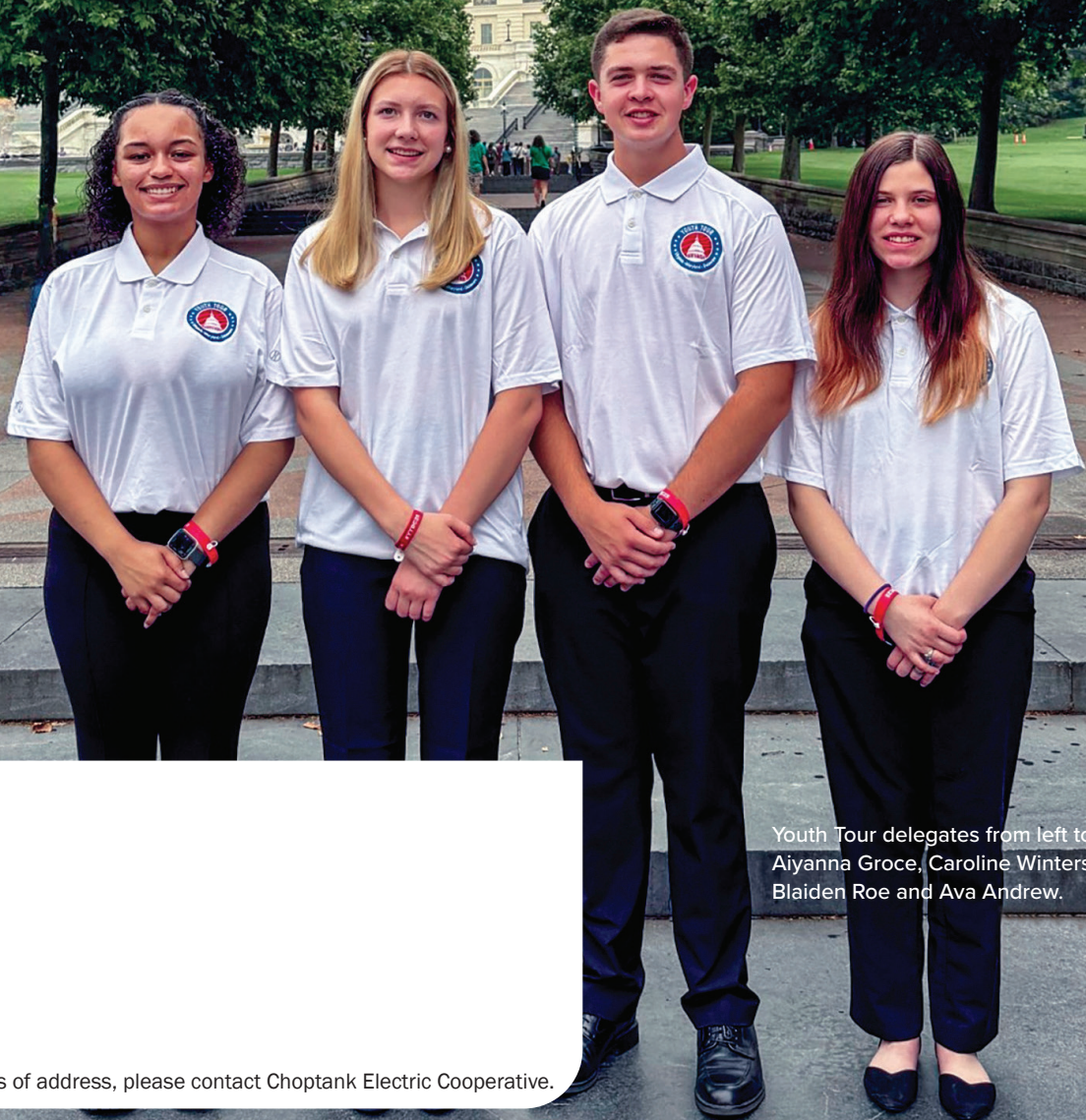


CHOPTANK ELECTRIC *Cooperative* **Living**

YOUTH TOUR 2025

PAGE 14



Youth Tour delegates from left to right:
Aiyanna Groce, Caroline Winterstein,
Blaiden Roe and Ava Andrew.

For changes of address, please contact Choptank Electric Cooperative.

DON'T SHOOT THE LINES

As hunting season quickly approaches and our high-speed internet service continues to expand across the Eastern Shore, I'd like to remind our members to take caution when shooting around overhead powerlines. Here at Choptank Electric Cooperative and Choptank Fiber, we are dedicated to providing your farms and rural communities with the most reliable and cost-effective electricity and the best quality internet available.



