



SERVING UP SAVINGS

The holiday season is just around the corner. Soon, festive music will flood the airwaves, sparkling lights and decorations will adorn homes and businesses, and good tidings will abound.

The holidays also bring a frenzy of decorating, cooking and family gatherings, and amid the hectic hustle and bustle, you may receive higher-than-usual energy bills.

Keeping this in mind, it's a good time to remind Choptank Electric Cooperative members of a few programs and efficiency tips to help lower your monthly energy use.

The upcoming winter months typically bring some of the highest energy bills of the year. Making minor, low-cost improvements, like weatherstripping exterior doors and caulking around old, drafty windows can have a positive impact on energy bills.

We also offer our voluntary Beat the Peak program, which can help you achieve greater savings by cutting back your energy use during high-priced periods. Our team of member service representatives is available to help, so I encourage you to give us a call if you'd like to learn about specific programs and services that can lower your bills.

With holiday lights adorning the home for at least a month, we encourage you to make the switch to LEDs to save energy. LED holiday lights use 88% less energy than incandescent holiday lights. To put that into perspective, the Department of Energy estimates that with standard holiday decorations, LED lights typically increase energy bills by about \$5 to \$7. But with incandescent lights, energy bills will typically increase by \$33 or more. For homes that go above and beyond with incandescent holiday lighting (think Clark Griswold), energy bills could increase by as much as \$350. Beyond energy savings, LEDs provide additional benefits, such as being shock-resistant, shatterproof and cool to the touch, making them safer for the home.

You can also lower energy use by conveniently managing holiday lighting. Smart light timers can help you save energy by connecting to a smartphone app or voice

assistant to program lights to turn on and off at set times. If you don't use smart home technology, you can still save energy by using traditional timers.

Additional easy ways to save during the holiday season include turning off overhead lights and using your Christmas tree to illuminate your home. If you have a fireplace, remember to close the flue when you're not burning a fire to ensure heat doesn't escape through the chimney.

If you plan to have family and friends over this holiday season, you can cook up energy savings by using small countertop appliances like microwaves, air fryers and slow cookers when possible, as they use much less energy than the stovetop or oven.

When using the oven, bake multiple dishes at once for maximum efficiency. After all, it takes as much energy to cook one dish as it does to cook several. Turn the oven off a few minutes before the recipe's end time and allow the residual heat to finish baking the dish. Once the food is done, leave the stove door ajar to allow the residual heat to warm the room. When using the stovetop, match the pan size to the burner to maximize the stovetop's efficiency.

With a little planning upfront, you can find efficient ways to save on everything from holiday decor to your favorite soup recipes. From your friends at Choptank Electric Cooperative, we hope you have a wonderful holiday season.



Mike Malandro,
President & CEO
Choptank Electric Cooperative



NOV.-DEC. 2023



Choptank Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

Choptank Fiber

P.O. Box 430 | Denton, MD | 21629
Member Service Center: 1-877-892-0001
Automated Member Service: 1-866-999-4574
Automated Outage Reporting: 1-800-410-4790
Text "OUT" to: 1-800-410-4790
Use SmartHub to Manage Account,
Track Usage and Report Outages —>



WWW.CHOPTANKELECTRIC.COOP



Mike Malandro
President & CEO



Cole Herr
Journeyman Lineman



Ethan Wallace
Chief Lineman



Marion Townsend
Meter & Apparatus
Technician



Thank you to all Veterans,
especially those who now
serve our electric members!

*"This nation will remain the land
of the free only so long as it is
the home of the brave."*

-Elmer Davis



Scott Maurer
Work Order & Material
Coordinator



Otis Wagner
Work Order & Material
Coordinator



Scott Smart
Journeyman Lineman



Derek Brinsfield
Meter & Apparatus
Technician



Frankie Davis
Apprentice Lineman



Tyler Blackiston
Apprentice Lineman

Lasting Youth Tour Impact on Cooperative Employees

Current Choptank Electric Cooperative employees reflect on Youth Tour experiences and its impact on their careers



When Choptank Electric employees Katie Lockett and Matthew Teffeau think back on their time at National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Youth Tour and Youth Leadership Council, they summarize the experiences with one key word: empowered. Their participation in these programs equipped them for college and careers in the cooperative workforce. Beyond meeting high school students from across the country and exploring monuments and museums in Washington, D.C., they learned valuable leadership lessons and witnessed the benefit of cooperatives at the local and national levels.



