



# Choptank Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy<sup>®</sup> Cooperative



## NOVEMBER & DECEMBER 2022

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- 21** Keeping Warm and Saving Money

## IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

- NOVEMBER 6** - Daylight Savings
- NOVEMBER 24 & 25** - Offices Closed
- DECEMBER 23 & 26** - Offices Closed

P.O. Box 430 | Denton, MD | 21629  
Toll-Free: 1-877-892-0001  
Outage Reporting: 1-800-410-4790  
Automated Member Service: 1-866-999-4574



### Ginny Williams Retires after 30 Years of Service

## Committed to Members & the Cooperative

We would like to wish our good friend and dedicated employee Ginny Williams, Senior Member Service Specialist, a very happy retirement after 30 years of dedicated service to Choptank Electric Cooperative and our highly valued members!

*“I have had the pleasure of working with Ginny over the past 30 years, and her dedication to the membership at Choptank Electric has been unwavering. Ginny was hired shortly after I was, and I found a friend in her immediately.*

*Her values and her character helped mold her into a valued and dedicated employee who will be missed by many.*

*My wishes for Ginny are that she will have beautiful, peaceful days ahead of her so that she can enjoy her retirement!”*

- Anne Chouinard, Manager of Member Services

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



*Change Up  
with  
Power Player*

## MATT BREEDING

MANAGER OF  
OPERATING SERVICES

### WHAT IS YOUR ROLE AT CHOPTANK?

I am responsible for the overall coordination of the nine contractor companies that support Choptank in performing both electrical and broadband fiber work. The contracting crews are providing the work needed for the upgrading of electrical lines, as well as preparing the grid for broadband fiber. We are changing out about 80 poles per week and expect to change approximately 2,500 poles over the next year. We are currently installing around 15 miles of fiber each week. This is a massive project, and my job is to make sure we are hitting our project targets.

### WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT CHALLENGES?

The materials we need are in short supply, and items that we could once get in a timely manner, now have long lead times, if we are able to get them at all. We hold weekly meetings to ensure we have enough material to keep all the projects moving along with no detrimental surprises.

### HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WITH CHOPTANK?

I started working at the Co-op in 2014 in the System Control division, and then I became a lineman. I worked through several storms, and I know the value of having contractors in place to help with the restoration of power. I've been

in my current position, managing contractor services, for the last year. This role has really ramped up as we bring on more contracted crews to deliver broadband to members as quickly as possible.

### WHAT IS THE MOST REWARDING PART OF YOUR JOB?

The members — they are very excited about fiber and broadband. I'm glad to play a part in delivering this monumental service to the community.

### WHEN YOU ARE NOT AT WORK, WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO?

My wife and two little boys keep me busy. We enjoy going out on the boat, fishing and crabbing. I like to hunt in the fall and always enjoy a good barbecue.

## Welcome to the Choptank Electric Co-op Team!

### Meet John Schroeder, Tyler Blackiston and Ben Cunningham



**JOHN M. SCHROEDER**  
APPRENTICE LINEMAN

**Your future outlook with the co-op?**  
Growing in my career and expanding my knowledge in the utility industry.

**What motivates you? Any hobbies?**  
My Lauren, our daughter Evelyn, and our dog Sadie. Yes, boating, hunting, fishing and hiking.



**TYLER L. BLACKISTON**  
APPRENTICE LINEMAN

**Your future outlook with the co-op?**  
Learning about the linework field. Getting my journeyman card and to teach and train new apprentices.

**What motivates you? Any hobbies?**  
My wife Chelsie, and our children Gunner and Carsyn. Yes, working outside in the woods with my son and doing tree work.



**BEN CUNNINGHAM**  
OPERATIONS UTILITY PERSON

**Your future outlook with the co-op?**  
Looking forward to applying the skills I learned at lineworker school.

**What motivates you? Any hobbies?**  
My girlfriend and two dogs. Yes, hunting, fishing and playing cornhole.



## MOVE OVER FOR UTILITY VEHICLES

Motorists in Maryland must move over when approaching emergency, law enforcement, tow truck, UTILITY and transportation vehicles while they are stopped, standing or parked on a highway with their red, amber or yellow lights flashing. If it is not safe or feasible to move over, motorists must slow to a reasonable and prudent speed that is safe for existing weather, road, and vehicular or pedestrian traffic conditions.



