



Choptank Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative 

Choptank Fiber

July 2021

83rd Annual Meeting
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The Annual Meeting Goes Virtual!

While held virtually, the Annual Meeting had record-high registrations from our members.

By Elizabeth Hallett, Manager of Marketing & Communications

On Thursday, April 29, 2021, Choptank Electric Cooperative Board of Directors and staff welcomed members virtually at the Denton Headquarters to conduct the 83rd Choptank Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting. The meeting was held virtually due to COVID-19 protocols.

At 5:45 p.m. the Cooperative began with an informational video loop, and the business meeting started promptly at 6:00 p.m. There were 340 registrants for the virtual meeting, with 206 of those being members.

The business meeting began with Jeffrey Rathell, Chairman of the Board, introducing fellow board members and staff and proceeding with the election.

The Credentials and Elections Committee Chair, William Edwards, announced first that the petitions for each of the three incumbent candidates had been approved by the Credentials and Elections Committee.

Because there is only one ap-

proved Director candidate for each district, the Committee invoked Bylaws section 4.06(b). This section states that in the event of an uncontested election, Choptank Electric may forgo the balloting process. Director Bob Thompson, Ocean Pines District, oversaw the election of the following board members: Olin Davis, Kent County; Doug Scott, Dorchester County; and Bob Arnold, Queen Anne's County. All three were elected to a 3-year term.

Mike Malandro, President and CEO of Choptank Electric Cooperative, reported to the membership about the Co-op's accomplishments in 2020 and plans for the future regarding broadband and continued service to members.

"Choptank is stepping in, to solve the rural broadband problem like we did with electricity," said Malandro. "We continue our work to seek out federal, state, and local grant funds to expedite our broadband deployment as we steadily connect new customers.



Jeff Rathell, Chairman of the Board of Directors addresses members virtually.

Updates on our progress and general information can be found at www.choptankfiber.com. Our motto is 'No home left behind.'

The meeting ended with the drawing for door prizes that were bill credits ranging from \$100 to \$500 and the "Luck of the Draw" scholarship, which awarded ten \$1,000 scholarships to randomly selected students. Twenty-seven members submitted scholarship applications.

The Annual Meeting was a huge success. Details concerning the 84th Annual Meeting will be announced in September and will be published in the 2021-2022 Member Guide.

[Scan the QR code] to watch the live stream.





Learn About Recent Tariff Changes

Recent changes include load control, line extension policy, and more.

By Sarah M. Dahl, General Counsel

As a member-regulated Cooperative, Choptank Electric's Board of Directors has the authority to establish and change rates charged by the Cooperative. Here are a couple of recent changes for you to be aware of:

Load Control Rider – effective 4/1/21

This is a voluntary rider that may be paired with certain eligible rates which include a demand component. Because the Residential Rate does not include a demand component, this rider does not apply to residential members. Under this rider, members who reduce their load during specific peak periods are eligible for a curtailment credit.

Line Extension Policy – revision effective 7/1/21

This refers to the cost of extending new metered service. Residential line extension charges are mostly unchanged by this revision. For non-residential line extensions, Choptank Electric will provide a discount

if the facility is expected to exceed certain revenue thresholds.

Lighting Tariff – revision effective 7/1/21

Choptank Electric has re-opened the LED options in the Lighting Tariff to all members. This is a convenient way to install and pay for lighting in hard-to-meter places. The Cooperative is gradually phasing out its non-LED bulbs and will not be repairing or replacing these older, less-efficient bulbs going forward.

An updated version of the full Choptank Electric tariff, which includes all rates, charges, and terms and conditions, is always available on the Rates page of the Cooperative website at <https://choptankelectric.coop/rates> under “Current Tariff.”

Please email rates@choptankelectric.coop or call 1-877-892-0001 (ask for Rates Department) with questions.

*Congratulations to our 2021
Luck of the Draw Scholarship
recipients!*

- **Emma McClary** – from The Gunston School, attending Bucknell University
- **Brynn Yates** - from Cambridge-South Dorchester High School, attending Salisbury University
- **Genevieve Rinker** – from Bohemia Manor High School, attending Salisbury University
- **Keeley Good** – from North Caroline High School, attending Chesapeake College
- **Anna Price** – from North Caroline High School, attending University of Delaware
- **Giovanni Cristiano** – from Caravel Academy, attending Austin College
- **Benjamin Jordan** – from James M. Bennett High School, attending University of Maryland
- **Bradley Duley** – from St. Michaels High School, attending Parsons School of Design



- **Joseph Walstrum** – from North Caroline High School, attending Frostburg State University
- **Helena Cress** – from Chestertown Christian Academy, attending Southern Adventist University

All students will be receiving a \$1,000 scholarship to their higher education institution of choice!

