

GIRL POWER ON THE EASTERN SHORE

Connecting more women with the energy utility sector has been an industry-wide goal over the past few years. One area of focus is centered around linework. While we continue to see more women take on roles in the field, attracting them to line crew roles remains a challenge.



To spark their interest in the beginning phases of career exploration, the electric cooperatives of Virginia, Maryland & Delaware host Girl Power, a one-day energy career experience for high school girls. This free program is open to any female student interested in or curious about working on a line crew, in a substation, with advanced-metering technology, as a fiber broadband technician or a variety of other careers in the power industry. These types of operations roles can often lead to a variety of leadership opportunities within an organization.

The Girl Power Eastern Shore event will be held on Oct. 2, 2025, at Choptank Electric's Training Center in Salisbury, Md. Instructors will lead participants through various outdoor activities and demonstrations with some classroom instruction and guest speakers. The program emphasizes safety on the job, including how to safely climb a utility pole and operate a bucket truck.

Students will also individually meet with industry human resources professionals to review their resumes and discuss interviewing best practices. Other representatives, including community college advisors, are on site and available to answer questions about career paths and education requirements.

We are looking forward to providing girls with the experience and opportunity to reach new heights at Choptank Electric. To register and learn more about Girl Power, visit vmdaec.com/girl-power-camp/. The registration deadline for the Salisbury, Md. location is Sept. 30, 2025.



*Mike Malandro,
President & CEO
Choptank Electric Cooperative*



**Choptank Electric
Cooperative**

A Touchstone Energy®
Cooperative

**Choptank
Fiber**

P.O. Box 430 | Denton, MD | 21629

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

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Cooperative Interns

Summer of 2025

By Samantha Casale, Communications Intern

This is my third summer interning with the Marketing and Communications department at Choptank Electric Cooperative. After such a rewarding experience for the past two summers, I knew I wanted to return. I'll begin my senior year at Salisbury University this fall, majoring in communications with a minor in marketing.

Throughout my time here, I've developed stronger communication skills both internally with employees and externally with the public. From writing articles and creating social media content to planning and setting up exhibit booths at events, I have developed stronger skills in representing both myself and the co-op.

"Samantha's dedication to the Cooperative and engagement with our members is admirable. Her skills and positive attitude have been such an asset to Choptank Electric!"

— Katie Luckett, Director of Marketing, Communications & Education

It's been rewarding to work with a team that prioritizes service and community. From day one, I have witnessed just how much we put our members first here at Choptank Electric Cooperative.

Jenna Troyer, Accounting Intern



Jenna Troyer is entering her senior year at the University of Delaware, majoring in accounting. This is her second summer interning with Choptank. Throughout her time here, she has developed strong experience in accounting and data

processing. Thanks to hands-on projects and strong leadership, Jenna has solidified her interest in private industry work. "The accounting team has been incredibly open and helpful whenever I've needed guidance, and I genuinely enjoy the work I'm doing," Jenna says. After graduation, she plans to transition to a full-time accounting position. In the future she hopes to receive her master's degree in finance and a CPA license.

"We are truly impressed with Jenna's passion for learning and attention to detail. We value her contribution to our team."

— Jane Towers, Controller

Titus Martin, Engineering Intern



Titus Martin is currently studying electrical engineering at Liberty University. He has always looked for ways to give back to his community, which is what led him to intern with Choptank. "My favorite part of this internship so far has been

going out into the field and seeing how Choptank provides fiber and electricity to our members," says Titus. He has also learned about the technical and operational sides of the co-op. Titus plans to keep an open mind about what comes next and is focused on learning as much as he can during his time with Choptank Electric Cooperative.

"Engineering is truly grateful for the valuable support Titus has brought to our team this summer. It's been a pleasure working with him, and his contributions have not gone unnoticed."

— Peyton Gleaton, Director of Distribution Engineering

Leadership, Friendship and Service

Q&A with retiree Lance Lockerman

After nearly four decades of service, Lance Lockerman is retiring from Choptank Electric Cooperative. In this conversation with Communications Specialist McKayla Kiernan, he reflects on the journey, the people and some lessons learned along the way.