Matthew Teffeau, Manager of Government Affairs at Choptank Electric, participated in the 2005 Youth Tour the summer before his senior year at Colonel Richardson High School. "My favorite memory was walking the halls of Congress, meeting my elected officials, and being part of the action throughout our nation's capital," said Teffeau. "The activities with other youth from around the country were memories you wouldn't find on your typical vacation or student trip."

He was empowered by Youth Tour to stay connected with the people he had met during the program and to set a path forward on studies in government, politics and advocacy. "I was inspired by the amount of

support Choptank Electric and my community had for local youth to participate in programs like Youth Tour," added Teffeau. "It showed me the true power of my cooperative."

Following Youth Tour and Youth Leadership Council, Teffeau completed two summer internships at the NRECA in the Government Relations department. He credits Youth Tour for showing him how he could be an advocate for his community, even in high school. "My career has centered around being an advocate and engaged public servant. Applying many skills, even the simplest as telling my story and reaching out to others to make personal connections, were part of my Youth Tour experience."



Katie Lockett, Manager of Marketing, Communications and Education at Choptank Electric, participated in the 2008 Youth Tour the summer before her senior year at North Caroline High School. "I'll never forget collecting lapel pins from each state as I met students from around the country," said Lockett. "It was such a memorable week exploring Washington, D.C., and learning things about history, the democratic process, and feeling connected to our home cooperative through this network."

She was empowered by Youth Tour to branch out from the Eastern Shore and attend college out of state, and then to come back home after college to serve her local community. "I utilized the skills from Youth Tour and Youth Leadership Council to meet new people and connect with their individual stories to make a difference. It led me to my career in communications as an advocate and storyteller for cooperatives and their members."

Following Youth Tour and Youth Leadership Council, Lockett spoke at the Choptank Electric Annual Meeting in 2009 about her experiences in Washington, D.C. and in New Orleans representing Maryland. "That was my first opportunity at public speaking, and the Cooperative members in attendance made me feel at ease with their support," added Lockett. "The program helped me understand the impact we can make in our communities by sharing our voice. I'm grateful to be able to give back in my current role to the organization that kept my family's lights on my entire childhood and invested in my youth leadership journey."



> We're searching for students to attend the Youth Tour program with us in Washington, D.C., next year from June 17-21, 2024. Participants must be members of Choptank Electric Cooperative. Applications are due 12/29/23.

Interested high school juniors and seniors can learn more and apply online at **> www.choptankelectric.coop/youth-tour**



Don't Shoot the Lines

By McKayla Kiernan, Communications Specialist

Just one fiber line damaged by a shot can have a repair cost of \$20,000 to \$30,000 and will require an extended outage

Choptank Electric Cooperative is made up of 56,000-plus members who all rely on the safety and upkeep of our power grid. Our power lines and utility poles are the foundation of how we all enjoy the comforts, convenience and the power of reliable electricity and quality internet. An increasing, and unfortunate, issue occurring is our power lines being shot by hunters and gun enthusiasts. We've experienced a lot of damage to our broadband lines recently, which requires extensive repairs to the fiber-optic cables with specialized equipment to restore internet to our members.

We know the majority of hunters practice safe hunting and they understand the potential hazards when discharging a firearm. We encourage these experienced

hunters who are familiar with the area to help identify locations of electrical equipment to the younger, less-experienced hunters and gun enthusiasts. Tampering with or misuse of our fiber and electric lines cannot only put you in danger, but will also affect all other members down the line.

Shooting at transmission facilities — wires, poles and insulators — is dangerous to you, jeopardizes everyone's power, and is a federal crime. A gunshot can make electricity arc to the ground or cause the wire to fall, with a high risk of serious injury or death. Never attempt to shoot through the wires or at anything that may be on the wires or poles.

Structures such as tree stands attached to a transmission tower, pole, or underneath a high-

voltage line, even temporarily, are prohibited. Contact with these structures can be extremely dangerous due to high-voltage power flowing through the lines.