# Choptank Receives Large Grant to Continue Broadband Work

By Valerie Connelly, VP Government Affairs and Public Relations

The Maryland Office of Statewide Broadband (OSB) awarded Choptank Electric Cooperative and our subsidiary, Choptank Fiber, over \$23 million from the fiscal year 2022 Network Infrastructure & Neighborhood Connect programs to continue broadband construction. The grant awards will help the co-op offer high-speed internet service to more than 3,000 additional unserved homes and businesses in Caroline, Cecil and Somerset counties.

On the heels of the state award, the Worcester County Commissioners voted on August 2<sup>nd</sup> to give Choptank \$2.5 million in matching funds to build fiber broadband to almost 500 homes and businesses west of Route 12 and south to the Pocomoke River.

“When we created the broadband affiliate, we expected our build-out to take much longer,” explains Mike Malandro, President and CEO. “Financial support from government partners at the state and local levels and our ability to leverage those funds, is allowing us to move much faster.”

Malandro anticipates connecting the new grant areas before the 2023-24 school year begins next fall. “We know broadband connection is critical for the families in the Choptank footprint who have been left out in the past,” he says. “That’s why we partnered with local

governments to make this happen as quickly as possible.”

Cecil, Caroline, Somerset and Worcester county governments pledged American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to make the local government match. (Dorchester and Kent county governments made pledges too, but the state grant program ran out of money this round.)

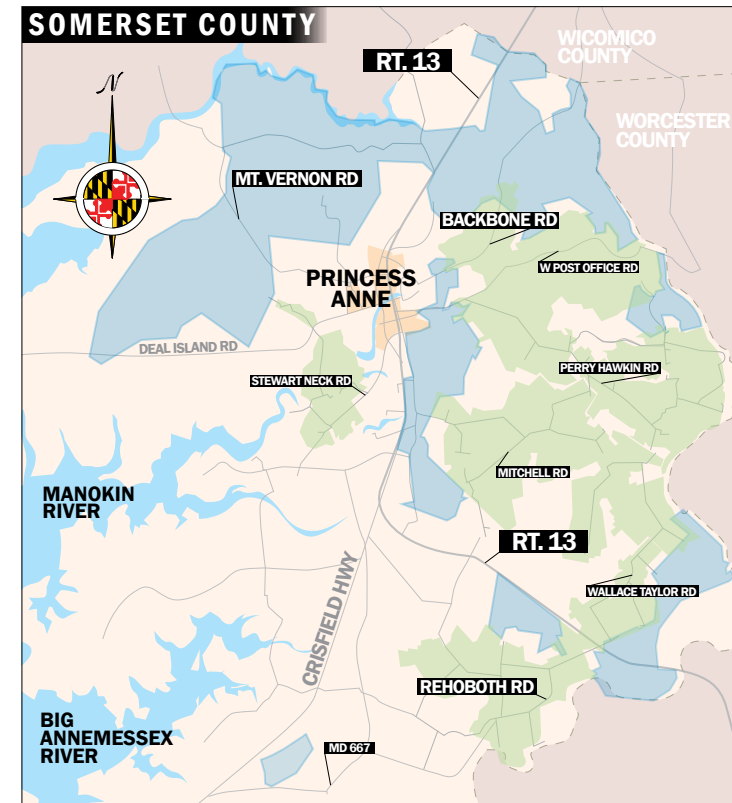
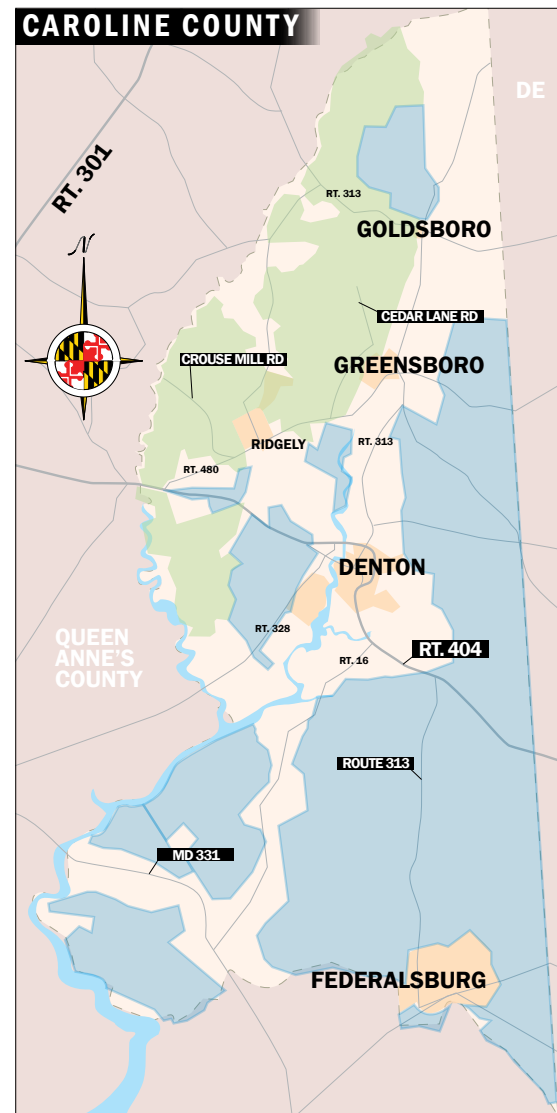
With the awards, Choptank will connect almost every unserved address in Caroline County, even those outside of the Choptank Electric Cooperative territory, reaching 2,250 locations on top of the 975 households who were recently offered Choptank Fiber broadband service.

