



Choptank Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy®
Cooperative



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JUNE 2022



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

Sunrise over our Regional Service Center solar field

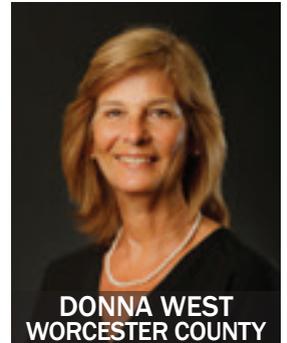
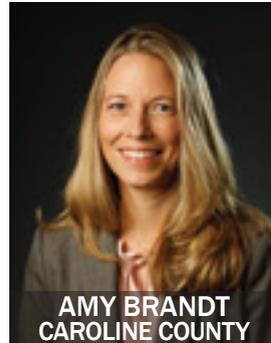


Your 2022 Choptank Electric Cooperative Board of Directors: (L to R) John Burke Jr., Craig Mathies Sr., Robert Arnold, Matthew Holloway, Douglas Scott, Amy Brandt, Olin Davis III, Donna West, Jeffrey Rathell Sr. and Robert B. Thompson

Board Members are Re-Elected at the 84th Annual Meeting

On Thursday, April 28, 2022, a little over 200 members and the Board of Directors gathered at The Wicomico Youth and Civic Center in Salisbury, MD, for the 84th Choptank Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting.

During the business meeting, members voted to reelect the following three board members in the seats up for election in 2022:



Congratulations on your reelection and thank you for your service to our members!



Summer Hurricane and Storm Season Preparedness

Be prepared for 2022's hurricane season that begins June 1 and ends November 30. Here are a few ways you can be prepared this summer:

BE PREPARED BEFORE THE STORM:

- ✓ Sign up for SmartHub to report outages using the SmartHub app, text CHOPTANK to 1-800-410-4790 to sign up for texting alerts, or use our Outage Reporting Number: 1-800-410-4790.
- ✓ Update your contact information with the Co-op for call back notifications and outage updates.
- ✓ Put together an emergency kit and plan. Fill your kit with such things as a flashlight, batteries, cash, first aid supplies, medications, and copies of your critical information if you need to evacuate.
- ✓ Know the elevation level of your property and whether the land is flood-prone. This will help you prepare for the storm surge and any tidal flooding.
- ✓ Secure your home: cover all windows with either storm shutters or boards, clear and repair clogged rain gutters, and bring all outdoor furniture indoors.
- ✓ Learn your community hurricane evacuation routes.

NEVER use a generator inside!

This includes homes, garages, crawlspaces, sheds, or similar areas.

Deadly levels of carbon monoxide can quickly build up in these areas.



DURING THE STORM:

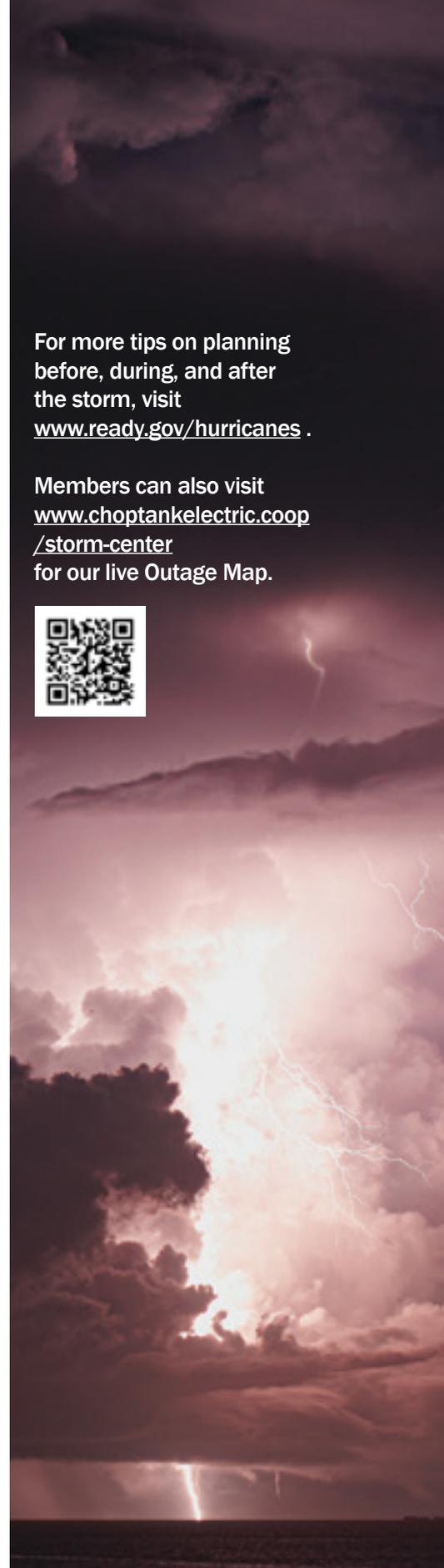
- ✓ Listen to the radio or TV for information, if possible.
- ✓ Avoid using the phone, unless there is an emergency.
- ✓ Unplug appliances if instructed to do so. Otherwise, keep the refrigerator thermostat on the coldest setting and keep the doors closed.

