



# MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

**Get to know your Board Members standing for reelection during**



*Jeffrey D. Rathell Sr.  
Talbot County*

**Jeffrey D. Rathell Sr.** has served on the Board of Choptank Electric Cooperative since 1998 and was elected Chairman in April of 2018. He serves on the Board as the representative of Talbot County.

Rathell is the President and General Manager of Rathell Sales and Service, LLC, a farm equipment dealership in Easton, Maryland.



*John J. Burke Jr.  
Cecil County*

**John J. Burke Jr.** was appointed to the Choptank Electric Cooperative Board of Directors in March of 2010 to represent Cecil County.

Burke was elected to the role of Board Secretary and Treasurer in April 2014. In April 2018, he was elected Vice-Chairman. Burke is an Associate Broker for Gunther McClary Real Estate.



*Robert B. Thompson  
Ocean Pines District*

**Robert B. Thompson** was elected to the Choptank Electric Cooperative Board of Directors in April of 2017 to represent the Ocean Pines District. Thompson is the Director of Operations for CoreLife, providing oversight and direction over all aspects of the clinics affiliated with its largest healthcare partner, Peninsula Regional Medical Center.



# Your Source for News & Information



## THIS MONTH'S FEATURES

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- Scholarships Galore....Pg. 23
- Energy Audits.....Pg. 24

Daylight Saving Time begins Sunday, March 8!

# AT THE ANNUAL MEETING

## the Annual Meeting on April 30, 2020.



Craig N. Mathies Sr.  
Somerset County

**Craig N. Mathies Sr.** was appointed to the Choptank Electric Cooperative Board of Directors in October of 2019 to represent Somerset County. Mathies had a career in the automotive business and is presently the Pastor of Zion Baptist Church in Cambridge. Mathies is also President of the Somerset County Commissioners, representing District 1.

Further information about each Director Candidate is posted at Choptank Electric headquarters in Denton and is available at <https://choptankelectric.com/board-directors>.

The petitions for each of the four incumbent candidates have been approved by the Credentials and Elections Committee. Because there is only one approved Director candidate for each district, the Committee has invoked Bylaws section 4.06(b).

This section states that in the event of an uncontested election, Choptank Electric may forgo the balloting process. This saves the Cooperative and its members thousands of dollars in printing and mailing of the ballots, along with other voting services.



### Attend the 2020 Annual Meeting to enjoy:

- Scholarships
- Shredding services
- Electronics recycling
- iPhone repair service
- \$100 - \$500 door prizes
- Full meal
- Camping chair gift
- And much more!

# The Outage Map: Stay in the Know During Outages

The Outage Map is a great tool we offer to our members to use during outage situations. During this inclement weather, use these features to stay informed with up-to-date information.

**Estimated Time of Restoration (ETR):** This feature helps members estimate when their power should be restored. This information is located in a gray box that appears when you click on any colored dots located on the Outage Map.

**County/Zip Code Tally:** A county tally tells the membership how many members in that particular county are without power. This is on the right side of the map in the gray toolbox. When you click on the particular county that is being affected, the map will automatically bring you to that county and then display how many members are without power. If you would like to see this information in zip code format, simply click on the drop-down menu that says “County” and it will automatically change to zip code format.

**Color-Coded Dots:** These dots represent the number of people who are without power according to color and size. When these dots are on the map, you can click on them and display details on that particular outage like how many members are without power, where they are located, and what is the estimated time of restoration.

**Trucks:** When a truck is on the map this icon means that a crew has been dispatched to the outage.

During outages, we encourage our members to use

this map as a resource for information. The Outage Map is just another way Choptank Electric Cooperative keeps in touch with its members.

Check out all of these features and more at <https://choptankelectric.com/storm-center>.



## RURAL Act Passes

The fiscal year 2020 spending bill passed in Congress and was signed by President Donald J. Trump in December. The bill also contained the RURAL Act and other key provisions for electric cooperatives and their consumer-members. The RURAL Act protects more than 900 electric cooperatives throughout the nation from the risk of losing their tax-exempt status when they accept government grants for disaster relief, broadband service and other programs that benefit co-op members.

