



Choptank Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy®
Cooperative



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MAY 2022



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One Trillion Dollar Infrastructure Law Begins to Release Funds

By Matthew Tefteau, Manager of Government Affairs

Since the passage of the \$1 trillion infrastructure package, many federal agencies have started working to roll out these large investments and funding opportunities. This process will take many more months. However, funding announcements have already started for energy programs and large transportation capital projects. The state of Maryland is expected to receive \$284,000,000,000 over the next five fiscal years. Much of this funding will be going to roads, bridges, and railways. On top of that there is a significant amount of funding for rural broadband, cybersecurity, and electric grid investments. Gov. Larry Hogan, through executive order, established a subcommittee on infrastructure with the sole purpose of administering funds and advising on the implementation of these funding programs.



The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) has been advocating on behalf of the electric cooperative community, in the halls of Congress, and to the numerous

federal agencies tasked with providing these grant applications and funding programs. Through a series of online platforms, and weekly information from our federal delegation offices, Choptank Electric Cooperative continues to look at various ways these funds can improve the quality of life for members here on the Eastern Shore. This historic amount of funding mirrors the very same investment Congress passed in 1936 with the Rural Electrification Act. The passage of this infrastructure package shows that bipartisanship exists on Capitol Hill when the time comes to invest in aging infrastructure and new technology.

Through good communication and advocacy, electric cooperatives and their members can benefit from this type of investment once again.



Committed to a Co-op Culture for All

By Mike Malandro, President and CEO

In the past, you may have heard me expound on why and how Choptank Electric Cooperative is different — because we're a cooperative. Our business model sets us apart from other utilities because we adhere to seven guiding cooperative principles that reflect our core values of honesty, transparency, equity, inclusiveness and service to the greater good of the community.

Electric cooperatives, including Choptank Electric Cooperative, have a unique and storied place in our country's history. We democratized the American dream by bringing electricity to rural areas when for-profit electric companies determined the effort too costly and burdensome. Back then, cities were electrified, and rural areas were not, creating the original rural-urban divide. Newly established electric lines helped power economic opportunity in rural areas. Today, that spirit of equity and inclusion is a vital part of our Co-op DNA.

EQUAL ACCESS FOR ALL

When our electric Co-op was founded, each member contributed an equal share in order to gain access to electricity that benefited individual families as well as the larger local community. Each member had an equal vote in Co-op matters. That sense of equity and inclusion is still how we operate today. Choptank Electric Cooperative was built by and belongs to the diverse communities and consumer-members we serve. Membership is open to everyone in our service territory, regardless of race, religion, age, disability, gender identity, language, political



perspective, or socioeconomic status.

INCLUSION

By virtue of paying your electric bill each month, you're a member of the Co-op, and every member has an equal voice and vote when it comes to Co-op governance. This ties back to our guiding principles of equitable economic participation and democratic control of the Co-op.

We encourage all members to vote in Choptank Electric Cooperative's director elections during a contested election, and we invite all members to participate in Co-op meetings to weigh in on discussions that set Co-op policies and priorities, such as high-speed internet.

We know members of our community have different needs and perspectives, and we welcome diverse views on all issues under consideration by the Co-op. The more viewpoints we hear, the better we are able to reflect the needs of all corners of our community.

While our top priority is providing safe, reliable and affordable energy, we also want to be a catalyst for good in our community. Because we are your local electric cooperative, our revenues stay right here in our community. In turn, we invest in our diverse community base through scholarship programs, charitable giving, educational programs, and our Choptank Electric Trust. We strive to make long-term decisions that improve and enrich the communities we serve.

While today's world is radically different than it was when Choptank Electric Cooperative was founded, our cooperative values have stood the test of time and remain just as relevant today. We recognize that today's Co-op members expect more, and my pledge to you — the members we proudly serve — is to promote a cooperative culture of inclusion, diversity, and equity for all.





Your Pennies At Work

THE CENTREVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH HAS BEEN

a long-standing presence in the Centreville area for over 100 years. Originally two parishes, they combined in 1959 to become one location that it is today. With a community hall, church, and playground area, there is much to see at their campus. The church also runs many additional programs for the community such as Sunday school and Vacation Bible school during the summer, in addition to supplying this open playground for the community.

“Being a safe place for families and children here in our community is why we are here,” said Rev. Karen Handy, Pastor of the Centreville United Methodist Church, when asked about their community and recent update to their playground. “This playground is used by more than just our parishioners. Members of the community

come weekly and bring their children to play, have picnics, and just enjoy themselves. We knew that this playground was important not only to our church members, but many others.”