AFTER THE STORM:

- ✓ Keep away from loose or dangling power lines and report them immediately to Choptank Electric Cooperative.
- ✓ Avoid flood water as it may be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines and may hide dangerous debris or places where the ground is washed away.
- ✓ Drive only if necessary and avoid flooded roads. Watch out for fallen objects, downed power lines, and weakened walls, bridges, or sidewalks.

For more tips on planning before, during, and after the storm, visit www.ready.gov/hurricanes.

Members can also visit www.choptankelectric.coop/storm-center for our live Outage Map.





Choptank Fiber One Year Later

By Elizabeth Hallett, Manager of Marketing & Communications



*Achievements
Of Our First
Year of
Operation*

**PASSED
OVER 1000
HOMES**

w/ infrastructure and offered high-speed broadband service

Applied for and awarded grants of **\$7.2 MILLION, IN 50% COST-SHARE** agreement to install service to 2300 unserved members in 3 counties

Created broadband points of presence and started **CUSTOMER CONNECTIONS IN 6 OF 9 COUNTIES** (more coming soon!)

Partnered with local governments and **COMPLETED 2 STATE EXPANSION GRANTS ALMOST A YEAR AHEAD OF SCHEDULE,** bringing service to more than 300 unserved members

Choptank Fiber has been connecting members to high-speed internet since its first customer connection in April of 2021. One year later, Choptank Fiber, a subsidiary of Choptank Electric Cooperative, has made broadband available to over 1,000 members.

“We are building fiber service that exceeds expectations,” explains Mike Malandro, President and CEO of Choptank Electric Cooperative. “We are offering speeds from 100 Mbps to 2.5 Gbps, we have stockpiled supplies, and we are building much faster than we anticipated.”

“When we engineered our system, we wanted to be ready for what members would need in the future, says Malandro. What we’ve discovered is that for some members, the future is now.” Choptank Fiber’s first 2.5 Gbps home service was installed weeks ago.

Hundreds of additional members are scheduled for broadband installation before the end of 2022, thanks to

grant funding provided by the state of Maryland and partnerships with local governments.

“We are 95% complete for buildout on our 2021 grants, which were supposed to take three years,” says Timothy McGaha, Vice President of Technical Services at Choptank Electric Cooperative. “With these speeds and our construction expertise, our members can do anything they can dream up with their internet – it’s truly a life-changing experience.”

Louise Montgomery is one of the many members who is genuinely happy with her fast and reliable service, installed in October 2021. Before fiber was available through Choptank, she petitioned local and state lawmakers to support enabling legislation. Following passage of HB 999 in 2020, Louise helped organize her community to vote “yes” for Broadband through Member-Regulation at the Cooperative’s annual meeting. Louise urged county

officials to partner with Choptank Fiber to expedite construction.

“From a mental health perspective, high-speed internet gives people time to engage their brains if they are isolated. It allows them time and space to do activities, games, and to socialize.” Montgomery says.

Louise and her husband have been Choptank Electric Cooperative members for over 40 years. Before their service was installed, she encouraged neighbors to sign up for Choptank Fiber’s broadband service.