Choptank Electric Cooperative’s Chairman of the Board and Talbot County Director, Jeff Rathell, said, “Passage of the RURAL Act is due, in large part, to the tireless commitment of our co-op advocates. This highlights what is possible when our members take action and work together toward practical solutions. Ultimately, this effort keeps your electricity affordable and reliable.”

“While we look to bring high-speed internet to our rural

communities here on the Eastern Shore and continue to prepare for extreme weather events, such as hurricanes, we need to make sure Choptank Electric is positioned to tap into federal, state and local funding opportunities without risking our tax-exempt status,” Rathell explained. “We would like to thank Senators Ben Cardin and Chris Van Hollen and Congressman Andy Harris for listening to our concerns and co-sponsoring the RURAL Act. Without their leadership and commitment to our cooperative members, this bill would not have made it across the finish line.”

The RURAL Act was the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association’s (NRECA) top legislative priority last year because of the profound threat to the business model of not-for-profit co-ops. Tens of thousands of co-op leaders, employees and members across the country rallied for passage of the bill.

# Are You Ready for Spring? Play It Safe!

## Your Co-op's Vegetation Management Best Practices

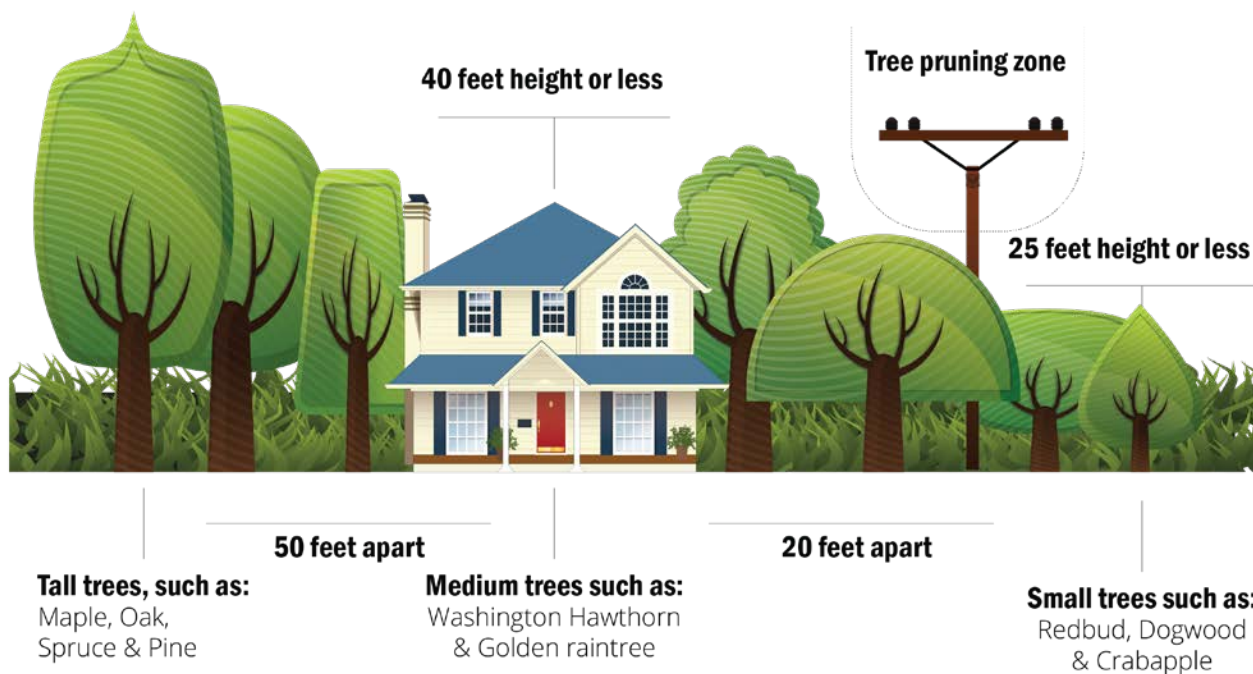
As your electric cooperative, it's our responsibility to provide safe, affordable and reliable electricity to all of our members. Part of our strategy is to conduct proven vegetation management activities such as tree trimming, tree removal, mowing and herbicide application. These practices conserve and enhance the vast natural resources of the Delmarva Peninsula that are touched by the Cooperative's maintained utility lines while also providing your much-needed electricity.

