

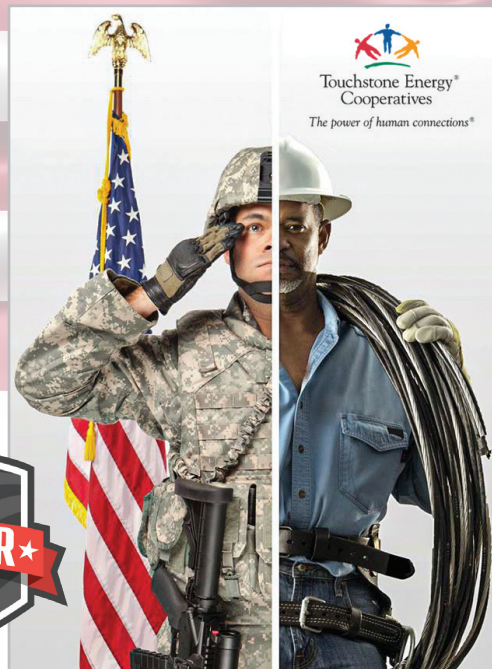
MEMBERS FIRST

Happy Veterans Day to all of our members

As we celebrate Veterans Day on Nov. 11, I am reminded of the sacrifices these men and women have made for our country and the dedication they have to their communities. Choptank Electric Cooperative is proud to have many employees and board members who serve or have served in the military. Our lineworkers, engineers, system control operators and essential field staff work tirelessly around the clock to keep your electricity on and, in turn, protect the safety and reliability of your home and family.

Veterans naturally fit into the electric cooperative industry because the military's values align well with the 7 Cooperative Principles that we follow as a co-op. Both are highly dependent on advanced technology and prioritize respect for procedure and a strong organizational commitment, which is crucial for the safety of our brothers.

As a veteran myself, I have found that the experiences gained in the military add value to the electric cooperative workforce through extensive technical, leadership and safety skills. My time spent in the U.S. Army and the West Virginia Army National Guard taught me that concern for community is the foundation to what we do, and that mindset holds true here at the Co-op.



Touchstone Energy®
Cooperatives
The power of human connections®

We are proud to participate in NRECA's Vets Power Us initiative to support veterans, active military and their spouses. With more than 40% of veterans hailing from rural communities, facilitating the connection between job-seeking veterans and electric cooperative career opportunities is a win-win endeavor.

Turn the page to see the staff and board members we honor this Veterans Day at the Cooperative, and read about one of our members who is making a difference for veterans in our community on page 17.

Thank you for joining us in appreciation for those who serve our country and work to keep our lights on.



A handwritten signature of Mike Malandro.

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



★ *Thank you for your service* ★

to our country and the cooperative.



CHOPTANK ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE VETERAN EMPLOYEES AND BOARD MEMBERS



Tyler Blackiston
Apprentice Lineman
MARINE CORPS



Derek Brinsfield
Meter & Apparatus Tech
AIR FORCE



John Burke
Chairman of the Board
NAVY



Dalton Church
Apprentice Lineman
ARMY



Frankie Davis
Apprentice Lineman
MARINE CORPS



Patrick Helgason
Apprentice Lineman
NAVY



Cole Herr
Chief Lineman
MARINE CORPS



Mike Malandro
President & CEO
ARMY



Scott Maurer
Work Order & Material
Coordinator
ARMY



Brian Postles
Apprentice Lineman
ARMY



Scott Smart Jr.
Journeyman
MARINE CORPS



Bob Thompson
Vice Chairman of
the Board
AIR FORCE



Marion Townsend
Meter & Apparatus Tech
NAVY



Otis Wagner Jr.
Work Order & Material
Coordinator
NAVY



Chad Baker's Dedicated Service to Wounded Veterans

By Valerie Connelly, Vice President Government Affairs & Public Relations

Chad Baker is an entrepreneur here on the Eastern Shore, living with his family in Queen Anne's County, Md. He is also a combat veteran who served 21 years in the U.S. Army as an airborne infantryman and then as a human resource manager assigned to special operations units. Most importantly, Chad is a Choptank Electric Cooperative member who exemplifies the seventh Cooperative Principle, Concern for Community, through his service to and for wounded veterans.

"As a veteran myself," says Mike Malandro, Choptank's President and CEO, "I am impressed with Chad's dedication to the men and women who served our country, returned home and now need some assistance to get back on their feet."

The 73 members of the Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH) Delmarva Chapter 570 can count on Commander Baker's unwavering commitment to bring together health professionals and resources whenever they are needed. In Chad's June newsletter to members highlighting PTSD awareness, he shared his own struggles with PTSD and the relief he found through treatment.

"Mental health services are the biggest need I see in my volunteer work," Chad explains. "Whenever I work with a veteran, I check first to make sure they are signed up for services through the Veterans Administration."