Somerset County Director Earns Valuable Accreditation

Craig Mathies earned the Credentialed Cooperative Director Certification.

Congratulations to Somerset County Director Craig N. Mathies Sr., for earning his Credentialed Cooperative Director Certificate. Members of the Choptank Electric Board of Directors are required to obtain this accreditation within three years of joining the Board.

Mathies had to complete five courses designed to teach essential knowledge and the skills deemed essential for cooperative directors by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

“Craig hit the ground running since day one, and this accreditation was just the next step on his journey to serve our membership according to the highest co-op standards,” said Jeff Rathell, Chairman of Choptank Electric’s Board of Directors and Talbot County Director.

Following the retirement of Carl Widdowson in 2019, Mathies was appointed to the Choptank Electric Board of Directors to represent Somerset County, and was elected by the membership in 2020.



Craig N. Mathies (center), was accredited with the CCD earlier in April.

Welcome to The Team!

We welcome Catherine “Cassie” Bishop to the Choptank Electric family.



Catherine “Cassie” Bishop
Member Services Specialist

Catherine “Cassie” Bishop is our newest Member Service Specialist, and joined the Co-op on Wednesday, April 21, 2021.

Bishop has 18 years of experience as a Customer Service Specialist, and holds an Associate Degree in Criminal Justice from Chesapeake College. She is currently pursuing a bachelor degree from University of Maryland Global Campus.

In her spare time, Bishop likes to travel, read, visit the beach, and spend time with her dog outdoors.

Bishop resides in Goldsboro with her husband of 6 1/2 years, J.B., one cat and a yellow lab.

Bishop says that she’s looking forward to being a team member in a positive environment that values dedication and professionalism.

Welcome to the Co-op, Cassie!



Visit www.choptankfiber.com to learn where we will be deploying next, OR scan the QR code.

High School Seniors Earn Co-op College Scholarships

Three area high school seniors were awarded \$1,000 each.

“We’re extremely proud that we can help these deserving young people from Maryland’s Eastern Shore.”

-Mike Malandro, President & CEO

Three high school seniors from the service territory of Choptank Electric Cooperative have each received \$1,000 college scholarships awarded by the Education Scholarship Foundation of the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives.

The 2021 scholarship recipients are:

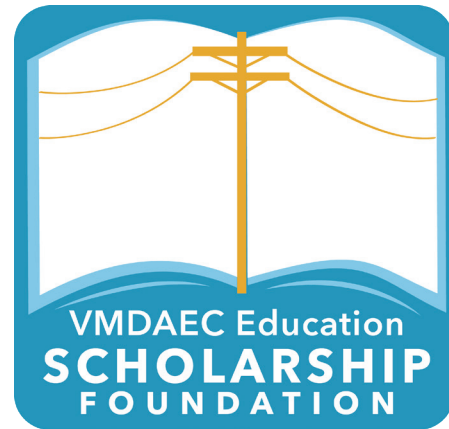
- **Tanner Bails of Salisbury**, a student at Mardela Middle & High School
- **Rachel Noonan of Salisbury**, a student at Delmar Middle & Senior High School
Special Recipient of the Bill Sherrod memorial scholarship
- **Delainey Sann of Preston**, a student at Colonel Richardson High School

The students were eligible for consideration because their parents or guardians are members of Choptank Electric Cooperative.

“We commend these students on their outstanding academic achievements,” said Russell G. “Rusty” Brown, Chair of the VMDAEC Education Scholarship Foundation Board and Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors at Northern Neck Electric Cooperative. “Our electric cooperatives are delighted to provide support to these worthy students, as they represent a future generation of leaders in their communities.”

The Foundation awarded Worth Hudson Scholarships of \$1,000 each to 57 students. They are named in honor of Hudson, the first chairman of the VMDAEC Education Scholarship Foundation.

Since 2001, the Foundation has provided approximately 780 scholarships totaling more than \$800,000



to aspiring college students as well as to the next generation of electric lineworkers.

The Foundation also awarded a special scholarship in memory of Bill Sherrod, the longtime editor of Cooperative Living magazine, to Rachel Noonan of Salisbury, a student at Delmar Middle & Senior High School, who is planning to major in English and pursue a career as a writer and author.

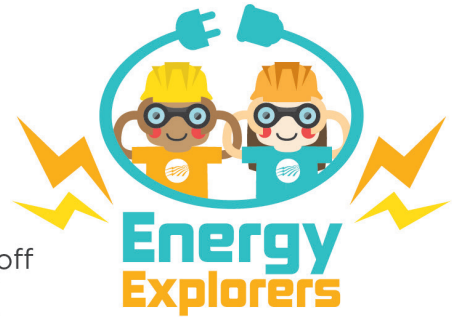
“We’re extremely proud that we can help these deserving young people from our Maryland’s Eastern Shore, whether attending college or by learning a trade, we are glad that they are continuing their education,” said Mike Malandro, President and CEO of Choptank Electric Cooperative.