The Caroline County Commissioners and staff were very clear when we sat down to plan the outreach map. They wanted a project that will close the gap in Caroline County, and they were willing to use a big chunk of the ARPA allocation for that purpose.

The new grant areas in Somerset County will help Choptank continue its build across the north and

to the east of Princess Anne and south toward the Pocomoke River. This will add another 514 locations to the 750 already covered by Choptank over the last year.

Cecil County identified six project



**KEY**

■ In Service ■ Under Construction

*Maps are not exact and will be updated as construction continues. Check website for most updated versions. Worcester map shows grant area approved by County Commissioners.*

areas with 329 unserved homes in the southern part of the county for its partnership with Choptank. Construction is already underway with new homes coming online weekly.

Over the last 14 months, Choptank Electric and Choptank Fiber have built broadband infrastructure and offered service to more than 2,500 unserved locations on the Eastern Shore. Funding from the state and local partners in fiscal year 2021 allowed Choptank to hire local contractors to work with Cooperative staff to expedite the work.

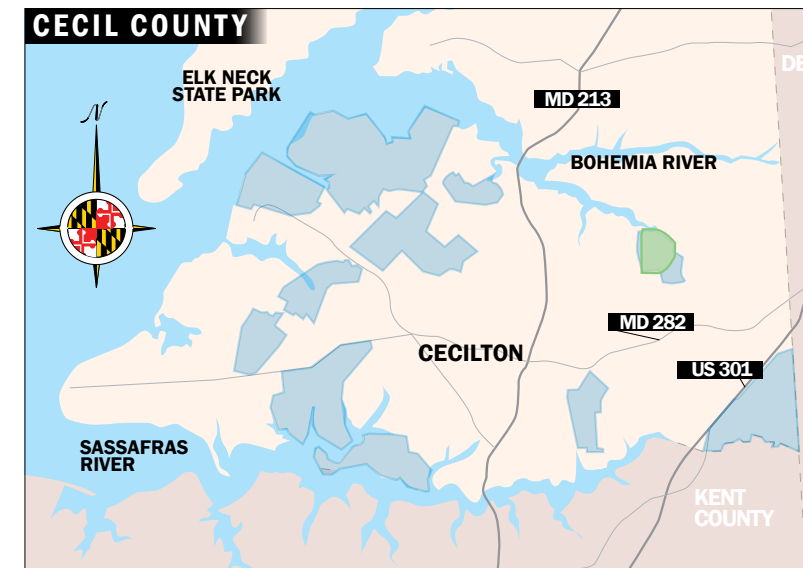
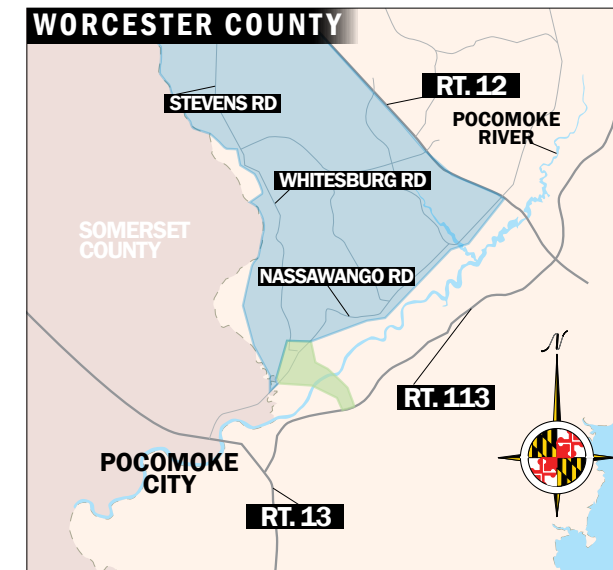
“We’ve made some real headway over that last year,” says Tim McGaha, Choptank Fiber Vice President. “We have scaled up to meet the larger community need, something other companies have been unable to do despite government support.”