The playground that is included in their campus has been a community staple for over 30 years. The original playground, a set of wooden structures, was becoming unsafe and beyond repair. “Over the years, we have had Boy Scout troops come fix parts of it for their Eagle Scout project, but in 2020, our Board of Trustees decided that it was time to replace the playground with new, safer equipment that was friendly for all ages and disabilities,” said Handy.

When it was decided, the community pulled together to help the church with this new project. Downes Lawn Care, a local business and parish-

ioner of the church, donated their time first to demolishing the old playground so that they could begin construction.

After that was completed, they began raising funds to prep the ground and place new equipment on site. With the help from many community businesses, they began raising funds. Handy and a parishioner both remembered that the Choptank Electric Trust could be a place to look for funding, and they applied in Sept 2021.

Seeing the need immediately, the Choptank Electric Trust jumped at the opportunity to support this community investment. “This type of work is vital for a flourishing community,” said Donna Landis-Smith, Queen Anne’s County’s representative on the Choptank Electric Trust Board. “Supporting the community as a whole

‘Playing’ it Forward and Making a Difference

By Elizabeth Hallett, Manager of Marketing & Communications



is how the Choptank Electric Trust wants to concentrate their funding.”

Donating \$2,500 toward the cost of the playground in October 2021, and with the help of many other community businesses and private donations, they were able to build the playground and dedicate it on October 24, 2021.

“When we reached out to the community and asked for their help, there was no hesitation. Everyone wanted to be involved, and the Choptank Electric Trust board was another partnership that we were happy to make to complete this project,” said Handy.

While the church is still working on minor additions to the playground like adding a bench, some other playground items, and sprucing up a few picnic tables, they are looking

forward to utilizing this playground for many years to come.

“This spring, we are looking to stage our Easter egg hunt for the children,” said Handy. “But we are already looking at additional programs that we can develop for the community as well. We are hoping to start a story time of sorts. We would invite the community to come read a fun book with us, and then they could play on the playground after it was over.”

For more information about the Centreville United Methodist Church, members can visit <https://centreville-umc.com/>

This project was funded by our Operation Round Up program. Members’ power bills are rounded up to the next highest dollar and those monies help improve our community. Thank you to all members who participate. To sign up for Operation Round Up or to apply for a Trust Fund Grant please visit:



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

Additional info available on page 22

Thank You Members!



Charge Up
with
Power Player

**ANNEMARIE
CHOUINARD**

MANAGER OF
MEMBER SERVICES

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

HOW DOES YOUR JOB FIT INTO THE OVERALL COOPERATIVE BUSINESS?

Being the Member Services Manager is a wholistic approach to taking care of our members. Being in Member Services requires you to be an investigator of sorts for many problems like billing issues and questions, energy efficiency, and general inquiries. Essentially, this department is here for the members and we work together to serve them. We strive for an excellent member experience, but the end goal is always to find the right resolution for each member.

WHAT IS SOMETHING MEMBERS MIGHT NOT KNOW ABOUT YOUR JOB?

I handle most of the hardship cases, which are complex and usually extreme situations. These are people who fall through the cracks, and I have created changes in our policies that help these members in impossi-

ble situations. I love working with the various agencies to solve these problems, create solutions, and get the lights back on for our members.

WHAT IS ONE STORY ABOUT YOUR LIFE THAT CAN HELP PEOPLE REMEMBER YOU?

My family and I formed a scholarship in 1991 in memory of my cousins B. Timothy and Shawn T. Heaney, brothers who both died tragically. Tim was killed by the Long Island Sniper and Shawn was lost at sea in Alaska. Then their brother Kerry passed away suddenly a few years ago. Our family has given over \$200,000 away to over 300 students who graduated from Greenport High School in my hometown, Greenport N.Y. I am the chairperson of the scholarship committee.



The Choptank Fiber Difference!

THE CO-OP DIFFERENCE? - IT'S OWNED BY THE MEMBER COMMUNITY IT SERVES.

CF is owned by the members of Choptank Electric Cooperative (CEC)

PROFITS ARE RETURNED TO THE MEMBER OWNERS OF CEC OR REINVESTED

BUILDING THE BROADBAND NETWORK

TO THE SAME HIGH STANDARDS AS THE ELECTRIC UTILITY

100% FIBER NETWORK - CAPABLE OF PROVIDING 10 GIG SERVICE TO EVERY LOCATION

OFFERING 2.5 GIG SERVICE TO RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS

GUARANTEED 2-YEAR PRICING - NO UNEXPECTED INCREASES!