Many of the utility poles around farms and hunting land now support fiberoptic cable in addition to our power distribution lines. These fiber lines are very fragile, containing up to 144 glass tubes in one cable. If hit by a shotgun blast, the fibers will break much more easily than powerlines, and each individual strand requires time-consuming splicing repair.

When fiber cables are shot, homes and businesses along that line lose access to the internet until a repair can be made manually. Not only does this put homes at risk, but several local 911 services lease our fiber for emergency communications. If the broken line is located over a field of crops, getting in before harvest is difficult.

Under Maryland law, the cost of the repair is borne by the landowner or the hunter who damaged the line. The average repair to a shot-damaged fiber cable runs from \$15,000 to \$20,000. We want to protect you from that expense and protect everyone who needs the electricity and internet service on our lines.

Visit our website at choptankelectric.coop/DSTL to review basic hunter electrical and powerline safety rules to follow. Thank you for helping to keep the lines safe during this hunting season.



Sincerely,
Mike Malandro,
President & CEO
Choptank Electric Co-op



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

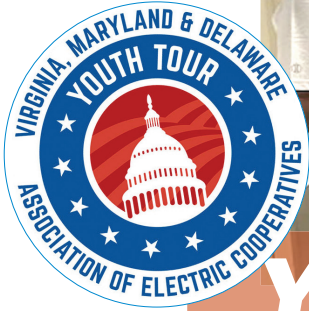
Electric Outage Reporting: 1-800-410-4790 option 1

Fiber Outage Reporting: 1-800-410-4790 option 2

Use SmartHub to Manage Account,
Track Usage and Report Outages —>

WWW.CHOPTANKELECTRIC.COOP





YOUTH TOUR 2025

Empowering Local Youth in D.C.

Rising high school seniors from across the Eastern Shore traveled with Choptank Electric to Washington, D.C., in June to participate in the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. This weeklong program allows students from across the country to tour our nation's capital and understand how advocating for rural communities can make an impact at home.

Choptank was proud to sponsor the following students this year: Aiyanna Groce, Ava Andrew and Blaiden Roe from Colonel Richardson High School, Madisyn Moore from Easton High School and Caroline Winterstein from Queen Anne's County High School.

Participants attended several activities focusing on leadership development and electric co-op advocacy, including NRECA Youth

Day with all 1,500 students in a pep rally. The duration of the week was spent touring with other students from electric cooperatives in Virginia, Maryland and Delaware with the regional association. The group visited monuments, Smithsonian museums, Arlington National Cemetery, a National's baseball game and took a dinner cruise on the Potomac River.

In addition to the activities and tours, the pinnacle of Youth Tour was Hill Day. Choptank Electric students were able to meet with Sen. Chris Van Hollen and staff from the offices of Rep. Andy Harris and Sen. Angela Alsobrooks.

"Seeing the excitement these students have while walking around the heart of Washington, D.C., is inspiring," shares Katie Lockett, Director of Marketing, Communications & Education for Choptank Electric and a Youth Tour



chaperone. “It’s such a great experience for them to meet their state representatives at a young age — one that I know makes a lasting impression for years to come.”

They also received a tour of the Capitol building and learned about the history of the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. The program traces its origins to NRECA’s 1957 Annual Meeting, when then-Sen. Lyndon Baines Johnson said in his address to the association, “If one thing comes out of this meeting, it will be sending youngsters to the national capital where they can actually see what the flag stands for and represents.”

Nearly 100,000 students from rural areas and small towns across America have participated in this

program. Applications for the 2026 Youth Tour will open in October. To learn more and apply to be sponsored by Choptank Electric, visit choptankelectric.coop/youth-tour.

Ava Andrew
participating in Co-op
101 activities.



Blaiden Roe
trading pins
with a student
from another
state on the
dinner cruise.



“Seeing the excitement these students have while walking around the heart of Washington, D.C., is inspiring.”

– Katie Luckett, Director of Marketing,
Communications & Education



LEAD program participants tour ODEC's Wildcat Point, a natural gas generation facility in Cecil County, to learn about where Choptank Electric gets its power.