The OSB and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) are updating the maps of unserved locations used in the grant process. “We are likely to find a few homes and businesses that were previously listed as ‘served’

but turn out to be unserved as we work through the current projects,” explains McGaha. “We will target those addresses next.”

Choptank will also pursue new grant funding in the fall of 2022 and spring of 2023 to secure resources for broadband projects in Dorchester, Kent, Somerset, Wicomico and Worcester counties.

Choptank Fiber, LLC was founded in the fall of 2020 at the request of the Cooperative’s members. We expect to offer service to at least 2,500-3,000 locations annually to meet the needs of unserved residents on the Eastern Shore. Members may pre-register to be notified of service availability at [www.choptankfiber.com](http://www.choptankfiber.com)





## Summer and Fall Fairs and Festivals

So many smiling faces — we'll see you again soon in 2023!



## Staying Warm & Saving Money Tips

By Bobby Schaller, MultiMedia Manager

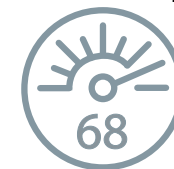


- Use LED lighting wherever possible, including decorating for the holidays. LEDs use much less energy than incandescent (regular) light bulbs. LEDs' electron flow creates photons, which is light we can see. Incandescent bulbs create light with filaments that glow. This also creates heat and requires far more energy for the same amount of light. LED bulbs use more than 75% less energy than a regular light bulb, and at low power levels, the difference is even larger.

- Using an electric blanket, wearing wool socks or your favorite hoodie, or snuggling with your dog or cat are all simple ways to stay warm.



- Consider a programmable or 'smart' water heater. Hot water accounts for about 18% of your home's energy use. Smart water heaters have the ability to heat your water when you need it most and to use electricity when the demand is the lowest.

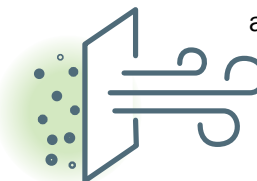


- Keeping your thermostat at 68 degrees during the day provides reasonable warmth while using a reasonable amount of power.

- On sunny days, make sure to open your curtains to let the warmth of the sun help heat your home. Close the curtains at night.



- Replace HVAC air filters to allow the unit to run efficiently. This also creates cleaner air for you and your family.

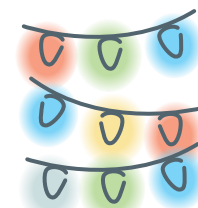


- Using a humidifier increases the moisture in your home's air. This is a great trick to pull during dry winter months. It can make the ambient temperature appear warmer and reduces sore throats and dry skin.



