunday, June 16, and its departure on Thursday, June 20. The first day of activities produced a visit to the Jefferson Memorial and a night cruise on the Potomac River.

The group also visited the National Zoo, the Pentagon, as well as Capitol Hill, where senators, representatives and their staffs met constituents who are soon to be of voting age. They also saw a performance of *Hello, Dolly!* at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and swapped state pins with others on the tour.

Choptank Electric students met

with Rep. Andy Harris’ Chief of Staff, John Dutton, to discuss current political issues such as immigration. They also had the opportunity to meet with staff from both Sen. Ben Cardin’s and Sen. Chris Van Hollen’s offices. They were even able to shake hands and snap a few pictures with Sen. Van Hollen himself as they were leaving his office!

“The whole trip was amazing!” says Hannah Eastman. “The schedule was full of awesome activities and I had so much fun meeting new people.”

Are you looking for a resume builder? A leadership opportunity? How about the trip of a lifetime? Apply for the 2020 Youth Tour program by going to our website at www.choptankelectric.coop.



Hannah Eastman and Emily Thompson pose with John Dutton, Rep. Harris’ Chief of Staff.



Sen. Chris Van Hollen with the Maryland participants and chaperones in front of his office.

July 2019 Trust Awards

- Tuckahoe Equestrian Center - \$1,000
- Cambridge Women’s Club - \$500
- Cecil Land Trust - \$250
- Union UMC - \$1,000
- Makemie Memorial Presbyterian Church - \$1,267 (Repairs to building)
- Living Waters Assembly - \$500
- CASA of Caroline - \$500
- Crisfield Heritage Foundation - \$750
- Worcester Co. Education Foundation - \$500

The total of approved applications for July was \$23,858 which included \$17,591 for individual home and medical expenses.

The Choptank 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.



Newly Appointed Agriculture Representative Enhances Member Experience

Your electric Cooperative recognizes and appreciates the diverse membership represented in all nine counties of Maryland's Eastern Shore. The Co-op strives to provide all of our member-owners a more personalized experience that meets their individual needs.

To add to our member value, Choptank Electric recently appointed Jacob Abbott as the Agriculture Representative. Abbott has been with the Cooperative for 14 years and is currently the Regional Member Service Manager for the southern region of the Cooperative's service territory. His responsibilities have been expanded to include being the primary contact for our agricultural members and the Cooperative.

"I am very excited to be given this opportunity to work with our agricultural members, and assist them with their questions or issues. I am looking forward to meeting and interacting with our agricultural community face to face, and touring and learning about their individual operations, so that we can ensure we are meeting their business needs."

Agriculture has been the cornerstone of the Eastern Shore for centuries and encompasses crop/vegetable/fruit farming, poultry, livestock, equine and grain production, just to name a few. Choptank Electric understands the complexi-



As new Agriculture Representative, Jacob Abbott will serve as the point of contact for our agricultural members.

ties of agriculture and the demand for reliable and fair-priced electricity, energy efficiency and energy management, evolving technology, and employing a well-trained workforce.

Abbott can assist our members by explaining the components and dynamics of a particular electric rate and the monthly electric bill, guide members toward energy efficient technology directly related to the nature of their business, and offer advice and strategies to more effectively manage energy consumption. He can help guide members to select plans for their electric infrastructure upgrades and associated costs, as well as determine the electric costs on a monthly and annual basis.

Abbott will also provide energy audits and explore opportunities to leverage funds to offset the costs

associated with the energy efficiency improvements. In the future, Abbott will develop additional programs exclusively for our agricultural members.



In observance of the Thanksgiving holiday, our offices will be closed

Thursday, November 28, 2019.

Gather & Say Thanks!

A Year In: Choptank Electric's Chevy Bolt

Last August, Choptank Electric unveiled the purchase of a 2018 Chevy Bolt. This was done in order to understand the projected loads of electric vehicles (EVs) on our system, and to understand how purchasing EVs is affecting our members throughout the shore.

The Chevy Bolt offers an EPA-estimated 238 miles of range on a single charge, which makes it perfect for driving distances throughout the Eastern Shore. When compared to the Chevrolet Cruze, which gets an average 35 MPG and costs \$41 for a fill up at the pump, powering an EV costs the equivalent of about \$1.28 a gallon for gas.

“Our employees really enjoy driving the car! Simply push a button, and their rides are super quiet,” says Thomas Tyndall, Member Services Administrator. “With the help of charging station apps like ChargePoint, and with Choptank Electric investing in the installation of EV charging stations, our employees can drive with confidence in the Chevy Bolt.” The Co-op installed its first EV charging station in St. Michaels in October of 2014, followed by the charging station at the Harriet Tubman Underground



Choptank Electric presented on the benefits of using EVs to employees of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center in Church Creek, Maryland, last December.

Railroad Visitor Center in Cambridge in December of last year.

The Chevy Bolt is charged by plugging into an available 240-volt/32-amp charging unit. At the end of the day, the vehicle is plugged in and is ready to go by the next morning even if it was fully depleted.

Members considering an EV purchase are encouraged to visit our Electric Vehicle calculator on our

Energy Efficiency webpage at www.choptankelectric.coop, on the Energy Resource Center section. This helpful tool provides monthly fuel costs stats for almost every EV on the market!

At the year mark, we have found the all-electric vehicle to be cost-effective and a valuable educational tool for the Co-op.



95%
Members Enrolled

\$4.5
Million Donated

*Thank you to our members
who participate in
Operation Round Up!*



About Choptank Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Choptank Electric, a Touchstone Energy Cooperative, is a not-for-profit, member-owned, electric distribution Co-op serving approximately 54,000 residential, commercial, and industrial members in all nine counties on Maryland's Eastern Shore.

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 Member
Service Line:
1-866-999-4574, toll free

www.choptankelectric.coop

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We present on:

- Safety
- Energy Efficiency
- Co-op Careers
- Renewable Energy
- Lineman Gear
- Hotline Demo
- And much more!

Visit our webpage to learn more at:

www.choptankelectric.coop

Or scan the QR code below:



Have a Safe & Happy Halloween!