He also works with nonprofit organizations to ensure no veteran pays for treatment, even if it is not covered by insurance or the VA. MOPH sources funds to help veterans deal with everyday struggles, job training and housing needs. Recently, a wounded veteran needed a plane ticket to attend a family funeral. Others living at Charlotte Hall, a veterans' home on the western shore, needed a new bingo machine and TV screens



for their weekly group activity.

Chad coordinates use of the Vet Mentor AI (artificial intelligence) to help veterans write their claims in a way that will be accepted by the VA with benefits paid as soon

as possible. The Great Genie AI is a small business tool Chad likes that will help identify the right grant programs to get a new veteran-owned small business up and running.

When asked about how his job in the military prepared him for what he is doing now as a strategic advisor and volunteer, Chad says, "I want to help people — and the Army taught me to be humble, listen to people and take criticism without overreacting."

Chad grew up in Delaware and was employed at a family construction company in Bethany on Sept. 11, 2001 when planes struck the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and crashed in the field in Pennsylvania. The next morning, Chad and many more like him lined up at the recruiter's office to serve and protect our nation. Chad trained at Fort Bragg in North Carolina and Fort Irwin in California. He was deployed to the Middle East in 2003, where he was injured by an IED (an improvised bomb) and awarded the Purple Heart. After recovery, Chad continued to serve for almost two decades.

"I am proud of Chad and am eager to support his work with other wounded veterans," says Mike Malandro. "I am amazed at the selfless volunteers I meet on a daily basis throughout the Cooperative community."

New Broadband Grants Awarded to Choptank Fiber



Choptank Fiber has secured funding to build high-speed internet service to another 1,200-plus locations over the next 10 months. The funding comes from the Difficult to Serve Premise program (or Long Lanes Grant) offered through the Office of Statewide Broadband. County governments are the recipients and seven of those counties have partnered with Choptank to implement the grant.

"We are making tremendous progress here at Choptank Fiber in our effort to connect cooperative members who were previously unserved," says Tim McGaha, Choptank's Vice President. "In just five years, we have been able to offer service to almost 15,000 homes and businesses in our service territory."

With the new round of funding, Choptank will continue construction in Cecil, Kent, Queen Anne's, Dorchester, Wicomico, Somerset and Worcester counties. Members should be on the lookout for letters, postcards and door hangers letting them know high-speed internet service is available from Choptank Fiber.



Members who pre-register interest and list an address and email at **choptankfiber.com** will be notified as soon as their zone is open for sign up.

"At the cooperative, our No. 1 goal is to serve our members," says Tim. "As we get closer to finishing the broadband construction effort, we are rolling out auxiliary

service tools like the low-priced mobile phone option, as one more way to help members save money."

The Choptank Fiber website contains all the information members need to evaluate subscription levels and pricing for internet, the option to bundle Choptank Mobile and a useful tool for streaming services to help find your favorite shows.

Agribusiness New Construction and Equipment Upgrades

Notify Choptank Electric when you plan new construction or large upgrades so we can accommodate the load.

In order to continue delivering the reliable power you know and trust to your business, we need to ensure our equipment can meet your demand. Prior to new construction or large upgrades on your farm, please complete a Commercial Load Equipment Form, found at **choptankelectric.coop/agribusiness**.

Our engineers will use this information to estimate project requirements. Call our Member Service Center at 877-892-0001 or email loadsheets@choptankelectric.coop with questions.



How Will You **Make Your Mark?**

Apply for Youth Tour 2026

Delegates from Maryland will join more than 1,800 students from across the country in Washington, D.C., June 15-19.



During the trip, students will:

- Develop leadership skills • Strengthen their resumes
- Connect with peers from 44 states • Meet with elected officials
- Experience history up close • Learn about cooperatives

All expenses — travel, lodging, meals and program costs — are covered by Choptank Electric Cooperative.



STATE PIN TRADING ON A DINNER CRUISE



ATTENDING A NATIONALS BASEBALL GAME



PARTICIPATING IN CO-OP 101 ACTIVITIES

Interested high school juniors and seniors can learn more and apply online at choptankelectric.coop/youth-tour

Participants must be members of Choptank Electric Cooperative.
Applications are due Jan. 30, 2026.

Stay Connected With Us!



Make sure your contact information is up to date with both Choptank Electric Cooperative and Choptank Fiber. Having your current phone number, email and mailing address on file means you won't miss important updates — like outage alerts, billing notifications or service announcements.

It's a quick and easy way to help us serve you better, keep you informed and ensure your electric and internet services run smoothly. **To update your contact information, call 1-877-892-0001 or log into your SmartHub account.**



DEVEREAUX ROSTIEN RETIRES AFTER 33 YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE!