NO EQUIPMENT RENTAL FEES OR OTHER HIDDEN FEES

COMMAND IQ - MANAGED WI-FI INCLUDED

	CHOPTANK FIBER	OTHER PROVIDERS
THE CO-OP DIFFERENCE? - IT'S OWNED BY THE MEMBER COMMUNITY IT SERVES.	YES	?
PROFITS ARE RETURNED TO THE MEMBER OWNERS OF CEC OR REINVESTED	YES	?
BUILDING THE BROADBAND NETWORK		
TO THE SAME HIGH STANDARDS AS THE ELECTRIC UTILITY	YES	?
100% FIBER NETWORK - CAPABLE OF PROVIDING 10 GIG SERVICE TO EVERY LOCATION	YES	?
OFFERING 2.5 GIG SERVICE TO RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS	YES	?
GUARANTEED 2-YEAR PRICING - NO UNEXPECTED INCREASES!	YES	?
NO EQUIPMENT RENTAL FEES OR OTHER HIDDEN FEES	YES	?
COMMAND IQ - MANAGED WI-FI INCLUDED	YES	?

Choptank Fiber is Your Company and Your Best Choice for Broadband

As we have rolled out Choptank Fiber broadband to members over the last year, the vast majority have welcomed the opportunity to finally connect to the internet as we build to their homes. They celebrate the connection, the speeds, and the reliability of the service.

Occasionally, we run into a member who gets an offer from another internet service provider just as we are preparing to connect them. They ask why they should connect through Choptank rather than another ISP. After we review the list of reasons, most agree, Choptank Fiber is the best choice. Here are the key points in the analysis:

Choptank Fiber is your company. You own the Cooperative and you own CF. The economies of scale used to construct and run your electric cooperative are also at work when we build out and manage Choptank Fiber.

The Cooperative Commitment to Quality and Member Service is at our Core. We operate on a set of principles that put our members and community first.

Our Call Center and Line Crew are staffed by employees who live in your community. And they work to get you immediate answers to all your questions. You can call us anytime!

Top Quality Infrastructure. We are building the broadband infrastructure to the same high standard we have been building the electric utility. We do it all day, every day.

All proceeds are reinvested in the business. To improve as technology improves — or returned to the members, keeping electric costs down.

On a couple of occasions, members ask if broadband will really improve their daily lives. Here's what friends and neighbors identify as the quality-of-life benefits of broadband, even

for those who don't need the internet for work or school: They have access to telehealth — fewer drives needed to town or across the bridge to Annapolis and Baltimore for visits or follow-ups with doctors. They save money on services when they use internet connection to subscribe to lower-cost television or movie channels or when they use cellular phones over their Wi-Fi network. Some even say they see their grandkids more (in person and virtually) because they have access to the internet. Many pay bills online saving money on stamps and avoiding late fees from delayed mail delivery.

As we continue to build out your broadband company, we look forward to connecting your home and providing your family with the best broadband anywhere. For more information, check out our website at www.choptankfiber.com.

Notice to Members of Revised Power Cost Adjustment

Choptank Electric Cooperative members will see an increase in the cost of power supply starting with May 1, 2022, billing. This will be reflected in the Power Cost

Adjustment (PCA), which will change from a credit of \$.00072/kilowatt-hour to a charge of \$.01388/kWh. The monthly bill of a residential member who uses 1,000 kWh per

month will be increased by \$14.60. This adjustment reflects an increase of wholesale power cost from our generation and transmission supplier, Old Dominion Electric Cooperative.

MEMBERS NOTES

Our members are the reason Choptank Electric Cooperative exists. Whether on social media, by phone, or through hand written-letters, we want to say thank you to our members who let us know when we are doing a good job! Thank you all!

*“So excited for this!!
Thank you Choptank!!
Lines are being put in
the ground on our road.”*
- Samantha

*“Thank you so very
much for your service
and dedication.”*
- Martha

*“You are the
BEST team!!!!!!”*
- Mary Linda

*“These men and women
are the ones who make our
lives so comfortable, your
dedication is awesome.”*
- James

*“Best Electric
Company ever!!”*
- Nancy

*“Thanks for getting
power back on at 4am.
What a blessing in the
middle of the storm!!”*
- Freida

*“Thank you linemen. You
all are the Best!!!!!!”*
- Cheryl



Choptank Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Choptank Electric, a Touchstone Energy Cooperative, is a not-for-profit, member-owned, electric distribution Co-op serving approximately 55,000 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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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.

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.

March 2022

- Beach to Bay Heritage - \$1,843
- Community Fire Co of Millington - \$1,583
- Berlin Heritage Foundation - \$2,058
- Denton Little League - \$1,310
- Haitian Development Center - \$5,000
- Phillips Wharf Environmental Center - \$5,041
- Ridgely United Methodist Church - \$5,000
- Stories Love Music - \$1,200
- Christ Church/Episcopal Church Worton - \$2,500

The total of approved applications was \$40,919, which included \$15,384 for individual home and medical expenses.