2025 LEAD PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

Samantha Schuyler, Manager of Human Resources; Alyssa Tobolski, Member Services Project Coordinator; Rob Jump, Supervisor of System Control; Jason Gaskill, Manager of Regional Operations in Salisbury; Nick Newnam, Manager of Regional Operations in Denton; Wayne Daubach, Manager of Operating Services; Patrick Dubinski, Senior Electrical Engineer

Choptank Electric's LEAD Program

By Samantha Casale, Communications Intern

The Leadership, Engagement and Development (LEAD) Program at Choptank Electric Cooperative is a special opportunity for selected employees to develop new leadership skills. This program emphasizes core values such as emotional intelligence, communication and adaptability, ultimately preparing employees for greater responsibilities within our co-op.

Participants in the inaugural class were selected through an application process in the fall of 2024. Seven employees ready to focus on core leadership skills from various departments across the Co-op were selected. Throughout the year, participants attend sessions regarding numerous cooperative subjects and are assigned a mentor from our senior staff.

They work closely with their mentors while completing assignments like a problem-solving white paper, group collaborations and developing a personal growth plan for making a successful transition to leadership. The goal is to help each participant reflect on their leadership style by building new skills and applying these skills to real work situations.

The LEAD initiative is centered on more than just individual growth; it's about shaping leaders who can make a true impact. "At its heart, the program reflects Choptank's identity and elevates the communities they're part of — not just as employees, but as stewards of a shared mission," explains Marnie Stockman, facilitator of the program. Marnie is also

the co-author of "*Lead it Like Lasso*" and has created a masterclass on personal leadership, speaking around the world to help others become the best versions of themselves in fun ways.

Samantha Schuyler, Manager of Human Resources and current LEAD participant, shares how the program has helped her grow. "I'm building a strong bond with my team and our department, providing the guidance they need while also embracing the idea that not everything has to be done the way it's always been."

Rob Jump, System Control Supervisor and current LEAD participant, notes that the most helpful principle

he's learned is that "clear is kind, unclear is unkind." He shares, "I use this to filter and revise communications to my team for optimal clarity, and it has been very helpful."

Jason Gaskill, Manager of District Operations and current LEAD participant, explains how the program

has helped in reshaping his leadership approach. "The LEAD program has helped me to look at things from a different perspective," shares Jason. "It makes you reflect on past decisions and think of new ways to handle those situations."

Paula Bishop, Vice President of Human Resources, shares about the creation of this program at Choptank Electric. "This was an initiative driven by the Cooperative's strategic plan and I couldn't be more excited to collaborate with our CEO and senior staff on our inaugural program. We hope this program sets the stage for employee development for many years to come."

"When you invest in character and connection, leadership becomes contagious."

— Marnie Stockman



Broadband Leadership Summit

By Valerie Connelly, Vice President Government Affairs & Public Relations

As our broadband business matures, the team here at Choptank has become active in policy at the national level through NRECA Broadband. This spring, Choptank Fiber was invited to the Broadband Leadership Summit in Washington, D.C., to discuss important changes to infrastructure funding programs, mapping of served and unserved areas and more.

Broadband leaders from electric cooperatives around the country attended to build relationships, hear from federal agency staff, and learn more about what is working at other co-ops.

President & CEO, Mike Malandro and key Choptank staff visited Capitol Hill to meet with Maryland's delegation about

broadband on the Eastern Shore. U.S. Rep. Andy Harris (MD-1) chairs the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA and related agencies. Mike spoke to him at length about the value of federal grant funding to connect rural families to the internet. Because there are fewer homes and more miles between homes and businesses in rural areas, the cost to build is often prohibitive without grant assistance.

Reliability and internet speed were also emphasized, as families need at least 100 Mbps download speed and almost as much upload speed to work, learn or get healthcare services at home.

Our message to Rep. Harris, Sen. Van Hollen and Sen. Alsobrooks was

to implement the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program without delay and to insist that the FCC's new National Broadband Map accurately reflect locations and quality of service (speed and reliability). Both items are key to achieving the goal of universal broadband for families and businesses on the Eastern Shore.

As Choptank Fiber gets closer to meeting the broadband service needs of Choptank members and the surrounding community, you can be assured that we will continue to remind elected leaders at all levels of your need for reliable, affordable and world-class service.

Choptank
Fiber



Matthew Tefteau, Tim McGaha, Maryland Rep. Andy Harris, Mike Malandro and Valerie Connelly





Lighting up a Summer Tradition

Choptank Trust helps light up the Talbot County Fair

By McKayla Kiernan, Communications Specialist

For over 100 years, the Talbot County Fair has been the highlight of the summer for people of all ages. This beloved tradition continues thanks to the dedicated volunteers of the Talbot County Livestock Fund. These volunteers work tirelessly year-round, organizing and running the 4-H/FFA livestock auction, maintaining and repairing livestock buildings and facilitating the 4-H/FFA Talbot County Livestock Auction Scholarship for auction participants.