Maryland law has several provisions that prohibit hunters from damaging the property of another. Please be advised that if you or hunters that you allow on your property cause damage to Choptank's equipment, you could be fined by the Department of Natural Resources and/or held liable for the cost of repairs.

Please respect yourself, your fellow members and our power infrastructure. Thank you for being a valued member of Choptank Electric Cooperative; please find helpful safety tips here > www.choptankelectric.coop/dst/

Light Up the Pines This Holiday Season!

Ocean Pines members are invited to brighten their community



We invite our Ocean Pines members to register your home for this free outdoor decorating event. A map of participating homes will be available at > www.oceanpines.org.

Choptank Electric is giving free LED string lights to the first 25 homes to sign up.

Registered homes will also be entered to win one of three \$50 bill credits.

Registration will be open from November 20 – December 8. Email your name, address and phone number to info@oceanpines.org or call 410-641-7717 to register. Good luck!



Olin Davis Retires from Choptank Board of Directors

By Valerie Connelly, VP Government Affairs and Public Relations



"We have to make sure the co-op stays service oriented, because the consumers are members." Olin and Catherine Davis, with son Christopher.

After 34 years of service to the members of Choptank Electric Cooperative that spanned several decades and many miles, Olin Davis said, "My wife Catherine and I both greatly enjoyed getting to know directors and staff here at home, at the VMD regional level and at NRECA nationally."



"I have always been proud to serve on Choptank's Board," explained Davis, "but never as proud as in these last four years." Turnover at the Cooperative led to big changes for the future. "The most important job a board does is hire the right person for CEO, and that's what we did when we chose Mike Malandro for the job."

As Board members celebrated Davis at a recent dinner, Choptank's President & CEO Mike Malandro said, "Olin has been a visionary and the voice of reason for members of the Cooperative. He has made an indelible mark that will be long remembered."

"My wife Catherine and I both greatly enjoyed getting to know directors and staff here at home, at the VMD regional level and at NRECA nationally."

**- Olin S. Davis III,
Choptank Electric Co-op Board
Member from 1989-2023**

Olin S. Davis III joined the Choptank Board of Directors in 1989 as the representative from Kent County. Over the years, he served on various committees and was elected Chairman of the Board from 2013 to 2018. Coincidentally, his grandfather, Olin S. Davis, was the second person to serve as President of the Cooperative in the 1940s.

said then. "It's different for an investor-owned utility; the owners are investors." As true today as it was 30 years ago.

In a 1991 *Rural Living* magazine article featuring Olin Davis III as a new Director at Choptank, he identified the biggest challenge as the economic supply of power. "We have to make sure the Co-op stays service-oriented, because the consumers are members," Davis

In 2020, Davis was elected as Maryland's representative to the Board of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, a prestigious position that allowed him to guide energy policy discussion in the halls of Congress in Washington, D.C., and across the nation.

Malandro joined the Choptank staff as President & CEO in 2019. He implemented the Board's vision for less regulation and fiber internet deployment. According to Davis, "Becoming member-regulated and adding broadband to our offerings was a dream come true."

Choptank Electric Cooperative's mission is to provide reliable and cost-effective services that improve the quality of life for the community. "I'm grateful to the Choptank staff that worked together so well to bring new life to the Cooperative through Choptank Fiber," reflected Davis.

Davis said he is stepping aside now to make room for the next generation of Co-op Board members who can bring new insight to address the challenges of the future. "I'm sure our new Board member from Kent County, Kristen Nickerson, will find that co-op folks are just great people."

Choptank Welcomes New Employees



Ariel Dawson
Member Service Specialist
Denton Headquarters

Experience: Lowe's
Hobbies: I love being outside, on the boat, fishing, homesteading and cooking new meals
Looking Forward To: Learning and meeting new people!