Q: As you prepare to retire, what thoughts come to mind?

I want to begin by expressing my gratitude to everyone who has helped me reach this milestone. From the leaders who placed their trust in me, to the farmers who would pull my truck out across a muddy field so I could make a critical repair to restore power — every experience mattered. Every person I've had the privilege of working with and learning from has left a lasting impact.

Q: You've held a variety of roles at Choptank. How did those positions shape your leadership style over the years?

Each role came with its own lessons, and through them I gained a deeper understanding of the challenges people face across the organization. I've always believed that good leaders create an environment where others can succeed. For me, that meant hiring the right people, giving them the tools and training they needed and trusting them to think for themselves. I was there to offer guidance when needed, but also wanted to give them the confidence to lead on their own.

Q: What were your main responsibilities as Vice President of Operations?

I was responsible for several critical areas of the cooperative. That included overseeing: line crews; contractors; safety, training and compliance; vegetation management; warehousing and supply chain; fleet services;



Lance and his son, Spencer, at Wesleyan Christian School in 1995.

and facilities management. I was fortunate to work alongside dedicated professionals who brought their best every day.

Q: Looking back, what stands out as your favorite part of working for Choptank?

Without a doubt, it's the people. The bonds formed over the years — through day-to-day work and the challenges we've weathered together — have led to friendships that will last a lifetime. In my 39 years at Choptank, I've worked through ice storms, floods, hurricanes, tornados, and even a derecho. Each storm taught us something new.

Q: What advancements during your career made the biggest impact on operations and service?

Two major enhancements stand out. First, the integration of automation through fiber technology, which puts information at your fingertips and reduces drive times during outages. Second, the improvements in materials used for underground cable, which have significantly boosted reliability.

Q: What are you most looking forward to in retirement?

More time with family and some longer-term vacations. I've truly enjoyed my time at Choptank. It's been an honor to be part of the organization's story.





Fall Fest Grows with Fiber

JZ Farms celebrates its fifth season this fall

By Katie Luckett, Director of Marketing, Communications and Education

As the harvest moon nears, farms across the region open their fields to the community for fall festivals and activities. Nestled on 175 acres in Federalsburg, Md., JZ Farms welcomes guests of all ages to their annual Fall Fest. This year marks the fifth season for owners Jane and Zach Blough to host groups from across the nation on their family farm.

“We wanted to share the land that our family loves with our community and create a space for everyone to make memories outdoors,” shared Zach.

What started as a few attractions for kids in 2021 has quickly grown into a full day and night experience with 20 fall-themed activities, including a 10-acre corn maze, Farmersville with 12 playhouses, a U-pick pumpkin patch, sunflowers and more.

As the excitement for Fall Fest grew in 2022 with more visitors, Jane and Zach saw the potential for making the event larger to serve additional people. With more guests came the need for more services and technology; and their current internet was not allowing them to expand or operate efficiently.

“We weren’t sure how we were going to be able to continue with slow-to-no internet out at the farm,” shared Jane. “It made ticketing transactions hard to complete and didn’t provide the quality customer service that our family delivers.”