The Foundation is supported through tax-deductible donations and bequests from individuals, proceeds from fundraising events and CoBank’s Sharing Success Program. One hundred percent of donations go to students for scholarships. For information on donating to the Foundation, visit www.vmdaec.com/scholarship.

Explore scholarship opportunities on our website! [Scan the QR code]



SWIMMING POOL ELECTRICAL SAFETY CROSSWORD



Water and electricity never mix! When you're cooling off in the swimming pool, remember to practice electrical safety. Complete the pool safety crossword puzzle below.

Hint: Check your answers in the key below.

1 Down:

When possible, use _____ operated devices when outside near a swimming pool.

2 Across:

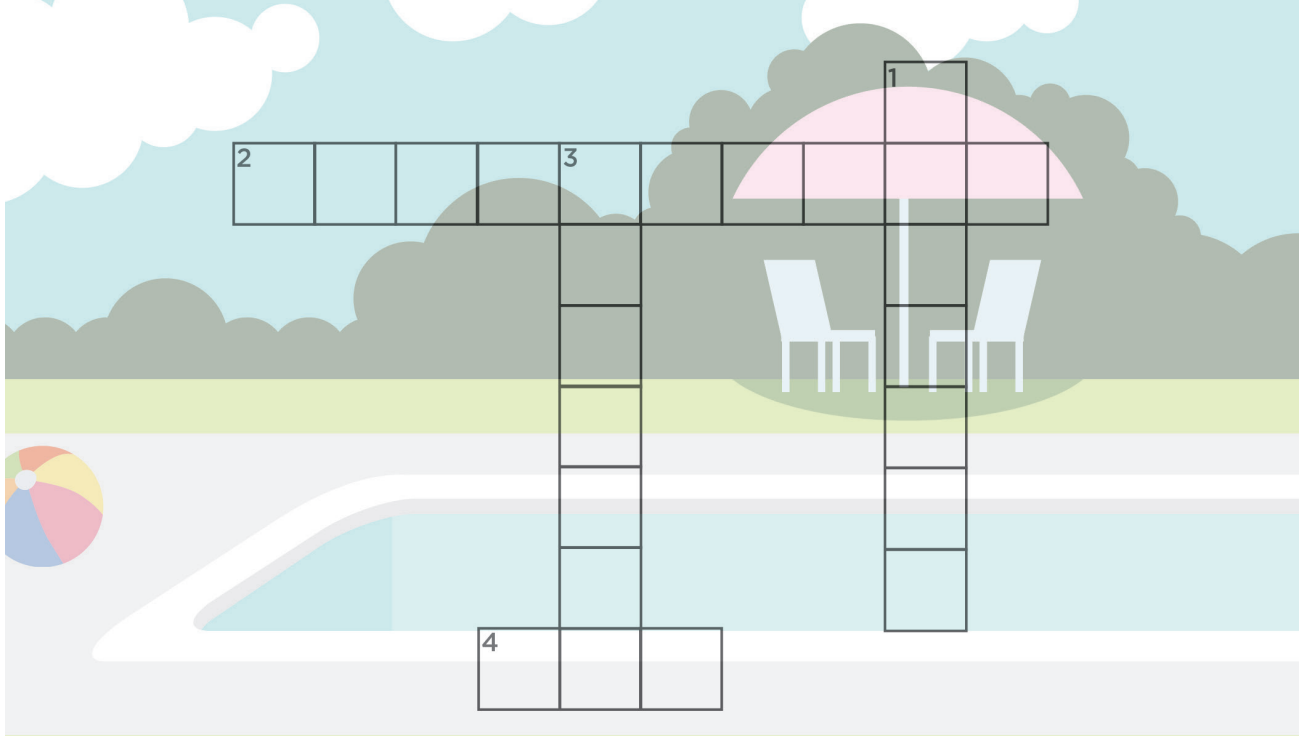
Never bring _____ devices near a swimming pool. If they come in contact with water, electric shock could occur. Devices should be kept at least 10 feet away from water sources.

3 Down:

If you hear _____, immediately exit the swimming pool. Storms may be near.

4 Across:

All outdoor electrical outlets should be covered to keep them _____.



Answer Key — 1 Down: battery 2 Across: electrical 3 Down: thunder 4 Across: Dry

Daily Maintenance Equals A Better Electric Grid

How the Co-op achieves a better electric grid every day.

By Elizabeth Hallett, Manager of Marketing & Communications



While the Cooperative carries out long-term planning projects on a large scale that help us manage our electric grid, there are many daily tasks that our linemen do day in and day out to ensure our grid is running at full capacity.