Since May of 2003, all of Choptank Electric's tree-trimming and mowing operations have been performed by Asplundh Tree Experts of Willow Grove, PA. Over these 17 years, Asplundh has provided a mix of resources at a reasonable rate to assist the Cooperative in its effort to maintain vegetation and minimize its impacts on our infrastructure.

But what can our members do to help us maintain these rights-of-way?

## Think Before You Plant







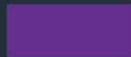

One of the simplest things our members can do is to "think before you plant." When you are looking at planting bushes, shrubs or trees, look up and see if there are any power lines above or near that spot. Some trees could grow up and interfere with power lines, so instead, think of planting shorter bushes or shrubs near those areas.



## Call Before You Dig

Protect your property and your life by "calling before you dig" on any project this spring. Before you dig a new spot for your mailbox or install that new fence call 811, which is a free service that marks out underground utility lines, pipes and cables. This way, you aren't causing damage to any utility lines, which can disrupt service to an entire neighborhood, harm diggers and potentially result in fines and repair costs, or potentially, your life. 811 marks all utility lines based on a color code for easy interpretation.

## Know The Color Code!

							
Proposed Excavation	Temp. Survey Markings	Electric	Gas, Oil, & other Gases	TV, Cable, Alarm, etc.	Potable Water	Reclaimed Water & Irrigation	Sewer & Drain

Choptank Electric Cooperative is working for our members in Annapolis this legislative season. SB540/HB999, The Member-Regulated Cooperative/Rural Broadband for the Eastern Shore Act will be considered by legislators before the Maryland General Assembly monthly session ends April 6th. For more information about how your Co-op is working for you, read our latest articles at <https://choptankelectric.com/e-news>.

**Our offices will be closed on Friday, April 10, 2020, to observe Good Friday.**



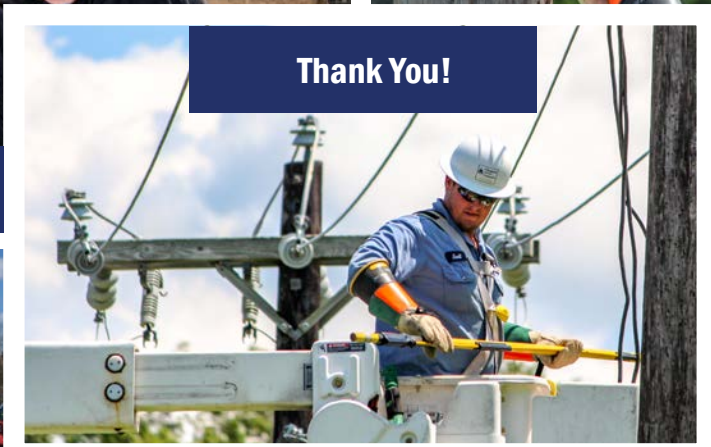
## Lineworker Appreciation Day

America's electric cooperatives have designated the second Monday of April as National Lineworker Appreciation Day. On April 13, 2020, America's electric cooperatives will again honor the hard-working men and women who often work in challenging conditions to keep the lights on.

Choptank Electric is proud of the skill, professionalism and dedication our lineworkers display each day when they step out and maintain our electrical infrastructure. A big "THANK YOU" to our Choptank Electric lineworkers!



**In the community**



**Training for the future**



## Don't Miss This \$2,000 Scholarship Opportunity!

If you are a high school or home-school senior whose parent or guardian is a member or employee of Choptank Electric Cooperative, you are eligible to apply and compete for the Choptank Electric Trust Scholarship that is distributed by the Choptank Electric Trust Board, a 501(c)(3) organization. Applicants must be entering a post-high school educational institution as a freshman in the fall of 2020.