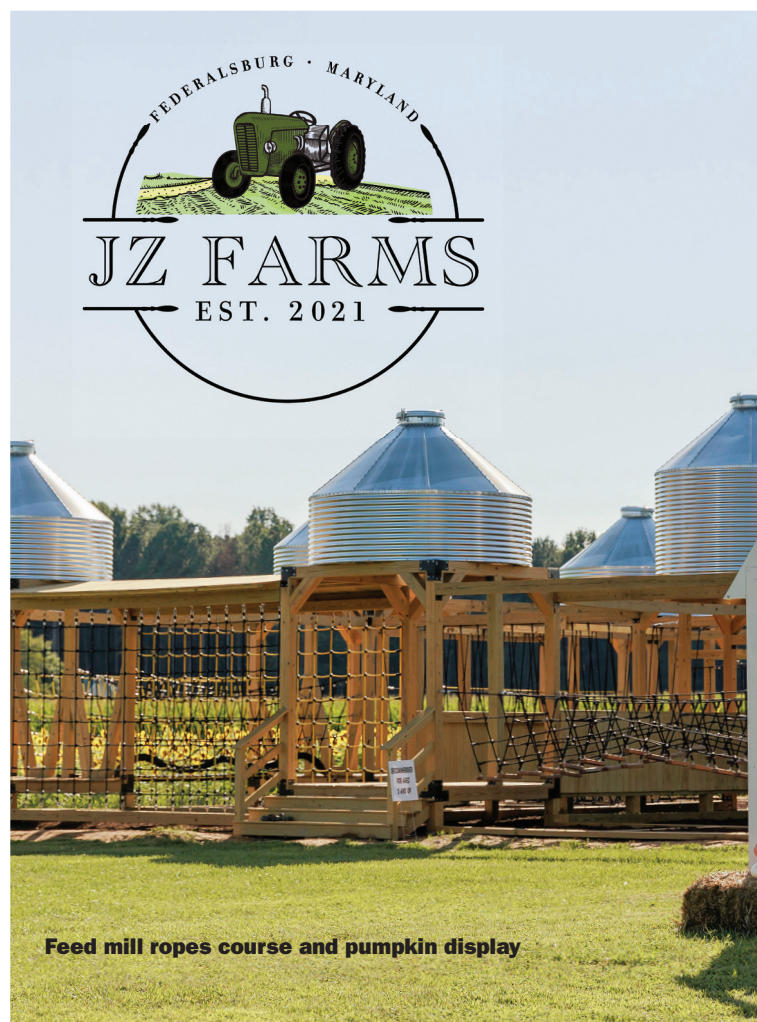
At the close of the 2022 Fall Fest season, Jane and Zach were dreaming of additions to their farm and beginning to plan for the next year. Around that same time, Choptank Fiber obtained funding from grants through the state of Maryland and Caroline County to expand its broadband network to rural areas that were left unserved by other providers. In March of 2023, JZ Farms connected to Choptank Fiber and purchased the 450 Mbps Performance Package.

“It was perfect timing,” added Zach. “We knew with Choptank Fiber, we could grow the event to its

potential with an advanced ticketing system now that we had reliable high-speed internet. We have not had one issue since!”

JZ Farms now sells season tickets online, allowing visitors to scan their passes at the farm on iPads connected to the fiber network. They also accept credit cards and use the Square point-of-sale system, processing payments instantly for all parties upon admission. The Wi-Fi is also used in the main building for concessions and market transactions.

Jane added, “We don’t have to worry about



Feed mill ropes course and pumpkin display



Main building for concessions, market and venue rental



transactions anymore and can spend our time focusing on the people and activities on the farm during Fall Fest.”

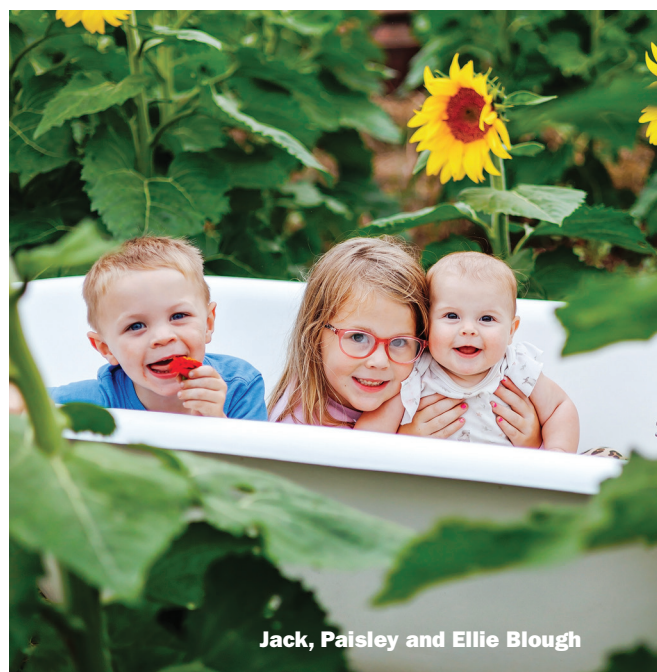
In addition to Fall Fest, JZ Farms also hosts field trips, birthday parties, corporate event room rentals, live music and food trucks.