Servicemen are assigned specific sections of our territory, and during the day, they patrol the lines and look for any signs of visible damage or other possible red flags, including:

- Abused equipment, whether it be overhead or in the ground; switches can deteriorate from weather exposure or from critters tampering or taking residence within;
- Possible vegetation management issues like trees growing too close to the lines, or vines climbing up poles;
- Poles that are leaning or past their lifespan;
- Transformers mounted on the ground can get hit by cars or farm equipment and eventually, wear out due to weather. Transformers can also be affected by flooding, meaning that the transformer might need to be raised;
- Protecting equipment in need of specialized covers so that birds, rodents, and reptiles (just to name a few) can't access the equipment; and
- Damage made to our equipment as a result of a traffic accident.

In addition, Servicemen also check in on all of our substations to make sure our equipment is running smoothly and securely.

Another unique factor that can affect the reliability

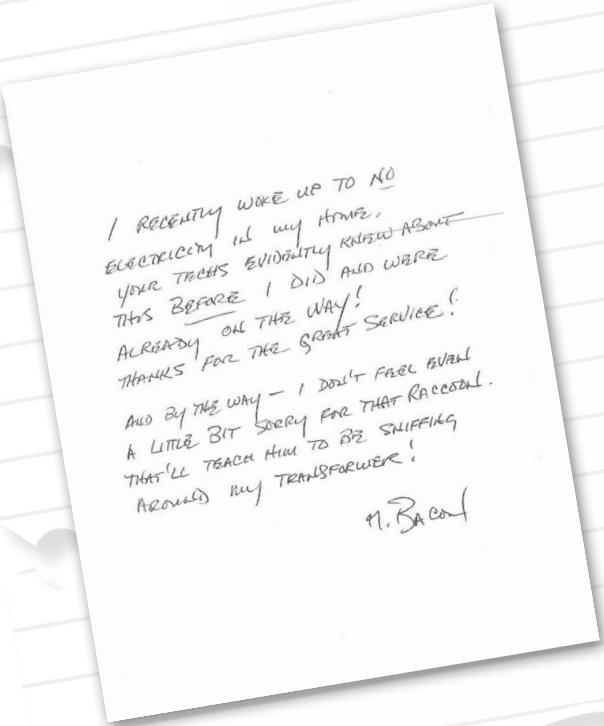
of our system is saltwater air. Saltwater damages equipment in the open air at a faster rate than typical industry standards, and marshlands and water literally eat away at guy wires. There is also erosion and the constant reevaluation of the pole placement when they are located close to the coastline. Over time, even underground wires can be affected by moisture in the ground. Animals can also cause equipment to short-circuit and can cause severe damage in a substation if they gain access.

While some outages cannot be prevented, know that Choptank Electric Cooperative maintains its systems every day to ensure that our members' electric grid is running at its best to deliver the most reliable, affordable electricity.



Member Notes

Our members are the reason Choptank Electric Cooperative exists. Without their support, it would be hard for us to move forward with current or new initiatives. Whether on social media, on the phone, or via old-fashioned letters sent along with their paper bills, our members love to let us know when their Co-op is doing a good job!



I RECENTLY Woke up to NO
ELECTRICITY in my HOME.
YOUR TECHS EVIDENTLY KNEW ABOUT
THIS BEFORE I DID AND WERE
ALREADY ON THE WAY!
THANKS FOR THE GREAT SERVICE!
AND BY THE WAY - I DON'T FEEL EVEN
A LITTLE BIT SORRY FOR THAT RASCAL.
THAT'LL TEACH HIM TO BE SHUFFING
AROUND MY TRANSFORMER!
M. B. Conf

Mark B. from Royal Oak sent a thank you note with the following message: "I recently woke up to no electricity in my home. Your techs evidently knew about this before I did and were already on the way! Thanks for the great service!"

Paula F. from Mardela Springs called in to let us know that when she had a tree fall on wires on May 1, the serviceman, Kelly Hubbard (RSC), was really nice and fast at what he had to do to get her electricity back on. She wanted to let us know he is a very good employee!

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 Maryland's Eastern Shore.

May 2021

- Wags and Wishes Animal Rescue - \$790.16
- Swim Ocean City - \$1,640.00
- LEAD Maryland Foundation Inc. - \$5,000.00
- Union UMC - \$5,000.00
- Eldorado Brookview VFC - \$3,000.00
- Holy Saviour/St. Mary of the Sea - \$5,000.00
- Mary Mac Foundation - \$1,000.00

The total of approved applications was **\$39,934.16**, which included **\$15,504.00** 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 54,000 residential, commercial, and industrial members in all nine counties on Maryland's Eastern Shore.

President and CEO

Micheal E. Malandro

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.



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.