“During the pandemic, my husband and I tried to work from home on our sub-par satellite internet service, but it just couldn’t handle everything we needed it to do. I work in healthcare and my husband in security. We needed to have fast, reliable internet,” Montgomery says. “Being a champion for Choptank Fiber in this community was crucial for not only my family, but also for my neighbors.”

Not only did Choptank Fiber’s internet installation increase property values

DENTON INGLESIDE WARWICK
 CENTREVILLE QUEEN ANNE'S MARDELA SPRINGS HEBRON POCOMOKE
 HILLSBORO
 CONNECTING THE EASTERN Choptank Fiber SHORE OF MARYLAND
 PRINCESS ANNE POCOMOKE CITY
 MARDELA SPRINGS HENDERSON RIDGELY BARCLAY

PROCURED ONE YEARS' WORTH OF CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS IN ADVANCE to battle long logistics lead times and start projects sooner

REMAINING GRANTS ARE MONTHS AHEAD OF ORIGINAL SCHEDULE

INSTALLED THOUSANDS OF BROADBAND ACCESS PEDESTALS AND JUST GETTING STARTED

THOUSANDS OF FIBER SPLICES to provide world class fiber optic broadband to our member community

CREATED PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS WITH 6 COUNTIES to work towards universal broadband access for residents

in her neighborhood, but it also helped her save money on her bills.

“When you think about paying for Wi-Fi through satellite or a landline phone service because cell service isn’t great here, we have saved a whole lot of money using Choptank Fiber. I have saved by switching to streaming services. For work, if I have to meet a client, I am saving gas money from when I had to travel around looking for Wi-Fi. Now, I can do virtual meetings in the privacy of my home. I even have fitness apps that help keep me active.”

Access to the internet not only helped the Montgomerys reduce their bills and allowed them to connect with the world, it also has helped Louise kickstart her small business.

Evergreen Senior Consultants LLC provides education and supportive services to people and families with cognitive impairments like dementia or Parkinson’s, and anyone else who falls within that scope.

“I visit homes, hospitals, facilities, senior centers, and other long-term care centers for people with these impairments. I educate the staff, families, and much of what I do is coach family members on how to deal with these different sicknesses and develop wellness plans for



Mike Malandro stands with Gov. Larry Hogan and other state officials celebrating our first customers, the Hollingsworth family, on April 15, 2021.

families. These families need so much support and during COVID, without internet, I couldn’t connect with my clients and their caregivers,” says Montgomery.

After her internet was installed, Mrs. Montgomery was also able to take continuing education classes online through the local hospital, which provided the privacy and credentials she needed to continue her work.

“The speeds and reliability of our fiber are unmatched by anyone else here on the Eastern Shore,” observed Malandro. “I’m not surprised that a member like Louise Montgomery was able to bring about economic development right in her own community once internet was available.”

Members who are not located in a current “in-service” area are encouraged to register, so they can be notified when service becomes available. For more information on Choptank Fiber, visit our website at www.choptankfiber.com.





EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

HOW DOES YOUR JOB FIT INTO THE OVERALL COOPERATIVE BUSINESS?

For the past 10 years, I have served as your Forester, providing technical and educational assistance on the importance of tree care activities. Activities such as tree pruning, tree selection, use of innovative technologies, and more to reduce outage restoration times. This increases the life of the Cooperative electrical system all while saving you money.

TALK ABOUT SOMETHING THAT MANY MEMBERS/EMPLOYEES MIGHT NOT KNOW ABOUT YOUR JOB.

Each year, about half of all electrical outages are caused by trees or other vegetation impacting the Cooperative's electrical infrastructure. My job as your Forester is to minimize these

impacts so we can provide safe, reliable, electrical service to our members.

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

Before joining the Cooperative, I worked as Smokey the Bear for the Delaware Forest Service. My career as this lovable character took me from schools to minor league baseball games promoting the importance of fire safety.

If you would like to learn more about the Cooperative's Forestry Program or have a specific question regarding trees and how they impact your electrical service, please visit the Cooperative's website or you may contact me at 410-479-8557.