The Choptank Electric Trust Board distributes nine \$2,000 scholarships every May and scholarship recipients are selected based on a combination of the following criteria:

- Financial need
- Academic achievement
- Extracurricular and community activities
- References
- Personal essay

The required essay should be limited to two typed, double-spaced pages on the following topic: "Why I have chosen to continue my education and how this scholarship will assist me."

Reference letters are required. Letters may be from

school administrators, teachers, civic leaders, clergy or neighbors. Please limit to three references. Letters may not be submitted from relatives.

The Academic Information section of the application must be completed by your guidance counselor or other

appropriate school official. You must submit the completed application to:

Choptank Electric Trust Scholarship  
Attn: Beverley Ireland  
P.O. Box 426  
Denton, MD 21629

Any incomplete applications will not be considered. The application must be postmarked no later than or hand-delivered to the Denton or Salisbury District offices by 4:30 p.m. on Friday, March 13, 2020. You will receive confirmation that your application has been received. Applications postmarked after this date will

not be eligible for consideration. For additional information and the application, please call Beverley Ireland, 1-877-892-0001, ext. 8660, or visit our website at [www.choptankelectric.coop](http://www.choptankelectric.coop) and under Member Benefits, click on Scholarships.



## November and December 2019 & January 2020 Trust Awards

### November 2019

- Humane Society of Somerset County - \$500
- Salisbury Urban Ministries - \$2,000
- Caroline Human Services Council, Inc. - \$500
- Antioch United Methodist Church - \$1,000
- Caroline Optimist Club - \$500

The total of approved applications for November was \$20,098.74, which included \$15,598.74 for individual home and medical expenses.

### December 2019

- LEAD Maryland Foundation - \$5,000
- Snow Hill High School Girls Soccer - \$1,600
- Galena Volunteer Fire Co., Inc. - \$1,390
- Brown Box Theatre Project - \$1,000
- Dorchester American Youth Football & Cheer - \$1,000

The total of approved applications for December was

\$33,821.76, which included \$23,831.76 for individual home and medical expenses.

### January 2020

- Preston Historical Society - \$500
- Dorchester County Comm. of Aging - \$3,000
- Horizons of Kent and Queen Anne's County - \$1,500
- Friends of Caroline County Public Library - \$500
- Sudlersville Middle School - \$1,000
- Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry - \$1,000

The total of approved applications for January was \$18,115.93, which included \$10,615.93 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.**

## Complimentary Energy Audits Offered to Members

Do you ever wonder why your electric bills seem to be different than what you expected? Do you understand why your bills seem to fluctuate during the year? Do you know which of your appliances is using the most energy? Do you know where conditioned air is escaping from in your home?

All of these questions can be answered by calling Choptank Electric Cooperative and speaking with our Energy Efficiency Coordinator, Justus Gellert. He can analyze members' accounts by reviewing their SmartHub data or even schedule an in-home energy audit, which is complimentary for every member.



When a member contacts us with an energy usage or energy efficiency concern, our first step is to review energy habits with account data from SmartHub. Members who still have a concern can request a complimentary walk-through energy audit.

During these energy audits, Gellert will address factors that are contributing to the usage you see on your bills each month, like heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC), lighting, and more. These energy audits are free for all members and in a majority of cases can identify ways to help you save on your bill with no costly repairs or upgrades.