DEVEREAUX ROSTIEN

Serviceman – Chestertown

After more than three decades of dedicated service, Devereaux Rostien is saying farewell to Choptank Electric Cooperative and heading into a well-earned retirement. His career with the co-op is one marked by hard work, commitment to members and a passion for keeping the lights on for the community he served.

Devereaux began his career with Choptank Electric in 1992 as System Controller. In this role, he was the vital link between members and the crews working to restore power. “My responsibility was to dispatch the servicemen and linemen as our members called in with power outages,” he explains.

In 2006, after 14 years in system control, Devereaux made the leap to the field, becoming a Journeyman Lineman. Within just three months, he accepted the role of Serviceman in Chestertown, a position he would hold proudly for the remainder of his career. As a Serviceman, he was responsible for troubleshooting outages, restoring power quickly and safely, and coordinating with linemen when extra help was needed.

When asked about his favorite part of working at CEC, Devereaux doesn't hesitate: “I really enjoyed talking with members while getting their power restored. And I always loved working with the linemen — they were a great team.”

Retirement for Devereaux will be filled with adventure, family and the great outdoors. “I plan to spend time with my family, vacation, hunt, fish and do whatever else I decide to do,” he says.

As Devereaux closes this chapter, Choptank Electric Cooperative celebrates his contributions and wishes him all the best in his next journey.

“I really enjoyed talking with members while getting their power restored. And I always loved working with the linemen — they were a great team.”

– Devereaux Rostien

THANK YOU, RICK LECOMPTE, FOR 20 YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE!



RICK LECOMPTE

Warehouse and
Facilities Attendant



After 20 years of hard work, dedication and a commitment to keeping things running smoothly behind the scenes, Rick Lecompte has retired from Choptank Electric Cooperative. Throughout his career, Rick was known for his willingness to jump in wherever needed, his teamwork and his love for the work he did every day.

Rick has spent his entire 20-year career at Choptank Electric in the Warehouse and Facilities Attendant role, a position that kept him busy with a wide variety of responsibilities.

“From bottom to top,” Rick shares, “I handled trash and recycling, loaded and unloaded trucks, pulled and delivered materials for the warehouse,

and worked closely with the linemen setting large transformers.”

Whether it was keeping the warehouse running smoothly or making sure crews had what they needed to do their jobs safely and efficiently, Rick was there to help make it happen.

When asked about his favorite parts of the job, Rick was quick to name a few highlights:

“I really liked driving the tractor and trailer, running material out to the office and to job sites and helping the linemen. I loved working outside — time went by fast!”

His advice to new employees?

“Make sure you can work as a team and don’t be afraid to help someone even if it’s not your job.”

In retirement, Rick is looking forward to spending time with family and friends, crabbing, fishing and continuing to grow lima beans in his garden.

Rick’s years of dedication, teamwork and positive attitude have left a lasting mark on Choptank Electric Cooperative, and we wish him the very best as he enjoys his next chapter.

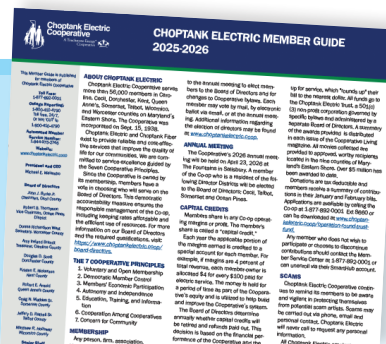
HAPPY Holidays!

OUR OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED

November 27 & 28 for Thanksgiving

December 24 & 25 for Christmas

2025 - 2026 MEMBER GUIDE NOW AVAILABLE



view online at choptankelectric.coop



Our Denton crew was hard at work one morning in August replacing broken poles after a tree fell across our lines.

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

August 2025 Trust Awards

• Backstreet Bikes	\$1,338
• Eastern Shore Ballet Theatre	\$1,000
• Eastern Shore Wellness Solutions	\$1,000
• Haven Ministries	\$3,000
• Hurlock Volunteer Fire Company	\$3,000
• Kent County Sheriff's Office	\$4,077
• Maryland Concerns of Police Survivors	\$1,000
• Women & Girls Fund of the Mid-Shore	\$2,500
• Saddlin' Up for Breast Cancer Ride	\$500
• Harry Neighbors	\$160

September 2025 Trust Awards

• Bayside Community Network	\$800
• Positive Strides Therapeutic Riding Center	\$2,000
• UM SHR Dorchester Shore Community Outreach Team	\$3,609
• Worcester County Veterans Memorial Foundation	\$1,500
• YMCA of the Chesapeake	\$1,500

The total of approved applications for August and September was \$47,50534, which included \$20,521.34 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.

President & CEO

Micheal E. Malandro

Board of Directors

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Chairman, Cecil Co.

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Vice Chairman, Ocean Pines District

Donna Richardson West
Secretary, Worcester Co.

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Somerset Co.

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Wicomico 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 of our unserved members on The Eastern Shore.