Aside from the agri-tourism business, Jane and Zach raise chickens for Coleman, grow strawberries, flowers and other produce, and lease farmland for corn and soybeans. The entire farm and family’s home is on Choptank Electric Cooperative’s lines,

benefitting from the affordable power as well as internet. Jane and Zach both grew up as Cooperative members in Caroline County and are proud to raise their own family with three children as part of the Choptank community.

Zach concludes, “We’re grateful for the reliable power the Co-op provides to operate our farm and maintain the essential equipment that’s responsible for keeping our chickens and produce alive.”

To learn more about Choptank Fiber and its services, visit www.choptankfiber.com.



Jack, Paisley and Ellie Blough

JZ Farms’ Fall Fest will begin on Sept. 11 and run through Nov. 2, 2025. Fall Fest is open Thursday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. with Fridays and Saturdays in October staying open until 8 p.m. for the flashlight corn maze. **For more information, visit www.jz-farms.com.**

Be Ready for Hurricane Season

Preparedness is the best defense



September falls within the peak Atlantic hurricane season, which runs from June 1 to Nov. 30. This means that tropical storms and hurricanes are more likely to develop and potentially impact our members during this time.

Choptank Electric Cooperative crews are always prepared and standing by to respond should power outages occur in our area. When severe storms cause power disruptions, our line crews take all necessary precautions before they get to work on any downed lines.

In the event of a prolonged power outage, turn off major appliances, TVs, computers and other sensitive electronics. This will help avert damage from potential power surges and will also help prevent overloading circuits during power restoration. That said, do leave one light on so you will know when power is restored.

If you plan to use a portable generator, make sure it's

rated to handle the amount of power you will need, and always review the manufacturer's instructions to operate it safely.

Severe storms can occasionally bring down power lines. If you see a downed line, always assume it's energized and never approach it. If flooding occurs, never walk through areas where power lines could be submerged.

Follow us on Facebook for the latest power restoration updates. If you experience an outage, please don't report it on Facebook. Call our outage reporting number at 1-800-410-4790 or report your outage on your SmartHub app.. This is the fastest way to let us know if your power is out.

We hope the region avoids severe storms this hurricane season, but Mother Nature's plans are never certain. That's why the co-op recommends making a plan today — because storm preparedness is always the best defense.

Choptank congratulates the following employees on their promotions:

Leroy Sverduk

Vice President of Engineering & Operations

Devereaux Rostien

Operations Technician II

Morgan Chandler

Member Service Specialist 5th Class

Brody Bennett

Serviceman

New Hire:

Scott Patrick

AMI Endpoint & Smart Grid Technician
Denton District

Experience: Verizon Communications and
Tuckahoe Underground

Hobbies: Collecting toy trains

Looking Forward to: Learning new experiences



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**Offices Will Be Closed
Monday, Sept. 1, 2025
HAPPY LABOR DAY!**



2026 Annual Meeting Date Announced

Our Annual Meeting will be held on
Thursday, April 23, 2026, at The
Fountains Wedding & Conference
Center in Salisbury, Md.

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!



— A note from a student to Nick Newnam, Manager of Regional Operations in Denton, after Nick and lineworkers showed students the hotline demonstration.

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

June 2025

• Humane Society of Somerset County	\$2,000
• Camp Mardela	\$2,000
• Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center	\$5,000
• Mary Mac Foundation	\$1,200
• New Beginnings Youth & Family Services	\$2,000
• Pony Express 4-H Club	\$866
• Somerset County Historical Society	\$525

The total of approved applications for June was \$44,429.50, which included \$8,838.50 for individual home and medical expenses, and \$22,000 for scholarships.



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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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.