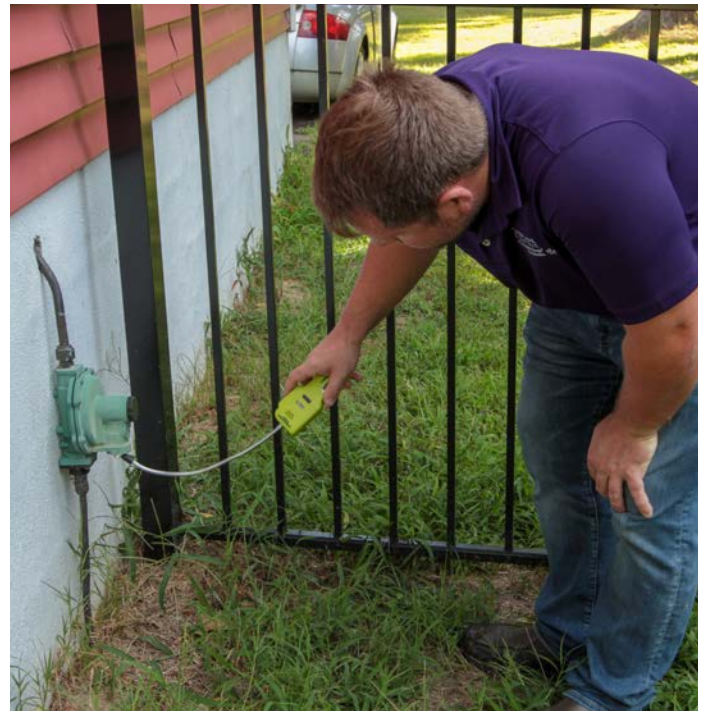
We have three certified BPI Building Analyst experts on staff who are able to walk through your home and discuss which appliances are using the most energy, how to curtail that usage as best as possible, where any leaks or inefficiencies in the home are located, explain how the house works as a system, and discuss how to implement no-cost or low-cost improvements that will reduce usage and improve the energy efficiency of your home.

Some commonplace items that Choptank Electric can

address in your home are:

- Appropriate sizing, condition, and functionality of the HVAC system(s)
- Ductwork condition and leakage
- Importance of supply and return air to the house as a system
- Air filtration and restriction to the system
- Thermostat settings as related to energy efficiency and comfort
- Supplemental sources of heating and cooling such as space heaters and window units
- Condition and amount of insulation in the home
- Appliances and other factors that contribute to energy usage and basic load calculations
- Condition of the envelope of the home as related to energy efficiency such as locating gaps or penetrations from the outside to the inside of the home
- External factors that can influence energy usage such as shading, windbreaks, etc.

For more information about our home energy audits, please visit our website at [www.choptankelectric.coop](http://www.choptankelectric.coop) under Member Benefits, Energy Efficiency, or call our Member Service Center at 1-877-892-0001 and ask for our Energy Program Coordinator, Justus Gellert.



*Justus Gellert, Energy Efficiency Coordinator, conducts an energy efficiency audit.*

### 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](http://www.choptankelectric.coop)

**President and CEO**  
Micheal E. Malandro



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#### Board of Directors

Jeffrey D. Rathell Sr.  
Chairman, Talbot Co.

John J. Burke Jr.  
Vice Chairman, Cecil Co.

Douglas D. Scott  
Secretary-Treasurer, Dorchester Co.

Robert E. Arnold  
Queen Anne's Co.

Amy I. Brandt  
Caroline Co.

Olin S. Davis, III  
Kent Co.

Matthew R. Holloway  
Wicomico Co.

Robert B. Thompson  
Ocean Pines District

Donna R. West  
Worcester Co.

Craig N. Mathies, Sr.  
Somerset Co.

## Renewable Energy Credits (RECs)

Interested in renewable energy but don't have space or can't install on your home?

- Choptank Electric offers RECs for anyone who is interested in purchasing renewable energy without the hassle.
- Purchase green power in blocks of 100 kWh for \$0.20 each.
- RECs appear as an extra line item on your monthly bill for easy tracking.

Minimum purchase of 1 block required, and there is no maximum - buy as much renewable energy as you want! A one-year commitment applies.

Signing up is easy! Simply visit [www.choptankelectric.coop/renewable-energy-credits](http://www.choptankelectric.coop/renewable-energy-credits) and complete the form.



Hydro



Wind



Solar



Biomass



Geothermal & Heat Capture

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Placing hot food in the refrigerator makes the appliance work harder than necessary, using more energy. Allow food to cool down before you place it in the fridge.