Camden Stinson
Apprentice Lineman
Chestertown

Experience: Southeast Lineman Training Center
Hobbies: Diesel mechanics, hunting, fishing, boating
Looking Forward To: Meeting new people and serving the community



Colby Benton
Apprentice Lineman
Chestertown

Experience: J.R. Smith
Hobbies: Hunting and fishing
Looking Forward To: Learning from the people around me



Dylan Perdue
Engineering Fieldman

Experience: Shea's Electric and The State of Delaware
Hobbies: Hunting, fishing and working on old tractors
Looking Forward To: Meeting new people and furthering my knowledge on electric



Judi White
Member Service Specialist
Denton Headquarters

Experience: Burriss Logistics and Johnson Diversey
Hobbies: Helping nonprofits, fundraisers and shopping
Looking Forward To: Working with people and meeting members' needs



Luke Turner
Apprentice Lineman
Chestertown


Experience: Southeast Lineman Training Center
Hobbies: Hunting, fishing, shooting, boating, friends and family
Looking Forward To: Meeting new people and keeping the lights on



Congratulations to McKayla Kiernan, who has been promoted to Communications Specialist. McKayla began her new duties on July 31, 2023.

Employment Opportunities Available

> www.choptankelectric.coop/employment



Any margins above the cost of service are allocated back to our member-owners.

Capital Credit Distribution

The Choptank Electric Cooperative Board of Directors voted to return \$2.5 million to its members during the month of January 2024.

Any active member who has accrued capital credits in 1994 and 2022 will receive a bill credit applied directly to their January bill. For any member who is inactive, you must accrue \$100 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 by mid-January.

From the moment you signed up to receive electric service from Choptank Electric, you became a member of Choptank Electric, not a customer. While investor-owned utilities return a portion of any

profits back to their shareholders, electric co-ops operate on an at-cost basis. Co-ops return their profits to their 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.



CHOPTANK FIBER
- is now offering -
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

We are offering three different assistance programs that can be combined for up to \$60 off your broadband subscription package.

For more information and to see if you qualify
> www.choptankfiber.com/discounts

Choptank
Fiber

WWW.CHOPTANKFIBER.COM | 1-877-892-0001



Safe & Happy Holidays!

Our offices will be closed during the holiday season on the following dates:

November 23 & 24
December 22 & 25
January 1

Members can still manage their accounts via SmartHub or by calling our Automated Member Service number at 1-866-999-4574

MEMBERS' NOTES

Our members are the reason Choptank Electric Cooperative exists. Whether on social media, by phone, or through handwritten letters, we appreciate when members let us know that we are doing a good job! **Thank you, all!**



Choptank Electric Cooperative
A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

Choptank Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Choptank Electric, a Touchstone Energy Cooperative, is a not-for-profit, member-owned, electric distribution co-op serving approximately 56,000 residential, commercial and industrial members in all nine counties on Maryland's Eastern Shore.

President & CEO

Micheal E. Malandro

Board of Directors

Douglas D. Scott
Chairman, Dorchester Co.

Robert E. Arnold
Vice Chairman, Queen Anne's Co.

John J. Burke Jr.
Treasurer, Cecil Co.

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Secretary, Wicomico Co.

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Caroline Co.

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Kristen E. Nickerson
Kent Co.

Jeffrey D. Rathell Sr.
Talbot Co.

Robert B. Thompson
Ocean Pines District

Donna R. West
Worcester 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.

Dear Choptank Electric Co-op,

To the linemen & construction crew who fixed my electric wires that came down in the storm (tree limb) was the culprit! After reporting my service out, about 9 p.m. the repair dept. called me back & told me that I was the only one affected & they had researched the neighbors & told me that they would be out soon to reconnect the line. And sure enough you showed up around midnight & in the rain, lightning & thunder & proceeded to restore our service.

Don't know who you are but a JOB WELL DONE as I woke up to lights on & that's a good feeling ... Thanks again to the guys & girls answering the phone, to the guys and girls doing the work outside.

*Well Done & Thank you!
- Ed & Penney Smith*

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 Cooperative. Funds from the Trust are distributed in all nine counties of Maryland's Eastern Shore.

SEPT. 2023

The total of approved applications was \$23,542, which included \$13,162 for individual home and medical expenses.

- Chesapeake Film Festival \$2,000
- Christ Church and First United Methodist Churches \$500
- Greenmount Cemetery \$3,880
- Stories Love Music \$1,000
- Martin's House & Barn \$3,000

To apply or to find out more about this program:

> www.choptankelectric.coop/operation-round-trust-fund