Committed to Members & the Cooperative

John Merritt Retires after 30 Years of Service



John Merritt
Chief Lineman

John Merritt, Chief Lineman for the Regional Service Center and the Berlin territory, retired on April 28, 2022, after almost 30 years of service to the members and the Cooperative.

He was hired in June of 1992 as an Operations Field Helper. Throughout the years he took other positions such as Meter Reader and Work Order & Material Coordinator, until he settled on becoming an Apprentice Lineman in 2002. Working his way through the training program, he became a Journeyman in 2005 and then was appointed Chief Lineman, a position from which he retired in 2007.

Thank you John for your many years of service and good luck in your retirement!





Important Election Year Ahead

Primary Election Day is July 19

By Matthew Tefteau, Manager of Government Affairs

This year is going to be another exciting election year. With Maryland statewide races, all House of Delegates and State Senate seats are up for grabs, and all kinds of county and local races, electric cooperatives have the opportunity to have a seat at the table and make their voices heard. Co-ops play a vital role in supporting political engagement, encouraging rural voter turnout, and engaging with candidates on issues that matter in our communities.

It remains imperative that co-ops be involved in the conversation. Please take the time to show concern for your community and encourage everyone who is eligible to get registered and vote.

For more information please visit:
www.elections.maryland.gov



PRIMARY ELECTION DAY is July 19, early voting is July 7 - 14.



GENERAL ELECTION DAY is November 8, early voting is October 27 - November 3.

SCAN FOR MARYLAND ELECTION SITE

Serving Members with Skill and Forward Thinking

Brenda Faulkner Retires After 37 Years of Service



Brenda Faulkner
Accounts Receivable
Accountant

When Brenda Faulkner began her 37-year career back in April 1985, she was hired as a KeyPunch Operator. She advanced in the Information Technology Department as Junior Office Equipment Operator and Office Equipment Operator. At that time, the Cooperative managed its billing via in-house programming. Over the years, due to advancements in technology and the continued growth of the Cooperative’s membership base, in 1999 the Cooperative migrated from its in-house billing system to partnering with its current enterprise vendor, National Information Solutions Cooperative (NISC). At that time, Brenda was promoted to her current position of Accounts Receivable Accountant and was involved with this conversion from day one and continued to be the liaison between the Cooperative and NISC’s Customer Care and Billing division until her retirement. Her vast knowledge of the billing system included cycle billing, online payment systems, cash register, and much more. She truly was the billing expert at the Cooperative and is known to be a forward thinker, always thinking ahead to how one change in the billing system impacts another.

“I am thankful for my rewarding 37-year career at Choptank Electric and have appreciated the opportunities it has provided. Looking forward to being on Brenda-Time.”

Brenda’s last day with the Cooperative was April 29. In her retirement, she plans to spend more time enjoying the beach life.

MEMBERS NOTES

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



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

Jeffrey D. Rathell Sr.
Chairman, Talbot Co.

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

Douglas D. Scott
Treasurer, Dorchester Co.

Robert E. Arnold
Secretary, 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.

Dear Mr. Billy,

On April 19th I had the good fortune to talk to Alyssa, a Choptank Electric Co-op representative.

My husband had died. He was the CPA and took care of all of our bills. It has been rough on me to figure the finances and mourn the loss of my husband.

Alyssa helped me through my financial questions and what I needed to provide. She was amazingly patient, kind and knowledgeable. I understood her answers.

A company is only as good as their representatives. The first company interaction I have decides my opinion of that company. In my opinion she is a treasure and deserves a reward. We should celebrate people like her.

*Sincerely,
Patricia*

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.

April 2022

- Baywater Animal Rescue - \$2,600
- Caroline Medical Adult Day Care - \$2,680
- North Caroline High School - \$400
- Easton High School - \$418
- Fairview Church of the Brethren - \$7,500
- Rock Hall Police Dept - \$8,531
- Wheatley Methodist Church - \$2,400
- Young Professionals of the OC Chamber of Commerce - \$1,250

The total of approved applications was \$37,916 which included \$11,336 for individual home and medical expenses.