In today's world, electricity is vital no matter where you are. Back in 2011, most of the livestock buildings on the fairgrounds had little to no power, and those that did were constantly blowing breakers due to the high demand during fair week. That changed when Tom Reilly, Chairperson of the Livestock Fund, submitted a Choptank Electric Trust application requesting funds to upgrade the electrical infrastructure. Thanks to the Trust's support through funds generated from the Operation Round Up program, Choptank Electric crews installed the necessary equipment, finally delivering dependable power that Choptank Electric provides to all the livestock buildings.

In March of this year, Tom submitted another application — this time requesting funds to bring electrical service to three cabins on the fairgrounds. Built in the 1960s, the cabins have been used by fairgoers for generations. These cabins are used for both storage and by youth who stay with their

livestock during the fair. With electrical service now in place thanks to the \$3,000 contribution from the Choptank Electric Trust, the



Talbot County Livestock Committee pictured from left to right, Thomas Reilly, Darian Sump, Susan Behrens, Terri Snow, Thomas Hutson, Sonny Snow and Amanda Clougherty.

cabins have lighting at night, temperature control and the ability to run dehumidifiers, ensuring stored supplies are protected during the hot, humid summer months.

"We actually have more electrical service than we need right now, but we're thinking about the future," says Tom. "It's not just about us. Future generations will have the opportunity to grow into this space and expand their use of electricity if they need to."

This year marked the 42nd year of the Talbot County Fair at its current location. To learn more about the Talbot Ag Fund and their mission, please visit talbotagcenter.org/.

If your program or organization is interested in applying for funding through the Choptank Electric Trust, please visit choptankelectric.coop/operation-round-trust-fund for details and eligibility.

Choptank congratulates the following employees on their promotions:

Lisa Robinson

Member Service Specialist 5th Class

Tim Hardesty

Apprentice Lineman 5th Class

Deni Dorsey

Manager of IT – OT Infrastructure

Adam Connolly

Manager of Broadband Systems



Congratulations to the Choptank Electric linemen who graduated from VMDAEC's Lineworker Technician Apprentices Program: Chas Fisher, Mason Johnson, Jordan Watson and Ben Carmean.

THANK YOU, BOB WHEATMAN, FOR 14 YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE!



BOB WHEATMAN

Operations Technician II

Bob Wheatman started at the Cooperative in November 2011 as a Regional Accounts Representative. After the AMI meters were installed in 2014, Bob began his role as an Operations Technician II where he remained until his retirement in July 2025.

In his role as Operations Technician II, Bob had many responsibilities, including coordinating work orders, handling materials, cutting grass and doing anything else that needed to be done.

"My advice to any new employee is: If there is anything you want to do while you are here, you can fulfill your dreams with the help of the Cooperative," Bob says.

During his retirement, Bob plans to continue his hobbies of woodworking, working on small engines, welding and metal fabrication, car and motorcycle detailing and riding his Harleys. He also plans to take trips and, most importantly, spend time with his family. We thank Bob for his years of service and wish him well as he begins this exciting new chapter!

"My advice to any new employee is if there is anything you want to do while you are here, you can fulfill your dreams with the help of the Cooperative."

– Bob Wheatman

MEMBER'S 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!



— Jenny and David Miles following an outage in early June.

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 MD's Eastern Shore.

To apply, or to find out more about this program:
[➤ choptankelectric.coop/operation-round-trust-fund](https://choptankelectric.coop/operation-round-trust-fund)

May 2025

- Graves Chapel UAME Church \$5,000
- Art League of Ocean City \$2,500
- The Benedictine School for Exceptional Children . . \$2,000
- Crystal Beach Manor Civic Association \$1,000
- Caroline Tennis Association \$200
- Lockerman Schools Association \$2,000
- Trinity AME Church \$4,000

The total of approved applications for May was \$28,137, which included \$11,437 for individual home and medical expenses.



Choptank Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Choptank Electric, a Touchstone Energy Cooperative, is a not-for-profit, member-owned, electric distribution co-op serving approximately 57,000 residential, commercial and industrial members in all nine counties on Maryland's Eastern Shore.

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Vice Chairman, Ocean Pines District

Donna Richardson West
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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 of our unserved members on The Eastern Shore.