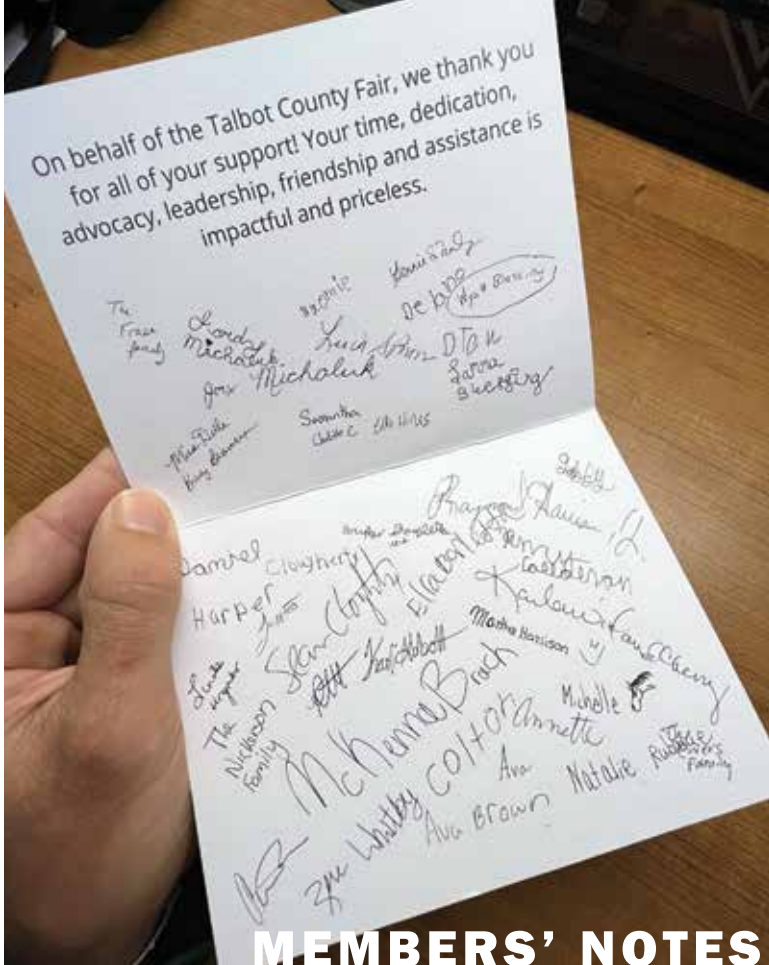
## Light Up the Pines Contest

Ocean Pines members are invited to brighten their community



We invite our Ocean Pines members to participate in the annual "Light Up the Pines" outdoor light display event. The first 25 people who register this year will receive free Choptank goodies. Registered homes will also be entered to win one of three \$50 bill credits.

Registration begins November 21st. All members interested in registering may do so by submitting a name, address and phone number via email to [info@oceanpines.org](mailto:info@oceanpines.org) or by calling 410-641-7717. Good luck!



## MEMBERS' NOTES

Our members are the reason Choptank Electric Cooperative exists. Thank you very much to all the folks at the Talbot County Fair for this great card! It was our pleasure!

## Choptank Electric Trust Awards

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 MD's Eastern Shore.

To apply, or to find out more about this program:

> [www.choptankelectric.coop/operation-round-trust-fund](http://www.choptankelectric.coop/operation-round-trust-fund)

### September 2022

- Chestertown Christian Academy – \$8,333
- Bohemia Manor High School – \$2,500
- Chesapeake Film Festival – \$500
- Dorchester County Historical Society – \$2,000
- Faith Christian School – \$500
- Eastern Shore Wellness Solutions – \$2,100
- His Hope Ministries – \$2,000
- MD Concerns for Police Survivors – \$1,500
- Mount Zion Cemetery – \$4,000
- YMCA of the Chesapeake – \$1,000



**The total of approved applications was \$34,329, which included \$9,896 for individual home and medical expenses.**



**Choptank Electric Cooperative**

### Choptank Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Choptank Electric, a Touchstone Energy Cooperative, is a not-for-profit, member-owned, electric distribution Co-op serving approximately 55,500 residential, commercial, and industrial members in all nine counties on Maryland's Eastern Shore.

#### President and CEO

Micheal E. Malandro

#### Board of Directors

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Ocean Pines District

Donna R. West  
Worcester Co.

Craig N. Mathies Sr.  
Somerset Co.



#### Choptank Fiber, LLC

Choptank Fiber, LLC is a wholly-owned broadband subsidiary of Choptank Electric Cooperative. Choptank Fiber's goal is to install true Gigabit broadband with no data caps one community at a time until we serve all our members on the Eastern Shore.